

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Consumers can be reassured that products subject to an alert notification have been withdrawn or are in the process of being withdrawn from the market.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 2008/29

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
14/07/2008	Italy	2008.0843	Salmonella enterica (subsp. enterica group 54) in frozen cooked mussels (<i>Mytilus galloprovincialis</i>) from Spain	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / prohibition to trade - sales ban
14/07/2008	Slovenia	2008.0844	migration of formaldehyde (125 mg/dm ²) from white melamine ladles from Germany	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) destroyed
15/07/2008	the Slovak Republic	2008.0850	tin (264.18 mg/kg - ppm) in canned artichoke hearts from Peru, via Germany	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
15/07/2008	Greece	2008.0851	migration of DEHP - di(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate (11 mg/kg - ppm) from sealing rings for pressure cookers from Italy	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
15/07/2008	Belgium	2008.0852	Salmonella (presence /25g) in meat spread from Belgium	company's own check	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) destroyed
16/07/2008	Belgium	2008.0860	migration of primary aromatic amines (4,4'-diamino-diphenylmethane 0,87; 0,69; 0,46 mg/dm ²) from black nylon plastic spoons from China (Hong Kong), via France	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) recalled from consumers
16/07/2008	Italy	2008.0863	too high count of <i>Escherichia coli</i> (5400 MPN/100g) in live chilled mussels (<i>Mytilus galloprovincialis</i>) from Greece	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / no stock left
17/07/2008	Germany	2008.0868	aflatoxins (B1 = 2.4 µg/kg - ppb) in pistachio paste for ice-cream from Italy	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / no stock left
17/07/2008	the United Kingdom	2008.0872	undeclared gluten in baked beans and sausages in tomato sauce from France	company's own check	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
18/07/2008	Germany	2008.0873	oxamyl (0.08 mg/kg - ppm) and thiamethoxam (0.01 mg/kg - ppm) in organic watermelons from Italy	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
18/07/2008	Slovenia	2008.0876	migration of formaldehyde (100; 410 mg/kg - ppm) from melamine table sets from China, via the Netherlands	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) destroyed

DATE	NOTIFIED BY	REF.	REASON FOR NOTIFYING	NOTIFICATION BASIS	STATUS
18/07/2008	Malta	2008.0877	prohibited substance chloramphenicol (0.4 µg/kg - ppb) in cooked, peeled and quick frozen North Atlantic prawns from Iceland, via the United Kingdom	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) recalled from consumers
18/07/2008	Malta	2008.0878	prohibited substance chloramphenicol (1.3 µg/kg - ppb) in blanched and peeled individually quick frozen prawns from the United Kingdom	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) recalled from consumers
18/07/2008	Finland	2008.0879	benzo(a)pyrene (11 µg/kg - ppb) in fish oil capsules from Sweden	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) detained

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
14/07/2008	Slovenia	2008.0841	altered organoleptic characteristics of hazelnut kernels from Spain infested with insects (moths) and with larvae of insects	consumer complaint	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) destroyed
14/07/2008	Germany	2008.0842	mercury (2.067 mg/kg - ppm) in chilled tuna from Ecuador	border control - consignment released	information on distribution not (yet) available / informing recipients
14/07/2008	Italy	2008.0845	too high content of sulphite (221 mg/kg - ppm) in cooked prawns (<i>Penaeus vannamei</i>) from France	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / prohibition to trade - sales ban
14/07/2008	Belgium	2008.0846	incorrect labelling (use-by date wrongfully indicated as 17/09/2008 instead of 17/07/2008) on cooked ham from Italy	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / public warning - press release
14/07/2008	Spain	2008.0847	mercury (2.1 mg/kg - ppm) in sliced frozen swordfish from Spain	official control on the market	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
14/07/2008	Italy	2008.0848	parasitic infestation with <i>Anisakis</i> of Atlantic mackerel (<i>Scomber scombrus</i>) from Spain	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
15/07/2008	Finland	2008.0849	too high content of the sum of E 211 - sodium benzoate and E 202 - potassium sorbate (Ba+Sa = 1560 mg/kg - ppm) in barbecue sauce from Sweden	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) detained

DATE	NOTIFIED BY	REF.	REASON FOR NOTIFYING	NOTIFICATION BASIS	STATUS
15/07/2008	Belgium	2008.0853	dioxins (4.1 ng/kg - ppt) in copper sulphate feed supplement from the Russian Federation, via the Czech Republic	company's own check	distribution restricted to notifying country / destination of the product changed
15/07/2008	Cyprus	2008.0854	unauthorised establishment for milk products from Greece	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) destroyed
15/07/2008	Finland	2008.0855	unauthorised use of colour E 127 - erythrosine in food supplement manufactured in Spain	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / public warning - press release
15/07/2008	Portugal	2008.0856	cadmium (2.5 mg/kg - ppm) in frozen cleaned whole cuttlefish from India	border control - consignment released	distribution restricted to notifying country
15/07/2008	Ireland	2008.0857	Escherichia coli (31 MPN/100g) in bottled spring water from Ireland	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) recalled from consumers
16/07/2008	Spain	2008.0858	mercury (2.5 mg/kg - ppm) in frozen swordfish fillets from Spain	official control on the market	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) seized
16/07/2008	Spain	2008.0859	mercury (1.9 mg/kg - ppm) in sliced frozen mako shark from Spain	official control on the market	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
16/07/2008	Malta	2008.0861	too high number of aerobic plate counts (from 300 to 4.1E+04 CFU/ml) for purified drinking water from Malta	consumer complaint	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) destroyed
16/07/2008	Greece	2008.0862	parathion-methyl (0.19 mg/kg - ppm) and lindane (0.044 mg/kg - ppm) and unauthorised substance alpha-HCH (0.13 mg/kg - ppm) in chickpeas from India	company's own check	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) destroyed
16/07/2008	France	2008.0864	aflatoxins (B1 = 5.5; Tot. = 6.0 µg/kg - ppb) in basmati rice manufactured in Guadeloupe, with raw material from India	official control on the market	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
16/07/2008	France	2008.0865	aflatoxins (B1 = 3.4; Tot. = 3.7 µg/kg - ppb) in basmati rice manufactured in Guadeloupe, with raw material from Pakistan	official control on the market	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
16/07/2008	Italy	2008.0866	parasitic infestation with Anisakis of chilled Atlantic cod (Gadus morhua) from Denmark	official control on the market	product already consumed / product (to be) withdrawn from the market

DATE	NOTIFIED BY	REF.	REASON FOR NOTIFYING	NOTIFICATION BASIS	STATUS
17/07/2008	Germany	2008.0867	fraud (over 50% of the oil is not olive oil) with oil labelled as extra virgin olive oil from Italy	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
17/07/2008	the United Kingdom	2008.0869	migration of primary aromatic amines (2.1 mg/dm ²) from kitchen utensils from China	official control on the market	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
17/07/2008	Finland	2008.0870	Salmonella (1 out of 48 samples) in rape seed meal from Belgium	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / physical treatment
17/07/2008	Italy	2008.0871	foreign body (probably latex glove) in fruit juice from Hungary	consumer complaint	distribution on the market (possible) / no action taken
18/07/2008	France	2008.0874	Listeria monocytogenes (presence /25g) in ricotta sheep's cheese from Germany	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
18/07/2008	Italy	2008.0875	dried dates from Tunisia infested with insects (larvae, eggs and adult insects)	official control on the market	distribution restricted to notifying country
18/07/2008	Denmark	2008.0880	thermotolerant Campylobacter (in 12/12 samples) in chilled whole chicken from Sweden	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) recalled from consumers
18/07/2008	Denmark	2008.0881	unauthorised substance sulphamethazine (> 40 µg/kg - ppb) in natural honey with comb from Turkey	official control on the market	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) destroyed

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
14/07/2008	Germany	2008.BCG	aflatoxins (B1 = 44.6; Tot. = 153.9 / B1 = 4.8; Tot. = 5.4 µg/kg - ppb) in raw pistachios from Iran	product (to be) re-dispatched
14/07/2008	Germany	2008.BCH	aflatoxins (B1 = 12.1; Tot. = 13.4 µg/kg - ppb) in pistachios from Iran	product (to be) redispached or destroyed
14/07/2008	Germany	2008.BCI	unauthorised colours Sudan 1 (1.2 mg/kg - ppm) and Sudan 4 (0.1 mg/kg - ppm) in red chilli pepper powder from Chile	product (to be) redispached or destroyed
15/07/2008	Cyprus	2008.BCJ	unauthorised use of colour E 122 - azorubine in pickled turnip from Syria	product (to be) redispached or destroyed

DATE	NOTIFIED BY	REF.	REASON FOR NOTIFYING	ACTION (TO BE) TAKEN
15/07/2008	Italy	2008.BCK	ochratoxin A (23.7 µg/kg - ppb) in raw coffee from Costa Rica	product (to be) re-dispatched or destroyed
16/07/2008	Italy	2008.BCL	migration of chromium (1.35 mg/kg - ppm) and of nickel (0.29 mg/kg - ppm) from cheese knives from China	product (to be) re-dispatched
16/07/2008	Italy	2008.BCM	Bacillus cereus (170000 CFU/g) in tofu from China	product (to be) re-dispatched or destroyed
17/07/2008	France	2008.BCN	mercury (1.621 mg/kg - ppm) in frozen swordfish cubes from Vietnam	product (to be) re-dispatched
17/07/2008	Italy	2008.BCO	migration of chromium (21.3; 11.4 mg/l) and of nickel (0.218; 0.129 mg/l) from steel knives and forks from China	product (to be) re-dispatched
17/07/2008	Cyprus	2008.BCP	unauthorised establishment and absence of health certificate(s) for various food products from the Philippines	product (to be) re-dispatched or destroyed
18/07/2008	Germany	2008.BCQ	aflatoxins (B1 = 3.8; Tot. = 3.8 µg/kg - ppb) in pistachios in shell from Iran	product (to be) re-dispatched

TABLE 5: WITHDRAWALS OF PREVIOUS NOTIFICATIONS

DATE:	REF.:	NOTIFICATION:	OF WEEK	SUBJECT	REASON FOR WITHDRAWAL:
14/07/2008	inf01	2008.0813	28	prohibited substance nitrofurantoin (metabolite) nitrofurazone (SEM) in barbecue prawns from France	This notification needs to be withdrawn since the finding of SEM is below the MRPL (1 ppb).