January 2018

Monthly Summary of Articles on Food Fraud and Adulteration

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

Food Fraud Cases

02/01/18 - Controls in Italian fishing harbours
In Mazara del Vallo (Sicily), 30 controls were carried out and a total of 500 kg of untraceable fish were seized in five different places.

Giornale di Sicilia

In Tuscany, within the operation "Dirty Market" (see results for Reggio Calabria in the previous issue of this report) 736 controls were carried out of which 62 were non-compliant. In total, 2700 kg of fish were seized which led to 90 000 EUR in fines.

Il Telegrafo Livorno

03/01/18 - A popular Chinese fish massively substituted
Roasted Xue Yu fillet (Mandarin for "Cod", Gadidae family) is a premium popular dish in China. Chinese and Italian teams studied the market by carrying out DNA tests on 153 samples belonging to 30 different brands. Results showed that 58% of the samples were not actual Xue Yu fish but other fish species. However, there is a lack of clarity in the definition of the Xue Yu species itself which could lead to confusion when assessing species identity.

Securing Industry
Scientific article: Science Direct

09/01/18 – A confectionery closed for traceability problems
In Battipaglia (province of Salerno), sanitary authorities had to close a pastry shop due to a serious lack of traceability of several products. Pastries, cakes and semi-finished products were seized (100 kg) as well as 800 untraceable eggs. Similarly, in a nearby village (Eboli), 4000 eggs were seized on a farm for lack of traceability.

Otto Pagine

15/01/18 – 40 000 litres of milk discarded in Pakistan
As in the past few weeks, milk controls were intensified in Pakistan leading to the detection of a substantial number of violations. In eight distinct places in the Punjab region, a total of 40 000 litres of milk were analysed and considered adulterated. The products were discarded on the basis that it was not safe for consumption.

Daily Times

23/01/18 – Huge crackdown in the San Daniele ham production chain
The Carabinieri of Udine announced the arrest of eight people suspected of commercial fraud and counterfeiting San Daniele ham, protected by a PDO. The scale of the operation is quite impressive since 13 000 hams were seized for an estimated value of 1.3 million EUR.

Salute
23/01/18 – Fraudsters brought to court for wine adulteration

Nine people are charged with adulteration of wine in Florence. The spectrum of frauds they are accused of is quite large; they were selling sub-standard wine, added alcohol and sold it under reputed denominations such as Chianti or Brunello di Montalcino. The adulterated wines were sent abroad, Costa Rica being the major destination. The trial is scheduled for the beginning of April 2018.

ANSA
La Nazione

25/01/18 – Quebec maple syrup subject to dilution fraud

USA customs announced they intercepted fraudulent maple syrup from Quebec. Tests revealed the presence of undeclared sugars in the product that most probably came from a dilution with cheaper table syrup. However, for the moment, the producers were not prosecuted.

Journal de Montreal

31/01/18 – Fake Franciacorta wine discovered in Brescia

The Carabinieri of Brescia investigated a wine company that is suspected of commercializing fake Franciacorta wine, a reputed PDO sparkling wine. The samples taken were analysed and results confirmed that the wine did not comply with the characteristics of the product. The alcohol content was found to be too low. The authorities seized 350 bottles for an estimated price of 5000 EUR.

Salute

Other interesting articles

02/01/18 – New technique combination to identify wine origin

Teams from the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation and the Australian Wine Research Institute developed a new technique to identify wine origin and fight counterfeiting of wine. The technique relies on the detection of trace metals and isotopic ratios of elements in wine. The particularity of this method is that it combines several aspects of wine identity and not just one as it is usually done. The parameters measured are able to describe globally the environment in which the vine grew, including the water, the geology of the soil and the surrounding air.

Radio Australia

16/01/18 – Dispute between EU and Mexico around Manchego cheese

Updates to the trade agreement treaties between the EU and Mexico brought to light the issue of the PDO cheese Manchego. Manchego is a protected denomination from Castilla-La-Mancha (Spain) but also another cheese product in Mexico. There is a conflict between an official denomination in the EU and a traditional name used for decades in Mexico. Negotiations are under way but the EU is particularly concerned since Mexico is neighbouring the USA that imported 4.4 million kg of (Spanish) Manchego in 2016.

ABC

24/01/18 – MEPs promote the fight against fake honey

Some members of the European Parliament made several propositions to support the EU honey sector. Beside bee colonies protection, they highlighted the need to develop effective laboratory analysis procedures, such as nuclear magnetic resonance. They also propose to tighten the traceability obligations such as mentioning explicitly the country of origin.

EU Business
31/01/18 – Indian government launches kit to test chemicals in fish
The Indian Ministry of Agriculture launched a test kit to detect the addition of chemical adulterants in fish. Ammonia and formaldehyde are common adulterants to extend the shelf life of fresh fish but these two substances also cause major health problems. The test kit is easy to use and is composed of paper strips, a reagent solution and a chart to assess the results.

Greater Kashmir

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.