

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Consumers can be reassured that products subject to an alert notification have been withdrawn or are in the process of being withdrawn from the market.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 2008/52

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
22/12/2008	the Slovak Republic	2008.1670	aflatoxins (B1 = 45.9; Tot. = 58.2 µg/kg - ppb) in roasted groundnuts in shell from Hungary, with raw material from China	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
22/12/2008	the Czech Republic	2008.1671	melamine (3.5 mg/kg - ppm) in salty sticks from Poland	company's own check	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
22/12/2008	the Slovak Republic	2008.1672	aflatoxins (B1 = 62.2; Tot. = 104.2 µg/kg - ppb) in dried figs from Hungary, with raw material from Turkey	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
23/12/2008	Luxembourg	2008.1683	undeclared milk ingredient in soup and sauce base from Belgium	company's own check	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
23/12/2008	the Netherlands	2008.1684	dioxins (3.1 ng/kg - ppt) in red colouring for feed from Spain	company's own check	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
23/12/2008	Belgium	2008.1686	prohibited substance nitrofurans (metabolite) nitrofurazone (SEM) (2.6 µg/kg - ppb) in raw frozen fresh water headless shrimps (<i>Macrobrachium rosenbergii</i>) from Bangladesh	border control - consignment released	distribution on the market (possible)
23/12/2008	Belgium	2008.1689	Salmonella (presence /25g) in mini chorizo from France	company's own check	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) recalled from consumers
24/12/2008	France	2008.1692	Bacillus cereus in mare's milk in capsules from Belgium	food poisoning	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) recalled from consumers
26/12/2008	France	2008.1693	Salmonella spp. (presence /25g) in dried sausages from France	company's own check	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) recalled from consumers
26/12/2008	France	2008.1695	dioxins (10.6 pg WHO TEQ/g) in feed additive premix manufactured in Spain, dispatched from the Netherlands	company's own check	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
22/12/2008	Italy	2008.1669	dried dates from Tunisia infested with insects	official control on the market	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
22/12/2008	Sweden	2008.1673	Salmonella Livingstone (in 1 out of 4 samples) in maize gluten from the Netherlands	company's own check	distribution restricted to notifying country / physical treatment - acid treatment
22/12/2008	Sweden	2008.1674	Salmonella Rissen (in 1 out of 8 samples) in soya bean meal from Brazil, via the Netherlands	company's own check	distribution on the market (possible) / physical treatment - acid treatment
22/12/2008	Austria	2008.1675	cadmium (15.4 mg/kg - ppm) in dicalcium phosphate from Slovenia	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
22/12/2008	the Slovak Republic	2008.1676	unauthorised use of colour E 124 - Ponceau 4R / cochineal red A in poultry sausages from Poland	official control on the market	product past use-by date / no stock left
22/12/2008	Italy	2008.1677	undeclared sulphite (63 mg/kg - ppm) in chilled shrimps (<i>Penaeus notialis</i>) from Senegal	border control - consignment released	product already consumed / no action taken
22/12/2008	Lithuania	2008.1678	Salmonella enteritidis in frozen turkey thigh trimmings from Germany	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / prohibition to trade - sales ban
22/12/2008	Lithuania	2008.1679	Salmonella enteritidis in frozen chicken hearts from the Netherlands	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
22/12/2008	Italy	2008.1680	dried dates from Tunisia infested with insects	official control on the market	distribution restricted to notifying country
22/12/2008	Sweden	2008.1681	Salmonella Münster in beef lung from Poland	official control on the market	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) destroyed
22/12/2008	Malta	2008.1682	Salmonella spp. in frozen beef burgers from Malta	official control on the market	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) destroyed
23/12/2008	Denmark	2008.1685	Salmonella typhimurium (multiresistant in 2 out of 12 samples) in chilled pork fillets from Germany	official control on the market	product past use-by date / product (to be) withdrawn from the market

DATE	NOTIFIED BY	REF.	REASON FOR NOTIFYING	NOTIFICATION BASIS	STATUS
23/12/2008	Latvia	2008.1687	altered organoleptic characteristics (chemical smell, bitter taste) of salmon spawn from Lithuania	consumer complaint	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
23/12/2008	Denmark	2008.1688	Salmonella Saint Paul (multiresistant in 12 out of 12 samples) in frozen turkey breast fillets from Poland	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from the market
24/12/2008	Germany	2008.1690	risk of breakage (presence of yeasts) of glass bottles containing aromatic wine-based drink from France	consumer complaint	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) recalled from consumers
24/12/2008	the Netherlands	2008.1691	Salmonella (presence in 2 out of 5 samples /25g) in coriander from Thailand	official control on the market	product already consumed / no action taken
26/12/2008	Italy	2008.1694	spoilage and bulging packaging of compote of salted spices from China	official control on the market	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) seized
26/12/2008	Germany	2008.1696	Salmonella Hithergreen (presence /25g) in live snails from Nigeria	border control - consignment released	distribution restricted to notifying country / product (to be) destroyed
26/12/2008	Germany	2008.1697	melamine (460,6 mg/kg - ppm) in leavening agent ammonium carbonate (E 503) from China	official control on the market	distribution restricted to notifying country / 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
22/12/2008	Italy	2008.CAS	aflatoxins (B1 = 2.0; Tot. = 2.5 / B1 = 132; Tot. = 160 / B1 = 10.4; Tot. = 12.4 µg/kg - ppb) in groundnuts in shell from Egypt	product (to be) re-dispatched or destroyed
22/12/2008	Germany	2008.CAT	prohibited substance nitrofurans (metabolite) nitrofurazone (SEM) (1.8 µg/kg - ppb) in chilled shrimps (<i>Macrobrachium</i> spp.) from India	product (to be) re-dispatched
22/12/2008	Poland	2008.CAU	altered organoleptic characteristics (chemical smell and taste) of white rice from Vietnam	product (to be) re-dispatched
23/12/2008	Poland	2008.CAV	aflatoxins (Tot. = 13.89 µg/kg - ppb) in curry powder from India	product (to be) re-dispatched
23/12/2008	the United Kingdom	2008.CAW	aflatoxins (B1 > 8.2 µg/kg - ppb) in crushed chillies from India	product (to be) re-dispatched
23/12/2008	the United Kingdom	2008.CAX	aflatoxins (B1 = 12; Tot. = 32.1 µg/kg - ppb) in chilli powder from Ethiopia	product (to be) destroyed
23/12/2008	the United Kingdom	2008.CAY	aflatoxins (B1 = 20.1; Tot. = 24.4 µg/kg - ppb) in groundnut paste from Ghana	product (to be) destroyed

DATE	NOTIFIED BY	REF.	REASON FOR NOTIFYING	ACTION (TO BE) TAKEN
23/12/2008	the United Kingdom	2008.CAZ	aflatoxins (B1 = 12.7; Tot. = 15.8 µg/kg - ppb) in groundnut (nkatie) cake from Ghana	product (to be) destroyed
23/12/2008	the United Kingdom	2008.CBA	aflatoxins (B1 = 12.4; Tot. = 15.0 µg/kg - ppb) in pine nut kernels from Pakistan	product (to be) destroyed
23/12/2008	Poland	2008.CBB	dead insects and excrements of insects in sunflower kernels from China	product (to be) re-dispatched
23/12/2008	the Czech Republic	2008.CBC	aflatoxins (B1 = 8.49; Tot. = 8.86 µg/kg - ppb) in raw groundnuts in shell from China	product (to be) detained
23/12/2008	Italy	2008.CBD	aflatoxins (B1 < 0.1; Tot. < 0.1 / B1 < 0.1; Tot. < 0.1 / B1 = 20.0; Tot. = 22.7 µg/kg - ppb) in pistachios in shell from the United States	product (to be) re-dispatched
23/12/2008	Italy	2008.CBE	aflatoxins (B1 = 11.1; Tot. = 13.2 µg/kg - ppb) in chanachur from Bangladesh	product (to be) re-dispatched or destroyed
23/12/2008	Italy	2008.CBF	aflatoxins (B1 = 14.9; Tot. = 16.4 / B1 < 0.5; Tot. < 0.7 / B1 = 102.3; Tot. = 118.4 µg/kg - ppb) in groundnuts in shell from Egypt	product (to be) re-dispatched or destroyed
23/12/2008	Italy	2008.CBG	aflatoxins (B1 = 12.7; Tot. = 16.8 µg/kg - ppb) in rice flakes from Bangladesh	product (to be) re-dispatched
23/12/2008	Germany	2008.CBH	aflatoxins (B1 = 4.2; Tot. = 8.0 / B1 = 6.6; Tot. = 11.0 / B1 = 4.0; Tot. = 11.8 µg/kg - ppb) in roasted hazelnuts from Turkey	product (to be) re-dispatched
23/12/2008	Denmark	2008.CBI	melamine (from <2.5 to 7.5 mg/kg - ppm) in organic soya expeller from China	product (to be) destroyed
23/12/2008	Germany	2008.CBJ	aflatoxins (B1 = 2.3; Tot. = 3.7 / B1 = 2.2; Tot. = 4.5 / B1 = 4.3; Tot. = 4.6 µg/kg - ppb) in dried garland figs from Turkey	product (to be) re-dispatched
23/12/2008	Germany	2008.CBK	aflatoxins (B1 = 4.5; Tot. = 6.0 / B1 = 1.7; Tot. = 3.0 / B1 = 0.7; Tot. = 0.7 µg/kg - ppb) in dried garland figs from Turkey	product (to be) re-dispatched
23/12/2008	the United Kingdom	2008.CBL	aflatoxins (B1 = 61; Tot. = 74 µg/kg - ppb) in peanut laddoo from India	product (to be) destroyed
24/12/2008	Belgium	2008.CBM	prohibited substance nitrofurantoin (metabolite) (4 x > 1 µg/kg - ppb) in frozen shrimps (<i>Macrobrachium rosenbergii</i>) from Bangladesh	product (to be) re-dispatched
26/12/2008	Italy	2008.CBN	aflatoxins (B1 = 20.0; Tot. = 22.9 / B1 = 81.2; Tot. = 87.4 / B1 < 0.5; Tot. < 0.7 µg/kg - ppb) in pistachios from Iran	product (to be) re-dispatched or destroyed
26/12/2008	Poland	2008.CBO	unauthorised use of colour E 102 - tartrazine, of colour E 110 - Sunset Yellow FCF and of colour E 160b - annato/bixin/norbixin in bread crumb from China	product (to be) re-dispatched
26/12/2008	Greece	2008.CBP	unauthorised use of hydrogen peroxide for decontamination of frozen whole cleaned cuttlefish (<i>Sepia pharaonis</i>) from Vietnam	

TABLE 4: CORRIGENDA TO PREVIOUS NOTIFICATIONS

DATE:	REF.:	NOTIFICATION:	OF WEEK	SUBJECT	CORRIGENDUM:
24/12/2008	inf02	2008.1319	43	ochratoxin A in turmeric from India, via the Netherlands	The Dutch contact point has confirmed that the origin of the product is India and not Syria.
22/12/2008	inf01	2008.CAO	51	dried figs from Turkey infested with moulds and with insects	The original notification was made by Slovenia, not by the Slovak Republic.

TABLE 5: WITHDRAWALS OF PREVIOUS NOTIFICATIONS

DATE:	REF.:	NOTIFI- CATION:	OF WEEK	SUBJECT	REASON FOR WITHDRAWAL:
26/12/2008	inf01	2008.1459	47	carbofuran in red chilli peppers from Thailand	Since this notification is based on the same lot and analytical results as notification 2008.1639, it is hereby withdrawn.