

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Consumers can be reassured that products subject to an alert notification have been withdrawn or are in the process of being withdrawn from the market.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 2009/3

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
12/01/2009	Finland	2009.0026	unauthorised genetically modified (Bt 63 rice) rice vermicelli from China (Hong Kong)	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
12/01/2009	Ireland	2009.0028	plastic fragment in peach dairy dessert for babies from Germany	consumer complaint	distribution on the market (possible) / no action taken
12/01/2009	Germany	2009.0029	prohibited substance nitrofuran (metabolite) furaltadone (AMAZ) (1.6 µg/kg - ppb) in salted hog casings from China	border control - consignment released	distribution on the market (possible) / destination of the product identified
13/01/2009	the United Kingdom	2009.0030	aflatoxins (B1 = 1200; Tot. = 1400 µg/kg - ppb) in chilli and lemon roasted pistachios from Iran, via Germany	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) recalled from consumers
13/01/2009	Greece	2009.0033	glass fragments in beer in glass bottles manufactured in Belgium, dispatched from the Netherlands	consumer complaint	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
14/01/2009	the United Kingdom	2009.0039	arsenic (12 mg/kg - ppm), lead (3.8 mg/kg - ppm) and thallium (1.4 mg/kg - ppm) in mineral supplement drink from Austria	food poisoning	distribution on the market (possible) / public warning - press release
15/01/2009	Belgium	2009.0044	prohibited substance nitrofuran (metabolite) furazolidone (AOZ) (> MRPL) in frozen shrimps from India	company's own check	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) recalled from consumers
15/01/2009	Italy	2009.0045	parasitic infestation with Anisakis of monkfish tails (<i>Lophius piscatorius</i>) from France	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) detained
16/01/2009	Germany	2009.0046	unauthorised colour Sudan 4 (6 mg/kg - ppm) in unrefined palm oil from the United Kingdom, via the Netherlands	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / no stock left
16/01/2009	France	2009.0047	<i>Listeria monocytogenes</i> (40 CFU/g) in gorgonzola from Italy	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
16/01/2009	France	2009.0050	Amnesic Shellfish Poisoning (ASP) toxins - domoic acid (22.1 mg/kg - ppm) in live scallops from France	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) recalled from consumers

DATE	NOTIFIED BY	REF.	REASON FOR NOTIFYING	NOTIFICATION BASIS	STATUS
16/01/2009	Belgium	2009.0052	prohibited substance chloramphenicol (4 µg/kg - ppb) in frozen boneless rabbit from China	company's own check	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from the market

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
12/01/2009	Slovenia	2009.0025	unauthorised novel food ingredient Hoodia gordonii in food supplement from the United States, via Hungary	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / public warning - press release
12/01/2009	Germany	2009.0027	aflatoxins (B1 = 4.6; Tot. = 5.4 µg/kg - ppb) in snack mixture from India	official control on the market	product past best before date / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
13/01/2009	the United Kingdom	2009.0031	Salmonella spp. in sliced turkey salami from Germany	official control on the market	distribution restricted to notifying country / no stock left
13/01/2009	the United Kingdom	2009.0032	residues of nicarbazin (210; 140 µg/kg - ppb) in chicken livers pate & duck pate from Belgium	official control on the market	product past use-by date / no action taken
13/01/2009	France	2009.0035	too high content of fluorine (2500 mg/kg - ppm) in monocalcium phosphate from France	company's own check	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
14/01/2009	Finland	2009.0036	traces of milk ingredient in gooseberry-boysenberry soup from Finland	company's own check	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) recalled from consumers
14/01/2009	Germany	2009.0037	E 210 - benzoic acid unauthorised in pineapple flavoured fruit jelly from Vietnam	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) recalled from consumers
14/01/2009	the United Kingdom	2009.0038	mercury (2.25 mg/kg dry matter) in chilled salted raw shark from China	border control - consignment released	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
14/01/2009	Spain	2009.0040	mercury (0.24 mg/kg - ppm) in complete feed from France	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible)

DATE	NOTIFIED BY	REF.	REASON FOR NOTIFYING	NOTIFICATION BASIS	STATUS
15/01/2009	the Czech Republic	2009.0041	chromium (41.5 mg/kg - ppm) in gelatine from China, via Germany	official control on the market	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) detained
15/01/2009	the United Kingdom	2009.0042	unauthorised use of colour E 127 - erythrosine in strawberry flavour soft milk candy from China	official control on the market	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
15/01/2009	Denmark	2009.0043	aflatoxins (B1 = 1.8; Tot. = 8.07 µg/kg - ppb) in hazelnut kernels from Turkey	official control on the market	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) returned to dispatcher
16/01/2009	Ireland	2009.0048	melamine (3.3; 28.64 mg/kg - ppm) in strawberry and lemon flavoured cream wafers from China	border control - consignment released	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) destroyed
16/01/2009	the United Kingdom	2009.0049	histamine (776 mg/kg - ppm) in frozen tuna steaks from Yemen	border control - consignment released	distribution on the market (possible) / destination of the product identified
16/01/2009	Denmark	2009.0051	Salmonella typhimurium DT 104 - multiresistant (presence in 1 out of 12 samples /25g) in chilled turkey inner fillets from Germany	official control on the market	product past use-by date / product (to be) recalled from consumers

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
12/01/2009	Portugal	2009.ABT	aflatoxins (B1 = 5.8; Tot. = 10.35 µg/kg - ppb) in dried figs from Turkey	product (to be) re-dispatched
12/01/2009	Italy	2009.ABU	aflatoxins (B1 = 18.6; Tot. = 20.6 µg/kg - ppb) in peanuts in shell from Egypt	product (to be) re-dispatched
13/01/2009	Greece	2009.ABV	too high content of the sum of E 210 - benzoic acid and of E 200 - sorbic acid (1293 mg/kg - ppm) in ketchup from the Russian Federation	product (to be) re-dispatched
13/01/2009	Spain	2009.ABW	parasitic infestation of southern blue whiting (<i>Micromesistius australis</i>) from the Falkland Islands	product (to be) destroyed
13/01/2009	Spain	2009.ABX	bad hygienic state of fishery products from China	product (to be) re-dispatched
13/01/2009	Spain	2009.ABY	bad hygienic state of fresh prawns from Tunisia	product (to be) destroyed
14/01/2009	France	2009.ABZ	aflatoxins (B1 = 4.5; Tot. = 11.0 / B1 < 0.1; Tot. < 0.3 / B1 < 0.1; Tot. < 0.3 µg/kg - ppb) in dried figs from Turkey	product under customs seals
14/01/2009	France	2009.ACA	aflatoxins (B1 = 1.8; Tot. = 2.4 / B1 = 4.5; Tot. = 5.6 / B1 = 0.7; Tot. < 0.8 µg/kg - ppb) in dried figs from Turkey	product under customs seals

DATE	NOTIFIED BY	REF.	REASON FOR NOTIFYING	ACTION (TO BE) TAKEN
14/01/2009	France	2009.ACB	aflatoxins (B1 = 38.0; Tot. = 44.0 / B1 = 11.9; Tot. = 17.6 / B1 < 0.1; Tot. < 0.3 µg/kg - ppb) in dried figs from Turkey	product under customs seals
14/01/2009	France	2009.ACC	aflatoxins (B1 = 7.2; Tot. = 7.7 / B1 < 0.1; Tot. < 0.3 / B1 = 0.8; Tot. = 0.8 µg/kg - ppb) in dried figs from Turkey	product under customs seals
14/01/2009	Spain	2009.ACD	parasitic infestation of anglerfish (<i>Lophius</i> spp.) from South Africa	product (to be) destroyed
14/01/2009	the United Kingdom	2009.ACE	suffocation risk as a result of the consumption of and E 407 - carrageenan unauthorised in jelly mini cups from Malaysia	product (to be) destroyed
14/01/2009	Italy	2009.ACF	aflatoxins (B1 = 31.3; Tot. = 46.3 µg/kg - ppb) in groundnuts in shell from China	product (to be) re-dispatched
14/01/2009	France	2009.ACG	aflatoxins (B1 < 0.3; Tot. < 0.8 / B1 = 33.0; Tot. = 37.1 µg/kg - ppb) in dried figs from Turkey	product under customs seals
14/01/2009	France	2009.ACH	aflatoxins (B1 < 0.1; Tot. < 0.2 / B1 = 9.0; Tot. = 10.4 / B1 < 0.1; Tot. < 0.2 µg/kg - ppb) in almond kernels from the United States	product under customs seals
14/01/2009	the United Kingdom	2009.ACI	suffocation risk as a result of the consumption of and E 407 - carrageenan unauthorised in jelly mini cups from Malaysia	product (to be) destroyed
15/01/2009	Spain	2009.ACJ	altered organoleptic characteristics of frozen fish from Argentina	product (to be) redispached or destroyed
15/01/2009	Bulgaria	2009.ACK	aflatoxins (B1 = 27; Tot. = 29 / B1 = 1; Tot. = 1.1 / B1 = 10; Tot. = 12 µg/kg - ppb) in walnuts in shell from Kyrgyzstan	product (to be) redispached or destroyed
15/01/2009	Spain	2009.ACL	bad hygienic state of fresh grouper from New Zealand	product (to be) redispached or destroyed
15/01/2009	Spain	2009.ACM	bad hygienic state of hake from Chile	product (to be) redispached or destroyed
16/01/2009	Germany	2009.ACN	aflatoxins (Tot. = 6.60 µg/kg - ppb) in roasted hazelnut kernels from Turkey	product (to be) re-dispatched
16/01/2009	Finland	2009.ACO	migration of primary aromatic amines (09-2.7 mg/kg - ppm) from black nylon whisks from China (Hong Kong)	product (to be) detained
16/01/2009	Poland	2009.ACP	altered organoleptic characteristics of black pepper from Vietnam infested with insects	product (to be) re-dispatched
16/01/2009	Greece	2009.ACQ	aflatoxins (B1 = 4.1; Tot. = 4.5 µg/kg - ppb) in rice from Pakistan	product (to be) redispached or destroyed
16/01/2009	Greece	2009.ACR	cashew nut kernels from Vietnam infested with insects	product (to be) redispached or destroyed
16/01/2009	the Slovak Republic	2009.ACS	aflatoxins (B1 = 59.64; Tot. = 76.18 µg/kg - ppb) in peanut in molasses from Ukraine	product (to be) detained
16/01/2009	Spain	2009.ACT	bad hygienic state of fresh southern hake (<i>Merluccius australis</i>) from Chile	product (to be) destroyed
16/01/2009	Spain	2009.ACU	bad hygienic state of fresh southern hake (<i>Merluccius australis</i>) from Chile	product (to be) destroyed
16/01/2009	Spain	2009.ACW	bad hygienic state of fresh southern hake (<i>Merluccius australis</i>) from Chile	product (to be) destroyed
16/01/2009	the United Kingdom	2009.ACW	aflatoxins (B1 = 33.7; Tot. = 61.1 / B1 = 2.3; Tot. = 3.9 µg/kg - ppb) in almonds from the United States	product (to be) re-dispatched

TABLE 4: CORRIGENDA TO PREVIOUS NOTIFICATIONS

DATE:	REF.:	NOTIFI- CATION:	OF WEEK	SUBJECT	CORRIGENDUM:
13/01/2009	inf01	2008.BXG	49	aflatoxins in blanched roasted peanuts processed in Serbia, with raw material from Argentina	The subject of the notification is modified into: "aflatoxins (B1 = 1.1; Tot. = 7.8 µg/kg - ppb) in blanched roasted peanuts processed in Serbia, with raw material from Argentina".
14/01/2009	inf01	2008.BZZ	51	bad hygienic state of frozen shrimps from Indonesia	The subject of the notification is amended to: "bad hygienic state of frozen shrimps from Indonesia".
13/01/2009	add01	2008.BZZ	51	bad hygienic state of frozen shrimps from Indonesia	The affected consignment was rejected on the basis of failing temperature controls and not because of the presence of nitrofurans as it is currently stated on the notification. The consignment was subsequently sampled to be tested for nitrofurans as a part of non-statutory surveillance scheme, however the results are not yet available.
15/01/2009	inf01	2008.CAT	52	prohibited substance nitrofuran (metabolite) nitrofurazone (SEM) in chilled shrimps (Macrobrachium spp.) from India	The notification type has been changed into "information" since the basis for notifying is border control - consignment released.