

RAPID ALERT SYSTEM FOR FOOD AND FEED

The legal basis of the system is Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 laying down the general principles and requirements of food law, establishing the European Food Safety Authority and laying down procedures in matters of food safety (O.J. No L 31 of 1 February 2002).

The purpose of the rapid alert system for food and feed (RASFF) is to provide the control authorities with an effective tool for exchange of information on measures taken to ensure food safety.

To assist the members of the network, notifications are classified under three different headings¹:

- **ALERT NOTIFICATIONS**

Alert notifications are sent when a food or feed presenting a serious risk is on the market and when immediate action is required. Alerts are triggered by the Member State that detects the problem and has initiated the relevant measures, such as withdrawal/recall. The notification aims at giving all the members of the network the information to verify whether the concerned product is on their market, so that they also can take the necessary measures.

Consumers can be reassured that products subject to an alert notification have been withdrawn or are in the process of being withdrawn from the market. The Member States have their own mechanisms to carry out such actions, including the provision of detailed information through the media if necessary.

- **INFORMATION NOTIFICATIONS**

Information notifications concern a food or feed that was placed on the market for which a risk has been identified, but for which the other members of the network do not have to take immediate action, because the product has not reached their market or is no longer present on their market or because the nature of the risk does not require any immediate action.

- **BORDER REJECTIONS**

These notifications concern food and feed consignments that have been tested and rejected at the external borders of the EU (and the EEA²) when a health risk was found. The notifications are transmitted to all EEA border posts in order to reinforce controls and to ensure that the rejected product does not re-enter the Community through another border post.

The Commission publishes a weekly overview of RASFF notifications belonging to the above three categories. As it is necessary to strike the balance between openness and the protection of commercial information, the trade names and the identity of individual companies are not published. This is not detrimental to consumer protection, as a RASFF notification implies that all required measures have been or are in the process of being taken.

The public must be aware that the Commission is not in a position to release more information other than that published here. However, in exceptional circumstances where the protection of human health

¹ This classification was put in place on 1 January 2008 and differs from the classification used until then.

² European Economic Area

requires greater transparency, the Commission takes the appropriate action through its usual communication channels.

The Commission informs the authorities of third countries of notifications concerning products manufactured in, distributed to or dispatched from these countries. However, the fact that a country is mentioned as the origin of a product does not necessarily imply that the identified hazard(s) originated in the country concerned.

The notifications reported in the weekly overviews published on the European Commission's web site are so-called "original notifications", representing a new case reported on a health risk detected in one or more consignments of a food or feed. On these cases, control authorities are exchanging additional information on measures taken and outcome of investigations. This additional information does not appear in the publicly accessible weekly overviews.

A short explanation about some of the notification tables' columns follows.

The "notification basis" column, appearing in the alert and information notifications tables, indicates what type of control, report or investigation lay at the basis of the notification:

- border control – screening sample: notification initiated through a sample taken at a border post for analysis but the consignment was meanwhile released to the market (“screening sample”);
- official control on the market: official control on the EU (and EEA) internal market;
- company own-check: notification initiated through a company notifying the outcome of an own-check to the competent authority;
- consumer complaint: notification initiated through a consumer lodging a complaint with the competent authority;
- food poisoning outbreak: reports of a food poisoning leading to the notification of a risk in a food on the market that has caused the food poisoning.

The status column is a combination of two values, "distribution status" and "action (to be) taken".

The distribution status indicates knowledge existing **at the time of notification** about the possible distribution of the product on the market. The concept "market" is to be interpreted in a geographical way: "the internal Community market" i.e. this does not necessarily mean that the product is already on the shelves available to consumers, as often it is not.

The action (to be) taken represents the action already taken or to be taken by the notifying country **at the time of notification**. If "no action taken" is given for an **alert** notification, this normally indicates that the product is not on the market of the notifying country (therefore: no action taken by the notifying country) but it may be on the market of other member countries.

Week 2008/26

TABLE 1: ALERT NOTIFICATIONS

Notifications in blue typeface concern feed, all other notifications concern food.

DATE	NOTIFIED BY	REF.	REASON FOR NOTIFYING	NOTIFICATION BASIS	STATUS
23/06/2008	the United Kingdom	2008.0742	undeclared almond in ready to eat soup with apricots and chilli from the United Kingdom	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) recalled from consumer
24/06/2008	the Slovak Republic	2008.0745	migration of cadmium (from rim 2.099; 2.391 mg) and of lead (from rim 44.673; 39.1 mg) from decorated drinking glass from China, via Hungary	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / prohibition to trade - sales ban
25/06/2008	the United Kingdom	2008.0752	plastic fragments (7 cm) in canned beans & sausage from Italy	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / public warning - press release
25/06/2008	France	2008.0755	Salmonella (presence /25g) in vacuum packed pork sausage from Italy	company's own check	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) recalled from consumer
26/06/2008	Sweden	2008.0756	specified risk material (SRM) (vertebral column) in various food and feed products from Sweden	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from recipient(s)
26/06/2008	Germany	2008.0757	Listeria monocytogenes (21300 CFU/g) in ricotta cheese from Italy	company's own check	distribution on the market (possible) / public warning - press release
26/06/2008	Denmark	2008.0758	aflatoxins (B1 = 6 µg/kg - ppb) in pistachio nuts from unknown origin, dispatched from Sweden	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
26/06/2008	Ireland	2008.0759	Salmonella Hadar (1 out of 12 samples /25g), Salmonella infantis (3 out of 12 samples /25g), Salmonella paratyphi group b (6 out of 12 samples /25g) and Salmonella Virchow (2 out of 12 samples /25g) in raw, minced, breaded chicken nuggets from Ireland	company's own check	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
26/06/2008	France	2008.0761	frozen pork from Belgium unfit for human consumption (containing animal by-products / category 3)	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) detained
26/06/2008	Spain	2008.0764	aflatoxins (B1 = 1.54; Tot. = 2.19 / B1 = 1.67; Tot. = 2.42 / B1 = 12.9; Tot. = 18.1 µg/kg - ppb) in peanuts from unknown origin, dispatched from Norway	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) detained

DATE	NOTIFIED BY	REF.	REASON FOR NOTIFYING	NOTIFICATION BASIS	STATUS
27/06/2008	Lithuania	2008.0770	unauthorised placing on the market of food supplement containing melatonin from Latvia	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) returned to dispatcher

TABLE 2: INFORMATION NOTIFICATIONS

Notifications in blue typeface concern feed, all other notifications concern food.

DATE	NOTIFIED BY	REF.	REASON FOR NOTIFYING	NOTIFICATION BASIS	STATUS
23/06/2008	Austria	2008.0740	Salmonella spp. (serogroup B, D /10g) in frozen döner meat from Austria, raw material from the Netherlands and Hungary	food poisoning	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) returned to dispatcher
23/06/2008	Ireland	2008.0741	too high content of sulphite (940 mg/kg - ppm) in dried and lightly sweetened pineapple from the Philippines	official control on the market	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
24/06/2008	Italy	2008.0743	lead (5.5 mg/kg - ppm) in green tea from China	official control on the market	distribution restricted to notifying country
24/06/2008	Germany	2008.0744	unauthorised use of colour E 102 - tartrazine in noodles Chinese style from Thailand, via the Netherlands	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) seized
24/06/2008	Bulgaria	2008.0746	cadmium (357,454; 349,173 mg/kg - ppm) in zinc oxide from China	official control on the market	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) returned to dispatcher
24/06/2008	Italy	2008.0747	too high count of Escherichia coli (330 MPN/100g) in clams (Tapes semidecussatus) from Italy	official control on the market	product past use-by date / no stock left
24/06/2008	Spain	2008.0748	mercury (3.3 mg/kg - ppm) in frozen slices of dogfish from Spain	official control on the market	information on distribution not (yet) available / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
25/06/2008	Denmark	2008.0749	Salmonella typhimurium DT 104 - multiresistant (in 10 out of 12 samples) in frozen pork ribs from France	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible)

DATE	NOTIFIED BY	REF.	REASON FOR NOTIFYING	NOTIFICATION BASIS	STATUS
25/06/2008	Spain	2008.0750	mercury (2.1 mg/kg - ppm) in frozen dogfish fillets (<i>Scyliorhinus canicula</i>) from Spain	official control on the market	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
25/06/2008	Malta	2008.0751	canned artichoke hearts from Italy infested with larvae of insects	consumer complaint	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
25/06/2008	Denmark	2008.0753	Salmonella (1 out of 12 samples /25g) and Salmonella typhimurium DT 193 - multiresistant (3 out of 12 samples /25g) in pork tenderloins from the United Kingdom	official control on the market	product past use-by date / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
25/06/2008	Denmark	2008.0754	altered organoleptic characteristics (chemical smell) of semi-skimmed milk from Germany	consumer complaint	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) recalled from consumer
26/06/2008	Denmark	2008.0760	Salmonella typhimurium DT 104 - multiresistant (1 out of 12 samples /25g) in fresh, boneless, skinless, vacuum packed turkey breast from Poland	official control on the market	product past use-by date / product (to be) destroyed
26/06/2008	Italy	2008.0762	histamine (1428; 462; 916; 1636; 1443; 1356; 1428; 998; 1993 - 152.0; 26.5; 150.2; 69.6; 31.2; 86.7; 80.3; 60.8; 118.3 mg/kg - ppm) in chilled vacuum packed tuna fillets (<i>Thunnus albacares</i>) from Sri Lanka	food poisoning	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
26/06/2008	Sweden	2008.0763	unauthorised genetically modified (Bt63 rice) rice noodles from China, via China (Hong Kong)	official control on the market	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) destroyed
26/06/2008	Latvia	2008.0765	E 363 - succinic acid unauthorised in vodka from Ukraine, via Estonia	official control on the market	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
27/06/2008	the United Kingdom	2008.0766	presence of antibiotics in curd cheese from the United Kingdom	company's own check	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) returned to dispatcher
27/06/2008	Italy	2008.0767	carbon monoxide treatment (64.3 mg/kg - ppm) of vacuum packed fresh tuna fillets from The Maldives	border control - consignment released	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
27/06/2008	the United Kingdom	2008.0768	E 210 - benzoic acid (814 mg/kg - ppm) unauthorised in butter pecan flavour syrup from the United States	official control on the market	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) withdrawn from the market

DATE	NOTIFIED BY	REF.	REASON FOR NOTIFYING	NOTIFICATION BASIS	STATUS
27/06/2008	the Czech Republic	2008.0769	too high content of the sum of E 210 - benzoic acid (814 mg/kg - ppm) and of E 200 - sorbic acid (663 mg/kg - ppm) in sweet chilli sauce for chicken from Thailand	official control on the market	distribution restricted to notifying country / no stock left

TABLE 3: BORDER REJECTIONS

Notifications in blue typeface concern feed, all other notifications concern food.

DATE	NOTIFIED BY	REF.	REASON FOR NOTIFYING	ACTION (TO BE) TAKEN
23/06/2008	the United Kingdom	2008.AZF	aflatoxins (B1 = 3.2 µg/kg - ppb) in dried figs from Turkey	product (to be) detained
23/06/2008	the United Kingdom	2008.AZG	aflatoxins (B1 = 12; Tot. = 32.1 µg/kg - ppb) in chilli powder from Ethiopia	product (to be) destroyed
23/06/2008	Italy	2008.AZH	prohibited substance nitrofurans (metabolite) furazolidone (AOZ) (5.6 µg/kg - ppb) in raw frozen farmed black tiger prawns (<i>Penaeus monodon</i>) from Malaysia	product (to be) re-dispatched or destroyed
24/06/2008	Poland	2008.AZI	suspicion of presence of mineral oil in refined deodorized sunflower oil from Ukraine	product (to be) re-dispatched
24/06/2008	Italy	2008.AZJ	mercury (0.7 mg/kg - ppm) in frozen gutted whole red snapper (<i>Lutjanus Sp</i>) from Indonesia	product (to be) re-dispatched
25/06/2008	the Netherlands	2008.AZK	aflatoxins (B1 = 12.2; Tot. = 15.6 µg/kg - ppb) in blanched groundnut kernels from Argentina	product (to be) detained
25/06/2008	the Netherlands	2008.AZL	aflatoxins (B1 = 24.6; Tot. = 28.6 / B1 = 53.2; Tot. = 62.8 / B1 = 55.2; Tot. = 64.1 µg/kg - ppb) in groundnut kernels from China	product (to be) detained
25/06/2008	the Netherlands	2008.AZM	aflatoxins (B1 = 5.1; Tot. = 5.1 / B1 = 17.2; Tot. = 20.7 µg/kg - ppb) in groundnut kernels from China	product (to be) detained
26/06/2008	Lithuania	2008.AZO	unlabeled irradiation and irradiation in an unauthorised facility of food supplement from the Russian Federation	product (to be) re-dispatched or destroyed
26/06/2008	Spain	2008.AZP	erythromycin (0.6 µg/kg - ppb) unauthorised in honey from China	product (to be) detained
26/06/2008	Spain	2008.AZQ	aflatoxins (B1 = 16.5; Tot. = 17.5 / B1 > 24; Tot. > 24 / B1 > 24; Tot. > 24 µg/kg - ppb) in pistachios from Iran	product (to be) re-dispatched
26/06/2008	Spain	2008.AZR	erythromycin (0.7 µg/kg - ppb) unauthorised in honey from China	product (to be) re-dispatched
26/06/2008	the United Kingdom	2008.AZS	unauthorised genetically modified (rice BT63) rice vermicelli from China (Hong Kong)	product (to be) destroyed
26/06/2008	the United Kingdom	2008.AZT	unauthorised genetically modified (rice BT63) rice noodles from China (Hong Kong)	product (to be) destroyed
27/06/2008	the United Kingdom	2008.AZU	unauthorised genetically modified (Bt 63 rice) flavoured rice noodles from China (Hong Kong)	product (to be) destroyed
27/06/2008	Spain	2008.AZV	erythromycin (0.5 µg/kg - ppb) unauthorised in honey from China	product (to be) re-dispatched
27/06/2008	Greece	2008.AZW	too high content of chromium (78.2 µg/l) and of boron (7.2 µg/l) in carbonated natural mineral water from Georgia	product (to be) re-dispatched
27/06/2008	Italy	2008.AZX	parasitic infestation with <i>Anisakis</i> of chilled hake (<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>) from Croatia	product (to be) destroyed
27/06/2008	Romania	2008.AZY	dried figs from Turkey infested with moulds	product (to be) re-dispatched or destroyed

TABLE 4: CORRIGENDA TO PREVIOUS NOTIFICATIONS

DATE:	REF.:	NOTIFI- CATION:	OF WEEK	SUBJECT	CORRIGENDUM:
26/06/2008	inf01	2008.0662	23	E 210 - benzoic acid unauthorised in and incorrect labelling on maple syrup from the United States	Measures taken are: "product (to be) withdrawn from the market" and not "product recalled from consumer".
23/06/2008	inf01	2008.0679	24	Bacillus pumilus in fresh ginger from Thailand	The notification concerns a consumer complaint (one consumer fell ill after consumption) and not a food poisoning outbreak.
25/06/2008	inf01	2008.0727	25	mercury in chilled shark (Ginglymostoma cirratum) from Spain	The product was chilled, not frozen.