Monthly Summary of Articles on Food Fraud and Adulteration

Retrieved mainly from the JRC tool Medisys (http://medisys.newbrief.eu/)

Food Fraud Cases

01/11/17 - Routine and targeted controls unveil numerous cases of fish frauds in Italy
In the context of routine controls in Italian harbours and fish shops, the authorities discovered this month several cases of fish fraud, mainly problems of traceability and compliance to mandatory labelling. The following table summarises the main cases in terms of volume and sanctions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Volume (kg)</th>
<th>Penalty (EUR)</th>
<th>Link</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/11/17</td>
<td>Castellammare di Stabia (Naples)</td>
<td>2 000</td>
<td>20 000</td>
<td>Metropolis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/11/17</td>
<td>Monfalcone (Trieste)</td>
<td>496</td>
<td>1 500</td>
<td>Trieste Prima</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/11/17</td>
<td>La Spezia (Liguria)</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>13 000</td>
<td>Citta della Spezia</td>
<td>Results of the last months in the area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/11/17</td>
<td>Calabria</td>
<td>832</td>
<td>143 000</td>
<td>Ansa</td>
<td>Operation Red Gold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15/11/17</td>
<td>Altavilla Vicentina (Veneto)</td>
<td>40 132</td>
<td>33 000</td>
<td>La Piazza</td>
<td>Latin name not matching common name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18/11/17</td>
<td>Naples</td>
<td>1 100</td>
<td>34 500</td>
<td>Il Mattino</td>
<td>Frozen seabass and gilt-head bream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22/11/17</td>
<td>Sicily</td>
<td>2 000</td>
<td>260 000</td>
<td>Marsala News</td>
<td>Operation Cleo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24/11/17</td>
<td>Villa San Giovanni (Calabria)</td>
<td>1 150</td>
<td>1 500</td>
<td>Strettoweb</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28/11/17</td>
<td>Eastern Sicily</td>
<td>1 500</td>
<td>100 000</td>
<td>Catania Today</td>
<td>Operation Swordfish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

02/11/17 - Olive theft in Tunisia following a dry season
Olives are also a target of choice for thieves, similar to what has already been reported for grapes. The season was particularly dry this year in Tunisia, jeopardizing the harvest. An increase in prices of olive oil is foreseen which encourages fraudsters to target this commodity. Several thefts were reported in Tunisia and it is to be feared that the stolen products will re-enter the market under fake declarations of origins and traceability.

La Presse
02/11/17 – Massive fraud on organic products discovered in Sicily
A massive fraud concerning organic fruits and vegetables was discovered in Sicily. The products were cultivated by conventional methods using pesticides, which violates the legalisation on organic producing methods. Moreover, the concerned farms received European Union funds to develop their activity. The farms were exporting in Europe (France, Germany, and UK) and the total amount of the scam is estimated to one million euros.

Giornale di Sicilia
Quotidiano di Ragusa

02/11/17 – Untraceable wine and olive oil found in Campania
During an unannounced control, the Carabinieri found in a company of Benevento around 17 000 litres of unlabelled red wine stored in 75 unregistered barrels. They also seized 100 litres of unlabelled and untraceable olive oil. The company also seemed to employ illegal workers on site.

Carabinieri
Otto Pagine

05/11/17 - Half a ton of Bluefin tuna seized in Andalusia
Coast guards of Algeciras monitored closely a group of fishermen suspected of illegally fishing Bluefin Tuna (Thunnus Thynnus). They could finally intercept a van with 582 kg of untraceable and unlabelled tuna, leading to the arrest of the driver. The fish was donated to the local food bank.

EuropaSur

07/11/17 – Horsetmeat found in 10% of Mexican beef
The School of Veterinary Medicine of Mexico City conducted a study on the beef meat sold in six Mexican cities. DNA testing revealed that 10 % of the products contained horsetmeat with a prevalence in ground beef products. The majority of vendors claimed not to be aware of this practice, casting doubt on an upstream stage of the meat production chain.

Global Meat News

07/11/17 – Fake Chianti seized in Rome
During the controls of the 2017 wine-making campaign, the Carabinieri of Rome seized 1600 fake bottles of 2015 Chianti, the reputed Protected Denomination of Origin (PDO) wine from Tuscany. Analytical tests (details not mentioned) proved that the wine was not compliant with PDO Chianti criteria.

Salute

10/11/17 – Untraceable meat seized at a big distributor close to Florence
Nearly three tons of meat were seized in Monsummano due to poor hygiene and non-traceability of the food. The distributor was supplying large quantities of meat to public institutions such as schools, hospitals and military canteens. Several top managers of the company were arrested.

La Nazione

15/11/17 – Olive theft and traceability problems in Puglia
A vast control operation of the olive oil sector in Puglia unveiled several malpractices by some local producers. Among other violations of the law, the Carabinieri reported the theft of 150 kg of olives directly from the field as well as traceability problems. Concerning the latter, 600 litres of olive oil were seized. The penalties reached 7000 EUR but the operation is still on-going and may uncover more fraud cases.

Stato Quotidiano

© European Union, 2017
16/11/17 – Counterfeit Australian wine on the Chinese online market

Shanghai police seized 14,000 bottles of counterfeit reputed Australian wine house. The low prices on the Alibaba e-commerce platform questioned the authenticity of the wine and a complaint was filed by an Australian company. As a result, 13 people were arrested.
Sydney Morning Herald

16/11/17 – Operation for controlling food authenticity around Florence

A still on-going control operation taking place around Florence revealed several infractions concerning food authenticity. The more spectacular cases concerned 70 wheels of untraceable cheese and the counterfeiting of a PGi for an olive oil.
OK Mugello

21/11/17 – Fraud on Corsica PDO honey

Based on document inspections, French fraud control authorities could demonstrate that a honey producer from Corsica imported chestnut honey from continental France and sold it as ‘AOP miel de Corse’. Honey from Corsica is the only PDO honey in France beside the ‘Miel de sapin des Vosges’. 600 kg of product were seized and the producer admitted the scam.
Corse Matin

22/11/17 – Flower honey marketed as acacia, 22 tons seized in Tuscany

Italian authorities investigated a honey distributor involved in the marketing of local and foreign honeys (Romania, Croatia, Argentina). Samples were taken and pollen analyses revealed that what was sold as an acacia honey was in fact a plain flower honey that is usually sold 40% cheaper than the acacia. As a consequence 22 tons of the suspect product were seized.
La Nazione

25/11/17 – Chili powder adulterated with sawdust and dyes

The Punjab Food Authority seized 2300 kg of adulterated chili powder. The product was diluted with sawdust and dyed with textile colours. Other contaminating agents were also found. The laboratory tests confirmed the adulteration as observed on site.
The Daily Times

26/11/17 – Cheap olive oil was actually dyed sunflower oil

Seven people from Thessaloniki were arrested for selling and exporting fake extra virgin olive oil. The product was in fact sunflower oil dyed green to resemble olive oil. 17 tons were seized on site. The company was exporting throughout Europe, especially to Germany.
The Herald Online
Washington Post

28/11/17 – 98,000 eggs seized near Rome for non-traceability

More than 98,000 eggs were seized for lack of traceability during a food control operation near the Italian capital city. 450 kg of buffalo milk were also confiscated for the same reason. The Carabinieri announced that, since the beginning of 2017, more than 3.5 million eggs were found to be untraceable and seized in Italy.
Carabinieri

28/11/17 – Massive market withdrawal for substandard olive oil in Brazil

The Brazilian Ministry of Agriculture withdrew from the national market 800,000 litres of olive oil from 64 different brands. The main accusation is the use of lampante oil but also the presence of other vegetable oils such as soya. 77 samples of suspicious products were sent to an official laboratory which confirmed an anomaly for 43 of them. Irregularities on the labelling were also discovered.
EBC Agencia Brasil
07/11/17 – Anti-fraud laser technology under development

The Italian National Agency for New Technologies is developing a portable instrument capable of detecting several types of food fraud based on infrared laser technologies. The idea is to build portable devices that could be used for on-the-spot controls in shops, markets, supermarkets and storage buildings. The method was already validated for the detection of histamine in fish and sweeteners in fruit juices. The ambition is to extend the capabilities to the detection of watering in drinks, the dilution of olive oil with other vegetable oils and the presence of methanol in wine.

ENEA

25/11/17 – Fast new technique to detect unwanted animal parts in ground beef

Researchers at the University of British Columbia developed a new DNA-based method that is able to identify the presence of foreign species. Based on a laser-equipped spectrometer and statistical analysis, authors were able to detect the presence of other unwanted animal parts of the same species (i.e. offal like heart, livers, stomach) with an accuracy of 99% and could tell which part and at which concentration in 80% of the cases.

University of British Columbia

Times Colonist

Disclaimer: The selection of articles reflects their media coverage. In any case, it does not reflect the frequency of food fraud in a particular country and/or concerning a particular food product. The European Commission does not take any responsibility for the truthfulness of the information extracted from the media channels scanned. The views expressed shall not be regarded as stating an official position of the European Commission.