

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Consumers can be reassured that products subject to an alert notification have been withdrawn or are in the process of being withdrawn from the market.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 2009/5

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
26/01/2009	Finland	2009.0081	aflatoxins (B1 = 15; Tot. = 16 µg/kg - ppb) in salted roasted pistachios from Iran, via the Netherlands	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) detained
27/01/2009	Finland	2009.0084	aflatoxins (B1 = 120; Tot. = 140 µg/kg - ppb) in groundnut kernels from Germany, with raw material from India	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) recalled from consumers
27/01/2009	Latvia	2009.0087	suspicion of fraud - expiry dates changed of fruit mash for babies from the Czech Republic	consumer complaint	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) destroyed
27/01/2009	Italy	2009.0089	altered organoleptic characteristics (coagulation and acid smell) of baby milk from Germany	consumer complaint	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) recalled from consumers
28/01/2009	Austria	2009.0090	traces of milk ingredient (casein: 120 mg/kg - ppm) in chocolate spelt balls from Germany	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
28/01/2009	Austria	2009.0091	traces of milk ingredient (1800 mg/kg - ppm) in chocolate covered amaranth bar from Germany	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
28/01/2009	Austria	2009.0092	high content of iodine (171;136 - 169;151 - 2530; 3260 mg/kg - ppm) in dried seaweed from Japan	border control - consignment released	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
28/01/2009	Italy	2009.0095	parasitic infestation with Anisakis (in the muscle) of chilled red gurnard (<i>Aspitrigla cuculus</i>) from France	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) destroyed
28/01/2009	France	2009.0096	foreign body (risk of presence of point of knife) in chopped tripes with vinegar from France	company's own check	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) recalled from consumers
28/01/2009	Sweden	2009.0097	Salmonella (positive) in endive from the Netherlands	company's own check	distribution on the market (possible)
29/01/2009	France	2009.0100	Listeria monocytogenes (5500 CFU/g) in raw milk camembert from France	company's own check	no distribution / product (to be) recalled from consumers

DATE	NOTIFIED BY	REF.	REASON FOR NOTIFYING	NOTIFICATION BASIS	STATUS
29/01/2009	Germany	2009.0101	Salmonella in minced meat döner from Germany	company's own check	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from recipient(s)
29/01/2009	Germany	2009.0102	Salmonella in various types of döner from Germany	company's own check	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from recipient(s)
29/01/2009	the United Kingdom	2009.0103	traces of milk ingredient (169 mg/kg - ppm) in dark chocolate with cocoa beans from France	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible)
30/01/2009	Italy	2009.0105	histamine (1910 / 2051 / 104 / 2066 / 2229 mg/kg - ppm) in canned tuna fillets in olive oil from Portugal	food poisoning	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) seized

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
26/01/2009	Germany	2009.0080	BSE tests not conducted on bovine meat from Germany	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) detained
26/01/2009	Germany	2009.0082	unauthorised placing on the market of herbal tea containing senna leaves, senna pods and senna seeds from Thailand, via the Netherlands	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible)
27/01/2009	Malta	2009.0083	suspicion of fraud - expiry dates changed of butter from the United Kingdom infested with moulds	consumer complaint	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) destroyed
27/01/2009	Germany	2009.0085	unlabeled genetically modified (> 10 %) soya lecithin from Brazil	official control on the market	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
27/01/2009	Germany	2009.0086	mercury (33.89; 83; 19.67 mg/kg - ppm) in dietary supplement containing herbs from India, via the United Kingdom	official control on the market	no stock left / product (to be) recalled from consumers
27/01/2009	Austria	2009.0088	aflatoxins (B1 = 12 µg/kg - ppb) in organic chilli powder from Sri Lanka	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
28/01/2009	Denmark	2009.0093	migration of primary aromatic amines (9260 µg/kg - ppb) from slotted turner from China (Hong Kong)	official control on the market	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) recalled from consumers
28/01/2009	Cyprus	2009.0094	mercury (0.83 mg/kg - ppm) in fresh fish from Egypt	border control - consignment released	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) recalled from consumers
28/01/2009	Finland	2009.0098	Salmonella Mbandaka (in 1 out of 53 samples) in soybean meal from Germany, dispatched from Switzerland	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / physical treatment - acid treatment
29/01/2009	Denmark	2009.0099	high content of DEHP - di(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate (12.1 %) in lids of glass jars containing jalapenos from Mexico	official control on the market	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
30/01/2009	Italy	2009.0104	foreign body (mouse) in canned white beans from Italy	consumer complaint	distribution on the market (possible) / informing recipients

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
26/01/2009	Finland	2009.AEP	benzo(a)pyrene (4.7 mg/kg - ppm) in marinated garlic from Lebanon	product (to be) detained
26/01/2009	Germany	2009.AEQ	aflatoxins (B1 = 14.6; Tot. = 16.4 µg/kg - ppb) in roasted hazelnut kernels from Turkey	product (to be) re-dispatched
26/01/2009	Spain	2009.AER	bad state of preservation of coconuts from Mexico	product (to be) destroyed
26/01/2009	Spain	2009.AES	bad hygienic state of humboldt squid (Dosidicus gigas) from Peru	product (to be) re-dispatched or destroyed
27/01/2009	Spain	2009.AET	aflatoxins (B1 = 3.6; Tot. = 3.6 µg/kg - ppb) in pistachios from the United States	product (to be) re-dispatched
27/01/2009	Italy	2009.AEU	aflatoxins (B1 = 0.3; Tot. = 0.3 / B1 = <0.1; Tot. = <0.1 / B1 = 59.1; Tot. = 70.4 µg/kg - ppb) in groundnuts in shell from Egypt	product (to be) re-dispatched
27/01/2009	Italy	2009.AEV	aflatoxins (B1 = 3.0; Tot. = 3.2 / B1 = <0.1; Tot. = <0.1 / B1 = 24.6; Tot. = 76.9 µg/kg - ppb) in apricot kernels from Algeria	product (to be) re-dispatched
28/01/2009	Italy	2009.AEW	unauthorised food additive (formaldehyde) declared on label in stuffed dates with almond paste from Tunisia	product (to be) re-dispatched
28/01/2009	the United Kingdom	2009.AEX	aflatoxins (B1 = 5.1; Tot. = 18 / B1 = 0.4; Tot. < 1 µg/kg - ppb) in dried figs from Turkey	product (to be) re-dispatched

DATE	NOTIFIED BY	REF.	REASON FOR NOTIFYING	ACTION (TO BE) TAKEN
28/01/2009	the United Kingdom	2009.AEY	aflatoxins (B1 = 19; Tot. = 21 / B1 < 0.25; Tot. < 1 / B1 = 7.9; Tot. = 17 µg/kg - ppb) in dried figs from Turkey	product (to be) re-dispatched
28/01/2009	the United Kingdom	2009.AEZ	aflatoxins (B1 = 19; Tot. = 21 / B1 < 0.25; Tot. < 1 µg/kg - ppb) in dried figs from Turkey	product (to be) re-dispatched
28/01/2009	Italy	2009.AFA	migration of cadmium (1.01 mg/dm ²) and of lead (0.95 mg/dm ²) from plates from China	product (to be) re-dispatched or destroyed
29/01/2009	the United Kingdom	2009.AFB	prohibited substance nitrofurans (metabolite) furazolidone (AOZ) (1 µg/kg - ppb) in raw frozen cultivated black tiger shrimps (<i>Penaeus monodon</i>) from India	product (to be) re-dispatched
29/01/2009	Germany	2009.AFC	histamine (46; 213; 7; 1691; 198; 122; 12; 358; 13 mg/kg - ppm) in tuna fish steaks from Vietnam	product (to be) re-dispatched or destroyed
29/01/2009	Poland	2009.AFD	walnuts from Ukraine infested with moulds and with insects	product (to be) re-dispatched
29/01/2009	Spain	2009.AFE	aflatoxins (B1 = 49.3; Tot. = 56 µg/kg - ppb) in pistachios from the United States	product (to be) re-dispatched or destroyed
29/01/2009	Spain	2009.AFF	bad hygienic state of dried figs from Turkey	product (to be) re-dispatched or destroyed
30/01/2009	Cyprus	2009.AFG	improper health certificate(s) for squid (<i>Loligo vulgaris</i>) from Senegal	product (to be) destroyed
30/01/2009	Cyprus	2009.AFH	improper health certificate(s) for fresh fish (<i>Epinephelus aeneus</i> + <i>Diplodus sargus</i>) from Senegal	product (to be) destroyed
30/01/2009	Spain	2009.AFI	bad hygienic state of fresh bananas from Côte d'Ivoire	product (to be) re-dispatched or destroyed
30/01/2009	Spain	2009.AFJ	improper packaging and storage of lentil flour from Israel	product (to be) re-dispatched or destroyed
30/01/2009	Spain	2009.AFK	aflatoxins (B1 = 73; Tot. = 80 µg/kg - ppb) in almond kernels from the United States	product (to be) re-dispatched or destroyed
30/01/2009	Germany	2009.AFL	aflatoxins (B1 = 1.9; Tot. = 5.4 / B1 = 2.8; Tot. = 5.7 / B1 = 1.4; Tot. = 3.3 µg/kg - ppb) in hazelnut meal from Turkey	product (to be) re-dispatched
30/01/2009	Norway	2009.AFM	<i>Salmonella anatum</i> in frozen beef chucks from Namibia	product (to be) re-dispatched
30/01/2009	Germany	2009.AFN	aflatoxins (B1 = ND; Tot. = ND / B1 = ND; Tot. = ND / B1 = 7.7; Tot. = 31.6 µg/kg - ppb) in hazelnut kernels with skin from Turkey	product (to be) re-dispatched
30/01/2009	Greece	2009.AFO	aflatoxins (B1 = 6.6; Tot. = 7.1 µg/kg - ppb) in pistachios from the United States	product (to be) re-dispatched

TABLE 5: WITHDRAWALS OF PREVIOUS NOTIFICATIONS

DATE:	REF.:	NOTIFI- CATION:	OF WEEK	SUBJECT	REASON FOR WITHDRAWAL:
26/01/2009	inf01	2008.BZN	51	aflatoxins in dried figs from Turkey	This notification is identical to notification 2009.ABZ. This notification is hereby withdrawn.