European Commission

Directorate-General for Health & Consumers

ISSN 1830-7302

The Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF)

Annual Report 2007

The Health and Consumers Directorate-General of the European Commission manages the Rapid Alert System for food and Feed (RASFF). This report describes the activity of the RASFF in 2007.

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Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2007

ISBN 978-92-79-08594-9
DOI 10.2772/63727

The Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF)

Annual Report **2007**

FOREWORD

For consumers, safety is the most important ingredient of their food. Food production, food retailing and international trade in food together make the EU the world's biggest food importer and one of the biggest food exporters. With the globalisation of trade and a worldwide distribution of food and feed, new challenges are faced in ensuring the safety of food for the European consumer.

The rapid alert system for food and feed (RASFF) is a concrete and visible result of a successful European integrated approach to ensure food safety. The quick exchange of information between food and feed competent authorities ensures coherent and simultaneous actions by all Member States, as demonstrated in this report on RASFF activities 2007, which I am proud to present to you.

The Commission together with Member States continues to work hard in further shaping this essential tool that is contributing to high food safety standards in the EU, preventing dangerous food or feed from reaching the consumer and allowing swift action to be taken to remove such products from the market.

Since 2004 the RASFF system has been working at cruise speed even though in 2007 it reached an all-time high with 7354 initial and follow-up notifications. As 12% of the products notified are of Chinese origin, a special chapter in the report focuses on problems detected in these particular products.

The Commission is keen on promoting the RASFF system as a model for other regions of the world. Concrete steps, such as developing a web interface enabling third countries to monitor notifications which concern them, have been taken. All these issues and more are described in detail in this report.

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this report and to the functioning of the RASFF in 2007, in particular all Member States. My gratitude goes especially to the European Commission Delegations all over the world that have facilitated transmission of the notifications to third countries concerned, allowing problems originating there to be resolved.

I am convinced that this report will provide useful data to all interested stakeholders and that it will further strengthen their support for the RASFF. The RASFF system can only function well thanks to the continuing and excellent collaboration between public authorities, consumers and business operators.

Androulla Vassiliou
European Commissioner for Health

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Acronyms used in this report

ADI.....Acceptable Daily Intake
AHD.....1-aminohydantoin (nitrofurantoin)
AMOZ .....3-amino-5- morpholinomethyl-2-oxazolidinone (furaltadon)
AOZ .....furazolidone
AQSIQ .....General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine
ARfD.....Acute Reference Dose
ASEAN.....Association of Southeast Asian Nations
Bt .....Bacillus thuringiensis
DG .....Directorate-General
EC.....European Commission
ECDC .....European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control
EEA.....European Economic Area
EFSA.....European Food Safety Authority
EFTA.....European Free Trade Association
EU .....European Union
FVO .....Food and Veterinary Office
FYROM .....Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
GMO .....Genetically Modified Organism
HACCP.....Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points
MRL.....Maximum Residue Limit
MRPL.....Minimum Required Performance Limit
OJ.....Official Journal
PAA .....Primary Aromatic Amines
PAH .....Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons
PCB .....Polychlorinated biphenyls
PCDD/F ....Polychlorinated Dibenzodioxins and Dibenzofurans
PCP .....Pentachlorophenol
PSTI.....Predicted Short Term Intake
RASFF .....Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed
S.....Salmonella
SEM.....Semicarbazide (nitrofurazone)
spp. .....species (plural)
TEF.....Toxicity Equivalency Factor
TEQ .....Toxic Equivalents
USA.....United States of America
WHO.....World Health Organisation

1

The Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF)

1. The Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF)

The RASFF was put in place to provide food and feed control authorities with an effective tool to exchange information about measures taken responding to serious risks detected in relation to food or feed. This exchange of information helps Member States to act more rapidly and in a coordinated manner in response to a health threat caused by food or feed. Its effectiveness is ensured by keeping its structure simple: it consists essentially of clearly identified contact points in the Commission and at national level in member countries, exchanging information in a clear and structured way by means of templates.

The legal basis

The legal basis of the RASFF is Regulation (EC) N° 178/2002. Article 50 of this Regulation establishes the rapid alert system for food and feed as a network involving the Member States, the Commission as the manager of the system and the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). Also the EEA countries: Norway, Liechtenstein and Iceland, are longstanding members of the RASFF.

Whenever a member of the network has any information relating to the existence of a serious direct or indirect risk to human health deriving from food or feed, this information is immediately notified to the Commission under the RASFF. The Commission immediately transmits this information to the members of the network.

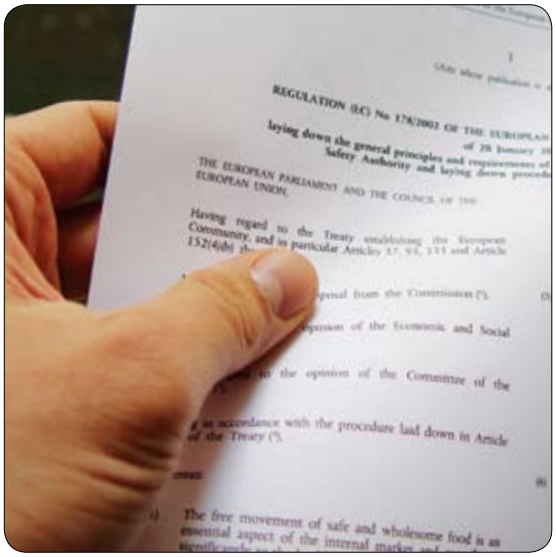
Article 50.3 of the Regulation gives further criteria for when a RASFF notification is required.

Without prejudice to other Community legislation, the Member States shall immediately notify the Commission under the rapid alert system of:

a any measure they adopt which is aimed at restricting the placing on the market or forcing the withdrawal from the market or the recall of food or feed in order to protect human health and requiring rapid action;

b any recommendation or agreement with professional operators which is aimed, on a voluntary or obligatory basis, at preventing, limiting or imposing specific conditions on the placing on the market or the eventual use of food or feed on account of a serious risk to human health requiring rapid action;

c any rejection, related to a direct or indirect risk to human health, of a batch, container or cargo of food or feed by a competent authority at a border post within the European Union.



The members

All members of the system have out-of-hours arrangements (7 days/7, 24 hour/24) to ensure that in case of an urgent notification being made outside of office hours, on-duty officers can be warned, acknowledge the urgent information and take appropriate action. All member organisations of the RASFF are listed below. Their home pages on the Internet can be consulted from the following RASFF web page:

http://ec.europa.eu/comm/food/food/rapidalert/members_en.htm

EUROPEAN UNION
- European Commission - Health and Consumers Directorate-General
- European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)

EFTA
EFTA Surveillance Authority

AUSTRIA
Österreichische Agentur für Gesundheit und Ernährungssicherheit GmbH und Bundesamt für Ernährungssicherheit

BELGIUM
A.F.S.C.A.- Agence Fédérale pour la Sécurité de la Chaîne Alimentaire
F.A.V.V. - Federaal Agentschap voor de Veiligheid van de Voedselketen

BULGARIA
Министерство на земеделието и горите
(Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry)

CYPRUS
Ministry of Health - Medical and Public Health Services

CZECH REPUBLIC
Státní zemedelská a potravinárská inspekce
(Czech Agriculture And Food Inspection Authority)

DENMARK
- Fødevaredirektorate - Ministeriet for Fødevarer, Landbrug og Fiskeri
- The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries

ESTONIA
Veterinaar- ja Toiduamet - Veterinary and Food Board

FINLAND
Elintarviketurvallisuusvirasto Evira - Finnish Food Safety Authority Evira

FRANCE
- Ministère de l'Économie, des Finances et de l'Industrie
- Ministère de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation, de la Pêche et des Affaires Rurales

GERMANY
Bundesamt für Verbraucherschutz und Lebensmittelsicherheit (BVL)

GREECE
Hellenic Food Authority (EFET)

HUNGARY
Magyar Élelmiszer-biztonsági Hivatal (Hungarian Food Safety Office)

ICELAND
UST - Umhverfisstofnun - (Environment and Food Agency of Iceland)

IRELAND
F.S.A.I. - Food Safety Authority of Ireland

ITALY
Ministero della Salute

LATVIA
Partikas un Veterinarais Dienests - Food and Veterinary Service

LIECHTENSTEIN
Amt für Lebensmittelkontrolle/Landesveterinäramt (Office for Food Inspection and Veterinary Affairs)

LITHUANIA
Valstybine maisto ir Veterinarijos Tarnyba - State Food and Veterinary Service

LUXEMBOURG
Sécurité Alimentaire Grand-Duché de Luxembourg

MALTA
Food Safety Commission

NETHERLANDS
Voedsel en Waren Autoriteit
(Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority)

NORWAY
Statens tilsyn for planter, fisk, dyr, og Næringsmidler
(Norwegian Food Safety Authority)

POLAND
Glówny Inspektorat Sanitarny (Chief Sanitary Inspectorate)

PORTUGAL
Ministério da Agricultura, Desenvolvimento Rural e Pescas (MADRP)

ROMANIA
Autoritatea Nationala Sanitar-Veterinara si pentru Siguranta Alimentelor (National Sanitary Veterinary And Food Safety Authority)

SLOVAKIA
Státna veterinárna a potravinová správa SR
(State Veterinary and Food Administration)

SLOVENIA
- Ministrstvo za zdravje (Ministry of Health)
- Health Inspectorate of the Republic of Slovenia

SPAIN
Ministerio de Sanidad y Consumo (Ministry of Health and Consumption)

SWEDEN
Livsmedelsverket (National food Administration)

UNITED KINGDOM
Food Standards Agency

The system

To assist the members of the network, information is classified under three different headings:

alert notifications[1]

Alert notifications are sent when the food, feed or food contact material presenting the risk is on the market and when rapid action is required. Alerts are triggered by the Member State that detects the problem and that 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.

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[1]

Information notifications concern a food, feed or food contact material for which a risk has been identified, but for which the other members of the network do not have to take rapid action, because the product has not reached their market or is no longer on their market. These notifications mostly concern food and feed consignments that have been tested and rejected at the external borders of the EU.

Products subject to an information notification have not reached the market or all necessary measures have already been taken or are in the process of being taken.

For both types of notifications follow-up notifications are sent by members of the network giving details of the distribution or the origin of the product, additional analytical results, documents accompanying the consignment, measures taken etc. These follow-up notifications are referred to as "additional information notifications".

news notifications

Any type of information related to the safety of food or feed which has not been communicated by a Member State as an "alert" or an "information" notification, but which is judged interesting for the food/feed control authorities in the Member States, is classified and made available as a news notification.

As far as alert and information notifications are concerned, two types of notifications are identified:

- original notifications, representing a new case reported on a health risk detected in one or more consignments of a food or feed;
- additional information notifications that are reactions from RASFF members reporting follow-up of an original notification.

An original notification sent by a member of the RASFF system can be **rejected** from transmission through the RASFF system, after evaluation by the Commission, if the criteria for notification are not met or if the information transmitted is insufficient. The notifying country is informed of the decision

1 .These definitions reflect how RASFF notifications were classified in 2007. From 2008 onwards, the classification of RASFF notifications has changed. See the RASFF web page for the new definitions.

not to transmit the information through the RASFF system and is invited to provide additional information allowing the rejection to be reconsidered by the Commission.

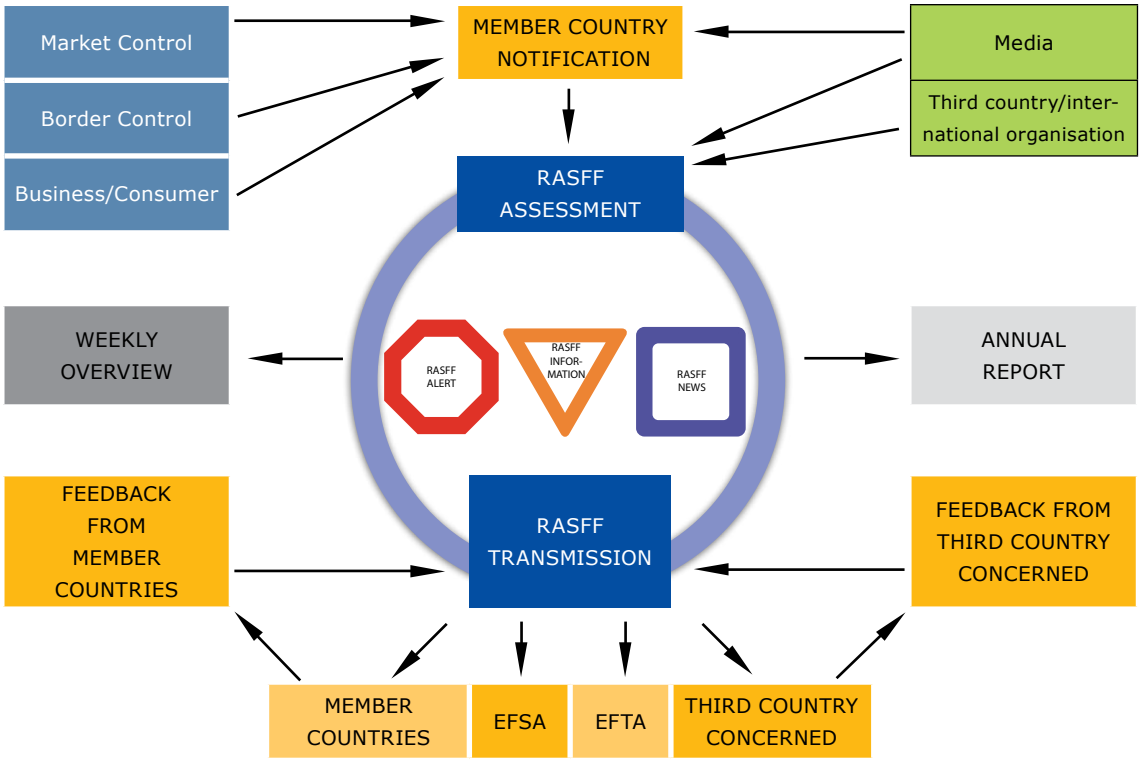
An alert or information notification that was transmitted through the RASFF system can be **withdrawn** by the Commission at the request of the notifying country if the information, upon which the measures taken are based, turns out to be unfounded or if the transmission of the notification was made erroneously.

The report

This report provides information on the functioning of the RASFF in 2007 and, in particular, on the number of notifications, the origin of the notifications, the countries involved, the products and the identified risks. Some caution needs to be exercised when drawing conclusions from these figures. For example, it is not because a Member State has a relatively high number of notifications that the situation regarding food safety would be bad in that country. On the contrary, it could indicate that a greater number of food checks are carried out or that the communication systems in that Member State function well.

The number of notifications concerning third countries cannot be compared with those concerning Member States. For third countries, official controls can only be carried out on the product as it enters the Community. On the other hand, within the EU, official controls are performed throughout the entire food and feed chain, and therefore food or feed hazards are often detected at an early stage of production. For all these hazards detected during production, there is no RASFF notification if the product was not placed on the market.

Schematic representation of the information flow of the RASFF:



2

RASFF notifications in 2007

2. RASFF notifications in 2007

The number of notifications transmitted through the RASFF rose from 823 in 2000, 1567 in 2001, 3024 in 2002, 4414 in 2003, 5562 in 2004, to 7170 in 2005. In 2006 the number decreased for the first time to 6840 but in 2007, the total number of notifications increased again significantly to 7354[2]. The main reason for this increase lies with an increased number of additional information notifications following up on the original notifications sent.

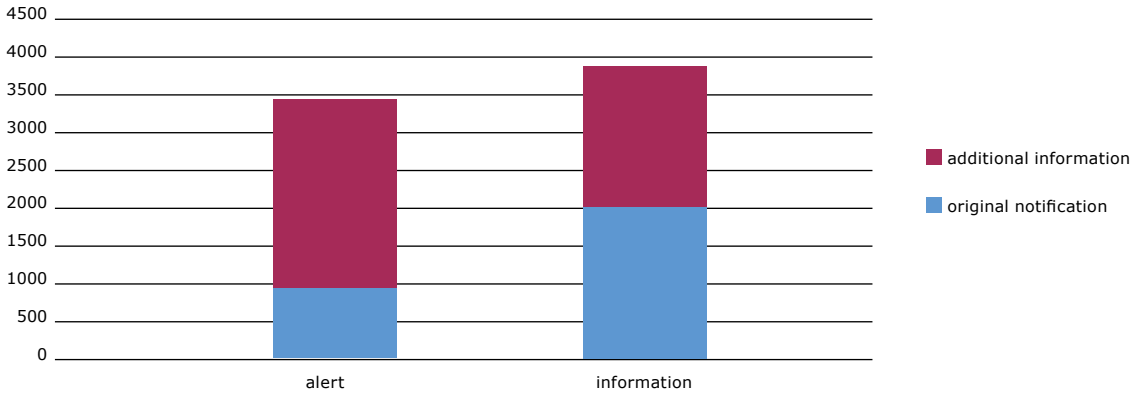
In 2007, a total of 2976 original notifications, classified as 961 alert and 2015 information notifications, were received through the RASFF, giving rise to 4339 additional information notifications, representing on average about 1.5 follow-ups per original notification.

During 2007, the Commission sent 39 news notifications through the system. After receipt of additional information, 13 information notifications were upgraded to an alert notification. Also after receipt of additional information, 21 alert notifications and 30 information notifications were withdrawn. Notifications that were withdrawn are further excluded from statistics and charts.

The European Commission decided not to upload 81 notifications onto the system since, after evaluation, they were found not to satisfy the criteria for a RASFF notification (rejected notifications).

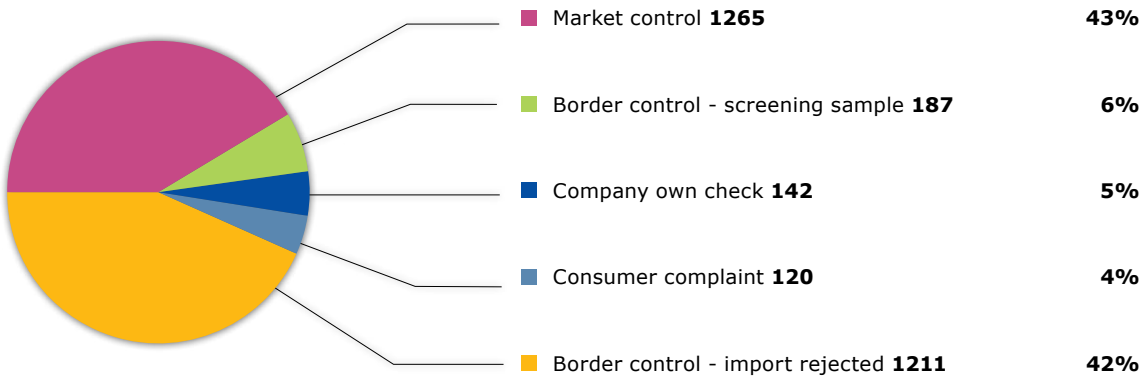
RASFF notifications are triggered by a variety of things. When notifications are classified according to the basis of the notification, the chart on the right page is obtained. Most notifications concern official controls on the internal market[3]. The second largest category of notifications concerns controls at the border posts of the outer EEA borders when the consignment was not accepted for import ("border rejection"). In some cases, a sample was taken for analysis at the border but the consignment was meanwhile released on to the market ("border control - screening sample"). Two special cases are identified when a consumer complaint or a company notifying the outcome of an own-check were at the basis of the notification. Food poisoning outbreaks are classified in the category of consumer complaints.

Alert and information notifications in 2007



2 From 2003 on, this figure includes all notifications (alert, information, news and additional information), including notifications that were afterwards withdrawn, but not the rejected notifications. The figure published for 2005 in the RASFF annual report 2005 erroneously excluded the notifications that were withdrawn after transmission.
3 Products placed on the market in one of the member countries including the EEA countries Norway, Liechtenstein and Iceland

2007 notifications according to type of control



Analysis of trends in hazards notified through the RASFF in 2007 (see next pages)

Explanation of the symbols used

↑ small increase of the number of notifications received
↓ small decrease of the number of notifications received
↑ ↑ significant increase in the number of notifications received
↓ ↓ significant decrease in the number of notifications received
→ number of notification follows the same trend as the year before
2003 Year in which a "peak" number of notifications was received
2004 Year in which a very high "peak" number of notifications was received.
2003 ↓↑ Year in which a "peak" number of notifications was received, but the number of notifications is on the rise again
new new hazard in the RASFF system with a significant number of notifications

Remark: to take any trends into account there needs to have been at least one year with "double figure" numbers of notifications in the period reviewed.
Data from 2001 onwards were taken into account for the analysis of the trends.

Analysis of trends in hazards notified through the RASFF in 2007

2007		food of animal origin						food of plant origin		
		fishery products	honey	eggs and egg products	meat and meat products (other than poultry)	milk and milk products	poultry meat and products	cereals and bakery products	cocoa, coffee and tea	confectionery
veterinary drug residues	(leuco)malachite green	2005								
	chloramphenicol	2002	↓		2003	2002				
	nitrofuran metabolite SEM	↓↓					2003			
	nitrofuran metabolite AOZ	2003		2003	2003		2002			
	nitrofuran metabolite AMOZ						2002			
	sulphonamides		2003 ↓↑							
	streptomycin		2002							
food additives	too high content of sulphites	↓								
	too high content of E 210 - benzoic acid									
	E 452 - polyphosphates	↑								
	too high content of colour additives									↑↑
	unauthorised use of colour additives							2005		2005 ↓↑
composition	unauthorised colour Sudan 1							2004		
	unauthorised colour Sudan 4									
	unauthorised colour Para Red									
	carbon monoxide treatment	↓↓								
	suffocation risk									↓
heavy metals	cadmium	2003								
	mercury	↑↑								
mycotoxins	aflatoxins							↑↑		
	fumonisins							↓		
	ochratoxin A							↓	↓	
pesticide residues	pesticide residues in general								2002	
	carbendazim									
	methomyl									
	oxamyl									
	unauthorised isofenphos-methyl									
food contact materials	migration of chromium									
	migration of lead									
	migration of nickel									
	migration of isopropyl thioxanthone									
	migration of primary aromatic amines									
	migration of formaldehyde									
	phthalates									
	too high level of total migration									
microbiological hazards	histamine	↑↑								
	parasites	2004 ↓↑								
	Listeria monocytogenes	2005 ↓↑			2005	↓	2004			
	Salmonella spp.	↑↑			↓		↑↑		2003	
	Campylobacter spp.						↑↑			
	Vibrio	↓								
	marine biotoxins	↓								
	moulds									
	too high count of Escherichia coli	↑								
	too high count of Enterobacteriaceae	2002								
	too high count of aerobic mesophiles	2003								
	too high count of faecal coliforms	2004								
foreign bodies	foreign bodies							→	↑	↑
other	melamine			2003						
	polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons	↓								
	high content of iodine									
	allergens							↑↑	↑	↑
	irradiation									
	illegal trade / improper documents	↓			↓		2005			
	unauthorised placing on the market									
	unauthorised genetically modified							↓		
	dioxins	↑↑								
	animal constituents									
	3-monochlor-1,2-propanediol (3-MCPD)									
	bad or insufficient controls	↑								
	spoilage	↓			↓					

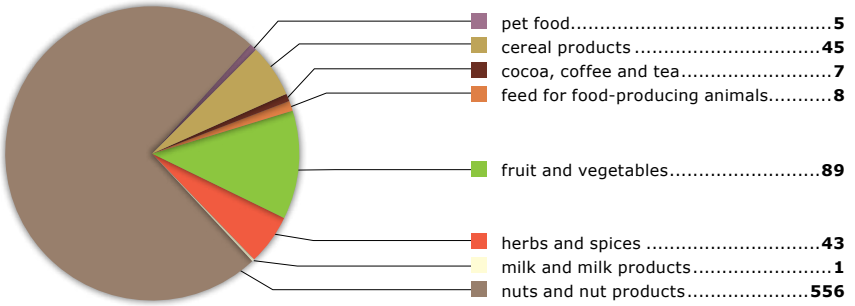
>> Analysis of trends in hazards notified through the RASFF in 2007

2007		food of plant origin					mixed		other		
		fruit and vegetables	herbs and spices	food supplements	non-alcoholic beverages	nuts and nut products	fats and oils	soups, broths and sauces	feed	pet food	food contact materials
veterinary drug residues	(leuco)malachite green										
	chloramphenicol								2002		
	nitrofuran metabolite SEM										
	nitrofuran metabolite AOZ										
	nitrofuran metabolite AMOZ										
	sulphonamides										
	streptomycin										
food additives	too high content of sulphites	↓									
	too high content of E 210 - benzoic acid				↑↑						
	E 452 - polyphosphates										
	too high content of colour additives										
	unauthorised use of colour additives	↓↓	↓								
composition	unauthorised colour Sudan 1		↓					2004			
	unauthorised colour Sudan 4		↓				2004				
	unauthorised colour Para Red		2005								
	carbon monoxide treatment										
	suffocation risk										
heavy metals	cadmium	↓									
	mercury										
mycotoxins	aflatoxins	↑	↑			↓					
	fumonisins										
	ochratoxin A	↓↓	↑								
pesticide residues	pesticide residues in general	↑↑	↓								
	carbendazim	↑↑									
	methomyl	↑↑									
	oxamyl	↑↑									
	unauthorised isofenphos-methyl	new									
food contact materials	migration of chromium										↑
	migration of lead										↓
	migration of nickel										↑
	migration of isopropyl thioxanthone										↓↓
	migration of primary aromatic amines										↑
	migration of formaldehyde										→
	phthalates										↑↑
	too high level of total migration										↑↑
microbiological hazards	histamine										
	parasites										
	Listeria monocytogenes										
	Salmonella spp.	2005 ↓↑	2005 ↓↑						↓	↑↑	
	Campylobacter spp.										
	Vibrio										
	marine biotoxins										
	moulds	↓				↑↑					
	too high count of Escherichia coli		2005								
	too high count of Enterobacteriaceae		2005							↑	
	too high count of aerobic mesophiles										
	too high count of faecal coliforms										
foreign bodies	foreign bodies	↑↑				↑↑					
other	melamine								new	new	
	polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons						2001				
	high content of iodine	2005									
	allergens										
	irradiation			↑							
	illegal trade / improper documents					↑↑					
	unauthorised placing on the market			↑↑							
	unauthorised genetically modified										
	dioxins								2003 ↓↑		
	animal constituents								2004		
	3-monochlor-1,2-propanediol (3-MCPD)							↓			
	bad or insufficient controls										
	spoilage	↑									

A selection of topics recurring in the RASFF in 2007

Mycotoxins

Mycotoxins are naturally occurring metabolites produced by certain species of moulds (e.g. *Aspergillus spp, Fusarium spp)* which develop at high temperatures and humidity levels and may be present in a large number of foods. This group of toxins includes a number of compounds of varying toxicity and frequency in food. The mould may occur on the growing crop or after harvesting during storage or processing. Whilst the moulds can be considered as plant pathogens, the ingestion of the toxin can result in disease in animals and humans. Mycotoxins like aflatoxins and ochratoxin A are known to be carcinogenic.



Substance	cereals and bakery products	cocoa preparations, coffee and tea	feed for food-producing animals	pet food	fruit and vegetables	herbs and spices	milk and milk products	nuts, nut products and seeds	total
Aflatoxins	21		6	4	70	35	1	568	**705**
deoxynivalenol (DON)	7							3	**10**
fumonisins	9								**9**
ochratoxin A	7	7			6	10			**30**
Zearalenone	3		2					1	**6**

in general

As in previous years, also in 2007 mycotoxins are the hazard category with the highest number of notifications. The RASFF received in 2007 a total of 754 notifications on mycotoxins, of which 705 concerned aflatoxins. This means 120 notifications on mycotoxins less than in 2006 and even 239 notifications less than in 2005.

Aflatoxins

pistachio nuts

There were 97 notifications less on aflatoxins in 2007 compared to 2006 and even 242 notifications less than 2005. Also in 2007 most of these notifications concerned pistachio nuts (176) primarily originating from Iran (126), although much less predominantly than in previous years. While in 2005 there were 457 notifications about pistachios from Iran, in 2006 there were 234 and in 2007 126 notifications. Although the import of pistachios from Iran decreased significantly in 2005 compared

>> pistachio nuts

to 2004, the quantity of import of pistachios in the period 2005-2007 remained stable (approx 33.000 tons/year). This means that the aflatoxin contamination of pistachios from Iran imported in the EU is improving. This is also reflected in the rejection rates observed. While in 2005 approx. 25 % of all consignments offered for import in the EU was found to be non-compliant with EU aflatoxin contamination, this rate was decreased in 2007 to approx. 10 %.

Worthwhile to note is the relative high number of notifications on the presence of aflatoxins in pistachios from Turkey (33) compared to the volume of import. This is reflected in the high rate of non compliance found at import (approx 25 % of the consignments offered for import rejected due to too high levels of aflatoxins). This is an issue which will require more attention in the coming years.

Other notifications concerned pistachios from Lebanon (6), United States (5) and Syria (3).

peanuts

Aflatoxins are also frequently reported in peanuts and derived products (163 notifications compared to 262 in 2006) originating from a significant number of different countries: China (54), Argentina (20), United States (15), Egypt (13), Nicaragua (9), India (7), Ghana (6, of which 3 for peanut butter), Brazil (5) and Nigeria (5).

hazelnuts

Within the group of nuts and nut products, 105 notifications concerned hazelnuts and derived products, nearly all originating from Turkey (103).

almonds

76 notifications concern edible almonds and derived products, primarily originating from the United States (68). For the first time, the presence of aflatoxins in almonds from Australia was reported (5 notifications) and this is an issue which needs to be closely followed. The high number of notifications on aflatoxins in almonds originating from the United States from 2005 onwards and the outcome of an FVO inspection in September 2006 lead to imposing special conditions on the import of almonds from the United States to protect public health. These special conditions are applicable from 1 September 2007 onwards.

Brazil nuts

Only one notification on aflatoxins concerned Brazil nut kernels and one on Brazil nuts in shell both originating from Brazil although EU legislation requires 100 % testing at import for Brazil nuts in shell originating from Brazil. This can be explained by the fact that there was, as in previous years, nearly no import of Brazil nuts in shell from Brazil into the EU in 2007.

dried figs Within the group of fruits and vegetables, 63 notifications concerned dried figs and derived products primarily originating from Turkey (59). While only 13 non-compliances were reported in the first 10 months of the year, 46 non-compliances were reported in the months November and December, indicating that the dried fig harvest 2007 is particularly affected by aflatoxins.

melon seeds 17 notifications concerned melon seeds all originating from Nigeria (6) and all notified by the United Kingdom.

Turkey Of particular concern is the continuous increase in numbers of notifications on aflatoxins in products originating from Turkey since 2005: 83 notifications in 2004, 118 notifications in 2005, 163 notifications in 2006 and 199 notifications in 2007, showing that the number of notifications has more than doubled compared to 2004.

spices Within the group of herbs and spices (35 notifications), primarily the following products (and derived products) were found in 2007 to be contaminated with aflatoxins at levels above the EU-maximum level: chilli (20), paprika (4), nutmeg (3), and turmeric (2). Notifications on chilli concerned products mainly originating from India (13). Other notifications concerned products originating from Peru, Morocco, Bangladesh, Spain, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, China and Indonesia.

ogbono 4 notifications on aflatoxins concerned ogbono kernels originating from Nigeria (4). Ogbono are kernels from wild mango trees native to tropical Atlantic coast regions of Africa.

cereals Remarkable in 2007 is the significant increase of notifications on aflatoxins in cereals and cereal products (16 notifications in 2007 compared to 4 notifications in 2006). The notifications mainly concerned rice (14 notifications) in particular basmati rice (11 notifications) from Pakistan (6) and India (3).

beans A new topic in 2007 is the presence of aflatoxins in different kinds of beans (drum, oloyin, brown, white, dried) from Nigeria (8 notifications)

feed Finally 10 notifications on aflatoxins concerned feed materials, more in particular groundnuts for bird feed (5), sunflower seeds from Egypt (3) and coconut cake from Ivory Coast (2).

Other mycotoxins

In 2007, 51 notifications concerned mycotoxins other than aflatoxins. The majority of notifications concerned ochratoxin A (30) and to a lesser extent deoxynivalenol (10), fumonisins (9) and zearalenone (6).

ochratoxin A The ochratoxin A notifications concerned mainly paprika powder (10) from Peru (8) and Spain (2). The very high levels found in paprika powder from Peru (up to 280 µg/kg) are a reason of concern and will require close follow-up in 2008. Non-compliances were also reported in dried vine fruit (3), liquorice (2), figs (2), cereals (3), honey cookies (4), instant (4), green (1) and roasted coffee (2).

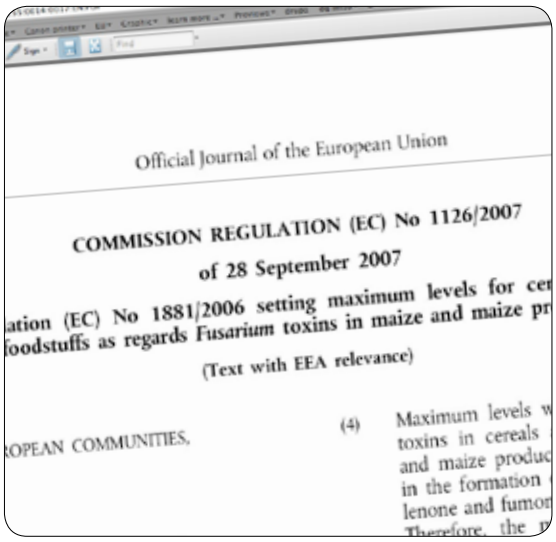
deoxynivalenol zearalenone Deoxynivalenol and zearalenone are two Fusarium toxins for which EU maximum levels have been established. Notifications on these mycotoxins appear for the first time in the RASFF system in 2007 (with the exception of 1 notification for deoxynivalenol in 2001 and 1 notification for zearalenone in 1999). Contrary to other mycotoxins the notifications on Fusarium-toxins (deoxynivalenol, zearalenone and also fumonisins) concern mainly food products (cereals and cereal products) from Community origin.

Two notifications for very high levels of zearalenone in soya hulls from Argentina destined for feed deserve particular attention. As zearalenone is mainly found in cereals and cereal products, the finding in soya hulls can be considered as rather unusual.

fumonisins Contrary to the two other abovementioned Fusarium-toxins, the presence of fumonisins in maize and maize products is regularly notified since 2003 (15 notifications in 2003, 14 in 2004, 2 in 2005, 15 in 2006 and 9 notifications in 2007). In 2007 all notifications relate to products originating from Italy, while also in previous years the majority of notifications related to products originating from Italy.

New EU-measures as regards mycotoxins in 2007

Commission Regulation (EC) No 1126/2007 of 28 September 2007 amending Regulation (EC) No 1881/2006 setting maximum levels for certain contaminants in foodstuffs as regards *Fusarium* toxins in maize and maize products[4].


Official Journal of the European Union

COMMISSION REGULATION (EC) No 1126/2007

of 28 September 2007

ation (EC) No 1881/2006 setting maximum levels for cer
foodstuffs as regards Fusarium toxins in maize and maize pr

(Text with EEA relevance)

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Maximum levels were established in 2005 for *Fusarium* toxins in cereals and cereal products, including maize and maize products. For maize, not all factors involved in the formation of *Fusarium* toxins, in particular zearalenone and fumonisins B_1 and B_2, were precisely known. Therefore, the maximum levels in maize and maize products were foreseen to apply only from 1 July 2007 for deoxynivalenol and

4 OJ L 255, 29.9.2007, p. 14

COMMISSION

COMMISSION DECISION

of 25 June 2007

sion 2006/504/EC on special conditions governing certain fo
third countries due to contamination risks of these produc

(notified under document number C(2007) 3020)

(Text with EEA relevance)

(2007/459/EC)

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zearalenone and from 1 October 2007 for fumonisins B1 and B2, in case no changed maximum levels based on new information on occurrence and formation are set before that time.

Information was provided demonstrating that for the harvest 2005 and 2006 higher levels have been observed in maize than for the harvest 2003 and 2004 of mainly zearalenone and fumonisins and to a lesser extent deoxynivalenol, linked to the weather conditions. The foreseen levels for zearalenone and fumonisins are therefore under certain weather conditions not achievable for maize, even when applying prevention measures to the extent possible.

Therefore, this Commission Regulation amends the maximum levels for deoxynivalenol, zearalenone and fumonisins B_1 and B_2 in order to avoid a disruption of the market whilst maintaining a high level of public health protection.

Commission Decision 2006/504/EC of 12 July 2006 on special conditions governing certain foodstuffs imported from certain third countries due to contamination risks of those products by aflatoxins[5] has been amended three times during 2007

1) Commission Decision 2007/459/EC of 25 June 2007 amending Decision 2006/504/EC on special conditions governing certain foodstuffs imported from certain third countries due to contamination risks of those products by aflatoxins[6]

This modification to Commission Decision 2006/504/EC was necessary as the application of Decision 2006/504/EC had revealed that certain amendments were required in particular as regards the application of the provisions to compound foodstuffs and very small consignments and to introduce a separate common document for checks performed on foodstuffs covered by the Decision. The list of designated points of import through which the products covered by that Decision may be imported into the Community needed to be updated, particularly in the framework of the accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the European Union.

2) Commission Decision 2007/563/EC of 1 August 2007 amending Decision 2006/504/EC on special conditions governing certain foodstuffs imported from certain third countries due to contamination risks of those products by aflatoxins as regards almonds and derived products originating in or consigned from the United States of America[7]

In 2005, 2006 and 2007 (see above) an increasing number of notifications through the RASFF indicated that the maximum levels for aflatoxin B1 and total aflatoxins were regularly exceeded in almonds and derived products

5 OJ L 199, 21.7.2006, p. 21
6 OJ L 174, 4.7.2007, p. 8
7 OJ L 18.8.2007, p. 18

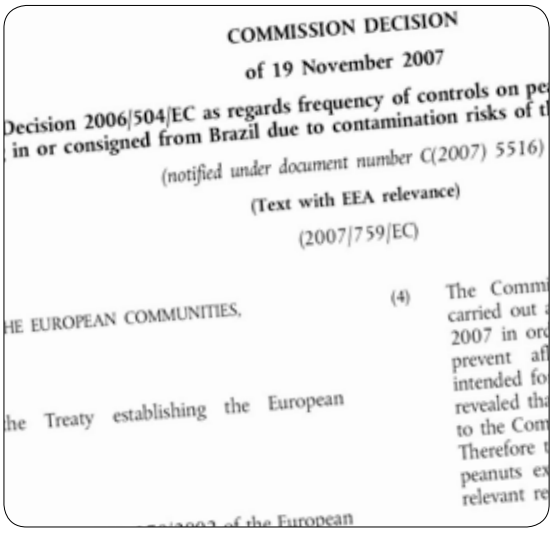
from the United States of America (USA). Such contamination constituted a threat to public health in the Community. The Commission's Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) carried out an inspection in the USA to assess the control systems in place to prevent aflatoxin contamination levels in almonds intended for export to the Community. This mission revealed the absence of any compulsory legal requirements to control aflatoxin levels in almond production and processing and the inadequacy of the current control system to offer guarantees concerning the compliance of exported products with Community standards.

It was therefore appropriate to adopt special measures at Community level for almonds and derived products from the USA for the protection of public health.

3) Commission Decision 2007/759/EC of 19 November 2007 amending Decision 2006/504/EC as regards frequency of controls on peanuts and derived products originating in or consigned from Brazil due to contamination risks of these products by aflatoxins[8]

An inspection mission was carried out by the FVO in Brazil from 25 April to 4 May 2007 in order to assess the control systems in place to prevent aflatoxin contamination levels in peanuts intended for export to the Community. This mission revealed that the system for control of peanuts exported to the European Union is in place but not fully implemented. Therefore the current system does not fully ensure that peanuts exported to the European Community comply with or are at last equivalent to the relevant requirements for aflatoxins.

A significant number of RASFF notifications were noted in 2005 (32) and in 2006 (24)



COMMISSION DECISION

of 19 November 2007

Decision 2006/504/EC as regards frequency of controls on pe
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(notified under document number C(2007) 5516)

(Text with EEA relevance)

(2007/759/EC)

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while the number of notifications dropped significantly in 2007 (5).

Following the high number of notifications in 2005 and 2006 and the deficiencies in the control system in Brazil identified by the FVO, it was appropriate in the interest of protecting public health to subject the import of peanuts and derived products into the Community from Brazil to an increased frequency of sampling and analysis for aflatoxin levels by the competent authority of the importing Member State, prior to release onto the market.

Guidance document for competent authorities for the control of compliance with EU legislation on aflatoxins

The guidance document has been updated and is available on the website of the Health and Consumers DG of the Commission[9]. The guidance document focuses mainly on the official control of aflatoxin contamination in food products which are covered by Commission Decision 2006/504/EC and amendments. Nevertheless, the provisions in this guidance document are also applicable, where relevant, to the control of aflatoxins in food products not subject to special conditions.

8 OJ L 305, 23.11.2007, p. 56
9 http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/chemicalsafety/contaminants/comm_dec_2006_504guidance_en.pdf

Dioxins

In 2007, 30 notifications concerned dioxins of which 20 were food and 10 were feed related.

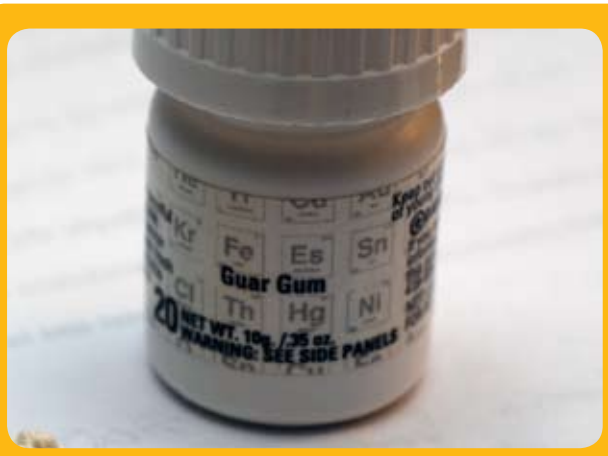
The 20 notifications on dioxins in food mainly related to the presence at very high levels of dioxins and in particular dioxin-like PCBs in canned fish liver (17) from Denmark (7), Poland (8) Norway (1) and France (1). No maximum level has yet been established for fish liver and processed products thereof. In order to protect public health, competent authorities prohibited the placing on the market of these products because they are deemed to be unsafe.

At the meeting on 14 December 2007 of the Standing Committee of the Food chain and Animal Health, section Toxicological Safety of the Food Chain, a common point of action was agreed for dioxins and PCBs in fish liver and derived products thereof of 25 pg /g wet weight for the sum of dioxins and dioxin-like PCBs (WHO-PCDD/F – PCB-TEQ) (WHO-TEF 1998). At that meeting, the Committee was informed that this common point of action could be envisaged as the maximum level in the Annex to Regulation (EC) 1881/2006 of 19 December 2006 setting maximum levels for certain contaminants in food in a forthcoming amendment to this Regulation.

One notification related to significant levels of dioxins in cod liver oil capsules, one notification to a high level of dioxin-like PCBs in eel and one notification on the presence of very high levels of pentachlorophenol (PCP) and dioxins in guar gum. Guar gum powder is extracted from the guar bean. The food grade guar gum powder is used as gelling, thickening and binding agent in a very wide range of foodstuffs such as jams, jellies, fruit spreads, ice cream, soft drinks, puddings etc.

The food grade guar gum is also used in pet food. This contamination incident resulted in one of the most intensive exchanges of follow-up information in the RASFF network. More details on this contamination incident can be found on the right in the framed story.

The 10 notifications reporting dioxins in feed were on the feed additives zinc oxide from Turkey (2), copper sulphate from China (1) and feed-grade lysine from China (1). 1 notification related to fishmeal, 1 notification to dried lucerne meal pellets and 1 notification related to palm oil fatty acid distillates, a by-product intended for animal feed from the production of edible palm oil. Three notifications related to compound feed.



Dioxins in guar gum from India, processed in Switzerland

The RASFF received on 24 July 2007 a notification from the competent authorities of Switzerland concerning a finding of a serious contamination by dioxins and pentachlorophenol in guar gum originating from India. The contamination levels of dioxins and pentachlorophenol (PCP) found in certain batches of guar gum were very high (about 1000 times the level of what can be considered as normal background contamination).

In response to this finding of elevated levels of PCP and dioxins, the FVO carried out an urgent inspection visit to India from 5 to 11 October 2007. The objective of the mission was to gather information on the possible source of the contamination and to assess the control measures put in place by the Indian authorities to avoid the recurrence of this contamination. The inspection team concluded that there is to date insufficient evidence of the cause of the contamination incident, and the investigation carried out by the Indian authorities has been inadequate to provide any conclusions. With availability of sodium pentachlorophenate and its use in the guar gum industry for non-food uses, and with a largely self-regulated industry, there are inadequate controls in place to ensure that this contamination does not occur again in guar gum intended for use in feed and food. A possible hypothesis on the source of contamination is that pentachlorophenol has been used as a preservative in guar gum for non-food uses and that there has been a redirection of this guar gum for food use.

Such contamination constitutes a threat to public health within the Community if no measures are taken to avoid the presence of pentachlorophenol (PCP) and dioxins in guar gum.

Therefore, in addition to the tracing and blocking of identified contaminated batches of guar gum following information disseminated through the RASFF, the Member States were asked in a note dated 1 August 2007 to the Heads of delegation of the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health to detain, sample and analyse for the presence of pentachlorophenol and dioxins all batches of guar gum originating from the company from where the initial contaminated batch originated: and to sample and analyse for the presence of pentachlorophenol and dioxins batches of guar gum from other suppliers in India.

In case pentachlorophenol is found at levels higher than 0.01 ppm and dioxins at levels higher than 0.75 pg WHO-PCDD/F-TEQ /g product, the guar gum cannot enter the feed and food chain and must be safely disposed of.

Commission Decision 2008/352/EC of 29 April 2008 imposing special conditions governing guar gum originating in or consigned from India due to contamination risks of those products by pentachloro-phenol and dioxins[10] was prepared at the end of 2007 requiring that all consignments of guar gum or products containing guar gum at significant amounts originating in or consigned from India and imported into the Community intended for human or animal consumption, shall be accompanied by an analytical report, endorsed by the competent authority from the country where the laboratory which has performed the analysis is located. This Decision entered into force on 5 May 2008.

10 OJ L 117, 1.5.2008, p. 42–44

Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH) in fishery products

In 2007 the number of notifications reporting on results for polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons found above the legal limit in fishery products was 29, compared to 40 in 2006. While this presents a decrease compared to 2006, the number of notifications remains still higher than in previous years (4 notifications in 2005, 2 in 2004, 12 in 2003).

Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons are a group of diverse organic compounds which are potentially genotoxic and carcinogenic. They enter food via the environment (e.g. combustion processes or contaminated waters) or are formed as a result of certain food preparation methods, such as grilling, roasting, drying and smoking. One representative of this group, benzo(a) pyrene, is currently used as a marker for occurrence and effects of carcinogenic PAH in foods. European maximum levels for benzo(a)pyrene are in place for different food categories since April 2005. The current Regulation setting maximum levels for benzo(a)pyrene is Regulation (EC) No. 1881/2006. For muscle meat of smoked fish and smoked fishery products, excluding bivalve molluscs, a maximum level of 5.0 µg/kg is laid down. For muscle meat of fish other than smoked fish a maximum level of 2.0 µg/kg applies.

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) is currently preparing an updated scientific opinion on polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons using new occurrence data collected by Member States. Once this opinion is available, the existing EU maximum levels for benzo(a)pyrene may need to be revised.

13 out of the 29 notifications for benzo(a) pyrene relate to canned smoked fish in oil, the other 16 notifications to other smoked and/or dried fish. Out of the 13 notifications for canned smoked fish in oil, 10 relate to canned smoked fish in oil (mainly sprats in oil) from Latvia, 3 to canned smoked fish from other countries (Poland, Turkey). In smoked sprats in oil the use of contaminated vegetable oil may contribute towards PAH levels. Indeed, 14 notifications reported on too high levels of PAH in vegetable oils. This is an increase compared to 2006 (5 notifications). Consignments of other types of smoked and/or dried fish were mainly from African countries (11 notifications) and Asian countries (5 notifications).

Mercury in fishery products

In 2007 the trend of increasing notifications for mercury in fishery products continued. The number of notifications referring to consignments with mercury above the legal limit increased to 124, compared to 71 in 2006 and 47 in 2005. Swordfish is the species with the highest number of notifications (73) followed by shark (21 notifications). The number of notifications for the other fish species was considerably lower (between 1 and 6 notifications).

Fish and seafood contain mercury as a result of its natural presence in the environment and from pollution. Methyl mercury, the organic and most toxic form of mercury, can make up more than 90% of the total mercury in fish and seafood. Large predatory fish such as swordfish, shark and tuna accumulate higher levels of mercury through intake over a long life-time.

According to Commission Regulation No (EC) 1881/2006 a maximum mercury level of 0.5 mg/kg applies to fishery products. For certain species (e.g. some large predatory fish such as swordfish, shark, tuna) a higher maximum level of 1.0 mg/kg applies. For processed fish (e.g. smoked, dried or canned fish), the mercury level must be recalculated for the fresh fish to be compared with the legal limit. This is done taking into account changes in concentration of the contaminants caused by processing. There were 4 notifications on mercury in smoked fish in 2007.

Spain was the country of origin with the highest number of notifications for

mercury in fishery products in 2007 (47 notifications), out of which 43 were notified by Italy.

The number of notifications for fish of Indonesian origin in 2007 decreased to 7, while in 2006 an increase to 18 had been observed. This is most likely an effect of the implementation of Commission Decision No. 2006/236 of 21 March 2006, which imposes reinforced controls on fishery products from Indonesia. The Decision requires the importing Member State to test every consignment of fishery products from Indonesia for heavy metals.

Residues of veterinary medicinal products

legislation

Community legislation on residues of veterinary medicinal products provides that only substances that have undergone a human safety evaluation with a positive result according to Regulation 2377/90 may be used in food producing animals. If needed to protect consumers' health, this evaluation might lead to the setting of a Maximum Residue Limit (MRL), above which the presence of such a substance cannot be tolerated. The use of substances that have not undergone a human safety evaluation is not authorised. Moreover, the use of some specific substances is expressly prohibited in Community legislation. As a consequence, residues of non-authorised or prohibited substances are not to be present in food offered for sale on the internal market.

fishery products

As in 2006, there were again less RASFF notifications for residues in fishery products than the year before: 58 in 2007 compared to 80 in 2006.

nitrofurans and metabolites

Nitrofurans still represent the biggest portion (35 notifications compared to 57 in 2006). Most of the findings concerned frozen freshwater shrimps from India (16), China (7), Bangladesh (4) and a few other Asian countries. In terms of substances found, a slight shift is noticed towards furazolidone (AOZ, 22 notifications) followed by nitrofurazone (SEM, 13 notifications). Furaltadone (AMOZ) and nitrofurantoin (AHD) represented respectively 2 and 1 notifications.

malachite green

crystal violet

Malachite green is a fungicidal dye with pharmacological activity whose use as a veterinary medicinal product for food-producing animals is not authorised in the Community. The number of RASFF notifications for malachite green and its main metabolite leucomalachite green in fish has further decreased from 17 in 2006 to 9 in 2007 (4 from Vietnam, 2 from Thailand and also 2 from China and 1 from Spain). Crystal violet, another dye illegally used for the same purpose as malachite green and first noted in 2005 has been notified twice for tilapia from such different places as Jamaica and China (5 times in 2006).

chloramphenicol

Chloramphenicol is an antibiotic banned in the EU for food safety reasons. After a steep decrease of the number of notifications for chloramphenicol in the period 2002 (113) till 2005 (2), there is still evidence of its illegal use although the number of notifications (5) clearly shows an improvement of the situation compared to the previous five years. This general observation of decreased patterns for chloramphenicol appears valid for most commodities.

honey and royal jelly

In the European Community antibiotics have not been evaluated according to Regulation 2377/90 for use in bees therefore they can neither be authorised nor otherwise used for bees. As a consequence, any presence of antibiotics in honey is considered non-compliant with EU legislation. This is also valid for imported products. But this is not the case in some third countries where the use of certain antibiotics (i.e. sulphonamides, tetracyclines, tylosin) for bees is authorised. There is no clear pattern in the findings over the last five years other than a clear presence of residues of pharmacologically active substances with antimicrobial action.

residues

The total number of 49 notifications remains high, but is not more than the average number over the last five years. The notifications mostly related to unauthorised use: sulphonamides (20, clearly

on the rise again), trimethorpim (7), ciprofloxacin (5), tylosin (5), tetracycline (5), streptomycin (2), oxytetracycline (1), bacterial inhibitor (1), nitrofuran metabolite furazolidone (AOZ) (1), lincomycin (1) and norfloxacin (1).

meat other than poultry

In 2007 there were 13 notifications on the presence of prohibited or unauthorised substances. Metabolites of the prohibited nitrofurans were notified on 7 occasions. 4 of these concerned furazolidone (casings and rabbit meat from China), the other 3 concerned nitrofurazone (dried hog casings from China). In two of the previous notifications on dried hog casings, chloramphenicol also was found. Apart from that, it was also notified for frozen beef from Brazil. Regarding the presence of unauthorised substances, residues of phenylbutazone and oxyphenylbutazone were notified twice for horse meat from Poland and from the United Kingdom.

poultry

With one notification on the presence of chloramphenicol (chicken from Belgium) and another one for sulphachloropyridazine exceeding the MRL for goose liver from Hungary the downward trend for notifications on residues in poultry meat is very much confirmed (from 113 in 2002 over 59 in 2003 down to 8 in 2004, 4 in 2005 and 2 in 2006).

milk

Only one notification was transmitted, showing presence of chloramphenicol above the MRPL of 0.3 ppb in cheese from Lithuania.

eggs

None of the notifications for eggs in 2007 were related to residues of veterinary medicinal products

Foreign bodies

A foreign body is an undesirable piece of solid matter present in a food that has the potential to cause an adverse health effect. It may be derived from animals (hair, bone...) or plants (pit, stalk…) from which the food has been manufactured. It may also have been introduced in the food during the manufacturing process or in the distribution chain (insect, piece of glass or metal, stone, plastics, paper, wood…). When buying food, consumers expect it to be safe, which also means free of any foreign bodies. An inadvertent ingestion of a foreign body can indeed have a serious impact on consumers' health. According to Community legislation, the primary responsibility for food safety rests with food business operators. They must take all measures necessary to ensure that the food they produce is fit for human consumption. In so doing, and based on the HACCP principles, they must conduct a hazard analysis to identify all potential biological, chemical or physical hazards that may be reasonably expected to occur at each process step under their responsibilities. They must then put in place, implement and maintain control

measures that are best suited to prevent or eliminate hazards, or reduce their impact or occurrence to acceptable levels. Specific systems are put in place either to detect or to filter out foreign bodies.

With 137 notifications in 2007, the number keeps climbing through recent years. It being unlikely that the controls on foreign bodies by food business operators would have relaxed, it would appear that authorities are more frequently notifying findings of foreign bodies.

border rejections 27 border rejections were notified on account of foreign bodies. Countries notifying this type of hazard the most were United Kingdom and Poland. Most frequent cases were insect infestations of diverse bulk commodities, in particular peanuts and raw coffee.

consumer complaints As many as 45 notifications were identified as being related to consumer complaints. Although a variety of foreign bodies were reported, presence of insects and glass fragments are most common.

insects and mites There were 15 notifications on infestation with insects or larvae of insects in the fruits and vegetables category. Eight notifications on infestation with mites were also received for this food category. Nineteen cases of infestation with insects or larvae of insects were notified for various types of nuts with primarily peanuts from China, representing a remarkable increase. Eleven notifications on infestation with insects or larvae of insects were issued for the category of tea, coffee and cocoa products, primarily for imported raw coffee and for chocolate on the EU market.

glass fragments As many as 24 notifications were received relating to glass fragments found in food, 14 of those identified as consumer complaints and 8 as company own-checks. Often the glass fragments are found in a product in glass packaging (jars) but, just as often, in other types of packaging. For the latter products it is not always possible to identify the exact cause of contamination. For products in glass packaging, defects in the packaging can be the cause with breakage occurring at the top of the jar or bottle where it is closed with a screw cap or lid.

metal fragments Five notifications on the presence of metal fragments were issued for various processed products.

other materials There were many individual cases of foreign bodies such as presence of a piece of wood, wires, nails, plastic, (parts of) rodents, snails, etc.

Food supplements

The number of RASFF notifications reporting on food supplements has increased in the last three years. Only a minority of the notifications (2) were issued for a problem with the composition of the food supplement with vitamins and minerals, which is regulated by Community Directive 2002/46/EC[11]. Instead, a relevant increase of notifications is noted for the unauthorised placing on the market of food supplements (59) in particular because of the marketing of an unauthorised novel food (28). There has been an increase of notifications concerning potential microbiological contaminations mainly due to some batches of vitamins contaminated with Enterobacter sakazakii (8). The number of notifications about unauthorised irradiation has slightly decreased (12) while those related to heavy metals has remained stable (11).

Food supplements are considered as foodstuffs under EU legislation. Therefore, all horizontal provisions applicable to foods apply also to food supplements.

In addition, Directive 2002/46/EC establishes rules for the labelling, presentation and advertising of food supplements. It also introduces specific rules on vitamins and minerals; Annex II of Directive 2002/46/EC contains a list of permitted vitamin or mineral preparations that may be added for specific nutritional purposes in food supplements.

A wide range of vitamin preparations and mineral substances are used in food supplements that are currently marketed in Member States and which have not undergone a scientific safety evaluation. In order to allow the necessary time for this safety evaluation, Member States may provide derogations until 31 December 2009 for vitamins and minerals and their forms not included in the Directive[12], under certain conditions.

Concerning substances other than vitamins and minerals, a wide range is used in food supplements. At present, their use is not harmonised at Community level but subject to the rules of free circulation of products on the EU market as provided by the Treaty. Some products containing physiologically active substances are marketed as food supplements but are considered as unauthorised medicinal products by many Member States. These products are often sold directly to the consumer via the Internet. Since these products have not been evaluated for safety, serious health incidents are sometimes reported in connection with their consumption.

It should be noted that a revision of the existing novel food Regulation[13] is underway that, as the present one, will continue to apply also to food supplements.

11 Directive 2002/46/EC of the European Parliament and Council of 10 June 2002 on the approximation of the laws of Member States relating to food supplements
12 http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/labellingnutrition/supplements/food_supplements.pdf
13 Regulation (EC) No 258/97 of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning novel foods and novel food ingredients

Furthermore, it should be signalled that discussions are underway on the opportunity to establish maximum levels for some heavy metals in food supplements under the Commission Regulation (EC) No 1881/2006 setting maximum levels for certain contaminants in foodstuffs.

Pesticide residues

With 180 notifications in 2007 concerning pesticide residue findings, the number almost doubled compared to 2006. All cases reported were found in food, almost exclusively of plant origin, with one exception for honey.

An important part of the notifications on pesticides (16%) was due to 5 pesticides not authorised for use in Europe. In particular 28 notifications were issued about isofenphos-methyl in peppers from Spain, the first one transmitted in December 2006. On one occasion information about findings of the illegal pesticide isocarbophos in various vegetables were transmitted in the form of a news notification.

In addition, in the course of 2007 new and lower MRLs became applicable for 20 pesticides in the light of new toxicological information. The new, lower MRLs were implemented as soon as possible and the pesticides were included in the annual monitoring recommendation to ensure compliance. Such targeted sampling usually leads to more findings of these pesticides in the year to follow. The findings reflect in several cases illegal or incorrect uses of these pesticides, but in some cases the residues found are due to use of the pesticides before the MRL was changed. Crops on the market such as apples, oranges, frozen vegetables and potatoes will continue to contain residues at formerly authorised levels for more than a year after the use of pesticides has been discontinued. An additional reason for the increased number of notifications may be that recently the performance of the laboratories has greatly improved both in number of pesticides that can be detected and the lowest levels that can be quantified.

It must be noted though that only those findings that present a potential health risk are notified to the RASFF. An evaluation of each exceedance of MRL is performed, calculating the Predicted Short Term Intake (PSTI) from the levels of residue found and comparing it with the Acute Reference Dose (ARfD) or the Acceptable Daily Intake (ADI)[14].

14 A working document outlining the proposed methodology for evaluation is published at: http://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/protection/resources/rasff_pest_res_en.pdf

Foodborne outbreaks

The following report of two foodborne outbreaks that were linked to RASFF notifications are a contribution by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) to the RASFF annual report and are a good example of public health and food safety authorities working together to achieve better protection of the consumer. Foodborne outbreaks will be better identified in the RASFF in the future and the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding with ECDC is envisaged.

Two foodborne outbreaks in the EU related to alfalfa sprouts in 2007

Outbreak in Sweden

In Sweden, 51 domestic cases with *Salmonella* Stanley were reported in July and August 2007. Domestic cases of this serotype are unusual in Sweden. The majority of cases were adults. An outbreak investigation was initiated in July involving the Swedish Institute for Infectious Disease Control, the Swedish Food Safety Authority and the county medical officers. An Enter-net alert was issued but did not reveal anything out of the ordinary in other countries. The case-control study performed pointed strongly towards alfalfa sprouts. The cases had eaten alfalfa sprouts from various food stores or restaurants throughout Sweden.

Most of the product was traced to a large-scale sprout producer who had imported alfalfa seeds through a wholesaler in Denmark from an Italian seed producer. The same seeds had also been sold to other sprout growers in Sweden. There were no longer any sprouts or seeds of the implicated batches in the grower's stock but samples (unpasteurized seeds) were taken from another bag of seeds of the same batch and brand and tested positive for *Salmonella* but for another serotype, *S.* Mbandaka. An alert was issued through the RASFF on 31 August (2007.0605) and the sprouts were withdrawn from the Swedish market. The grower had heat treated the seeds before sprouting but it did not seem to have been efficient. Later, four cases with S. Mbandaka from May and June were recognized to be infected with *S.* Mbandaka having the same molecular typing patterns as the *S.* Mbandaka isolated from the sprouts and two of the cases remembered eating sprouts.

Outbreak in Norway, Denmark and Finland

In Norway, an alert was raised when four domestic cases with *Salmonella* Weltevreden were reported in October 2007. Domestic cases of this serotype are unusual in Norway. An outbreak investigation was initiated involving the Norwegian Institute of Public Health (FHI), the Norwegian Food Safety Authority (NFSA), and the municipal medical officers and an urgent inquiry was sent to the former Enter-net network through ECDC. In response to the inquiry, 19, 19 and 8 cases were reported in Norway, Denmark and Finland respectively. The demographic characteristics were comparable: the cases were adults and predominantly female.

On 23 October 2007, a *Salmonella* isolate obtained from a major Danish alfalfa sprout producer was serotyped as S. Weltevreden. The Danish food authorities issued an alert through RASFF on the same day

(2007.0760). The isolate was later shown to have the same molecular typing patterns as the isolates from the case-patients from Denmark, Norway and Finland. S. Weltevreden was also verified in the sprouts sold in Finland and Norway.

The seeds for growing the alfalfa sprouts had been imported to Denmark in July and August 2007. The Danish producer had then exported part of the batch of seeds to a Norwegian alfalfa sprout producer in September. The batch of seeds used in Denmark and Norway was traded via retailers in Germany and the Netherlands to Denmark, and originated from Italy. The seeds used in Finland came from the same Dutch supplier. The alfalfa sprouts were recalled and withdrawn in Denmark on 18 October, in Norway on 23 October, and in Finland on 28 October.

References

Outbreak of *Salmonella* Stanley in Sweden associated with alfalfa sprouts, July-August 2007. Werner, S., Boman, K, Einemo, I., Erntell, M., Helisola, R., de Jong, B., Lindqvist, A., Löfdahl, M., Löfdahl, S., Meeuwisse, A., Ohlen, G., Olsson, M., Persson, I., Runehagen, A.,

Rydevik, G., Stamer, U., Sellström, E. and Andersson, Y.
http://www.eurosurveillance.org/ew/2007/071018.asp#2

Outbreak of *Salmonella* Weltevreden infections in Norway, Denmark and Finland associated with alfalfa sprouts, July-October 2007. Emberland, K.E., Ethelberg, S., Kuusi, M., Vold, L., Jensvoll, L., Lindstedt, B-A., Nygård, K., Kjelsø, C., Torpdahl, M., Sørensen, G., Jensen, T., Lukinmaa, S., Niskanen, T. and Kapperud, G.
http://www.eurosurveillance.org/ew/2007/071129.asp#4

ECDC comments

In both outbreaks described above the seeds for making the sprouts originated from Italy but it is not confirmed that the seeds originated from the same company. A recent batch from Italy has also been found positive for *Salmonella*. A major food safety problem for the sprout industry is that the seeds for making the sprouts are not traded as food and consequently do not have to comply with EU food regulations. Instead, the food safety aspects have to be considered when growing the sprouts. Most large-scale sprout producers treat the seeds before sprouting with either chemicals or heat, but in order not to inhibit the germination of the seeds this treatment cannot be too harsh. Subsequently *Salmonella* may sometimes survive and replicate during the sprouting process causing sporadic cases or outbreaks. In some countries, like in Finland, the sprout producers are recommended to give a very short heat treatment to the final products before putting them on the market or for consumption.

Alfalfa seeds appear to be sold in very large batches and used for sprouting

during many months. Contaminated seeds may therefore have the potential to cause recurring outbreaks during an extended period of time. When implicated in an outbreak it may be insufficient to withdraw only the sprouted product; the seeds should also be considered, not only in the affected country but wherever the contaminated batch of seeds was distributed.

These outbreaks also highlight that seeds and thus also sprouts may be contaminated with several *Salmonella* serotypes, which makes it sometimes difficult to relate human cases to the batches of seeds and sprouts. Furthermore, *Salmonella* detection from seeds is not easy, as *Salmonella* cells are often weakened and not readily isolated.

As there seem to be relatively few alfalfa seed producers in Europe, a joint effort should be made by public health and food authorities to provide more evidence of human cases linked to sprouts and to support the seed producers and the sprout growers to intensify their HACCP control procedures. The intensified collaboration between ECDC and RASFF is foreseen to be very useful in this effort.

Feed

The number of RASFF notifications on feed has increased over the last three years: 85 in 2005, 129 notifications in 2006, 163 in 2007. The increase is mainly due to the increased number of notifications related to pet food, 45 as against 18 in 2006, which was the first year of transmission of these notifications through the RASFF (with the implementation of the new feed hygiene rules). An important case of feed contamination in 2007 concerned the presence of melamine in pet food and protein-rich ingredients (15 notifications - see the story on melamine hereafter for more details).

The most frequently notified hazard is still Salmonella: 71 cases (20 in pet food, 17 in rapeseed meal, 9 in fishmeal, 8 in sunflower meal). 11 notifications related to a too high count of Enterobacteriaceae in pet food.

unauthorised genetically modified feed

The number increased from 9 notifications in 2006 to 12 in 2007, of which 2 on LL Rice 601 (this was the only GM feed notified in 2006), 6 on maize DAS 59122, 4 on Bt 63 rice protein.

mycotoxins

12 notifications, more than doubled compared to 2006. Most of them concerned aflatoxins, 2 concerned zearalenone. In particular these two findings of zearalenone, known mycotoxins on cereals, need particular attention as these notifications relate to high levels of zearalenone in a rather unexpected feed material, namely soya hulls from Argentina. Therefore the notification was accompanied with a warning message for competent authorities and food business operators. Bird feed is notified for the first time in 2007, four times in total.

prohibited animal constituents	12 notifications (increase by 5) on mammalian or avian protein found in feed for food producing animals. Such constituents are only allowed in ingredients for pet food as according to Commission Decision 2004/217/EC adopting a list of materials whose circulation or use for animal nutrition purposes is prohibited.
dioxins	10 notifications as in 2006, see chapter on dioxins.
heavy metals	7 notifications as in 2006: zinc (2), lead (2), cadmium (3).
residues of veterinary medicinal products and feed additives	1 notification concerning tetracycline and colistin, 1 oxytetracycline, 1 salinomycin and narasin. The number of notifications on feed additives decreased from 12 to 3 in comparison to 2006.
other hazards	notified include undesirable substance mustard oil in rapeseed meal (1 notification); botulinum toxin in pet food (1); too high content of fluorine in a feed additive (1) and of selenium in a complete feed (1); too many insoluble impurities in rendered fat and spoilage (2).

Melamine in feed

From February 2007, a lot of reports were made about unusual sickness and death of pet animals (cats and dogs) in the United States (US). Following these reports an investigation was undertaken by the US authorities to trace the source of these animal health problems. It was found that wheat gluten originating from China and used for the production of pet food was at the origin of the animal health problems. Recall of pet food in which the wheat gluten was used was initiated.

Early April 2007, the fraudulent addition of melamine, an industrial chemical used in plastics, glues, etc…, to wheat gluten imported from China, was found to be the cause of the animal health incidents. Later, melamine and cyanuric acid, a compound structurally related to melamine, were also found in rice protein concentrate imported from China. Melamine had also been found some time before in South Africa in corn gluten originating from China. The levels of melamine found in wheat gluten and rice protein concentrate were in the range of 0.2 to 8 % (i.e. 2 to 80 grams per kg)

As the protein concentration is measured by analysis of the nitrogen, the fraudulent addition

of melamine ($C_3H_6N_6$), a chemical substance rich in nitrogen, aims at enhancing the apparent protein content of wheat gluten and other protein sources. It appears that it is the combination of melamine and cyanuric acid, forming crystals in the kidney of animals, that has caused the animal health problems. All contaminated batches of wheat gluten and rice protein concentrate could be traced to two companies in China.

This contamination incident was first reported through the RASFF on 20 March 2007 as an unknown hazard and only in April it was confirmed that it concerned a contamination with melamine. The contamination case was addressed at the meeting of the Standing Committee, section Animal Nutrition on 20 April 2007 and at the Working Group meeting on the RASFF on 27 April 2007. At both meetings Member States were requested to increase their alertness as regards the presence of melamine and structurally related compounds (such as cyanuric acid) in wheat gluten and rice protein originating from China.

Although there was no evidence that contaminated wheat gluten or rice protein concentrate or any other protein source originating from China had been imported into the EU, Member States have been formally asked by the Commission on 2 May 2007 to check consignments of wheat gluten, corn gluten, corn meal, soy protein, rice bran and rice protein concentrate originating from third countries, in particular from China, for the presence of melamine and related compounds and to report the results (both favourable and unfavourable) to the Commission through the RASFF.

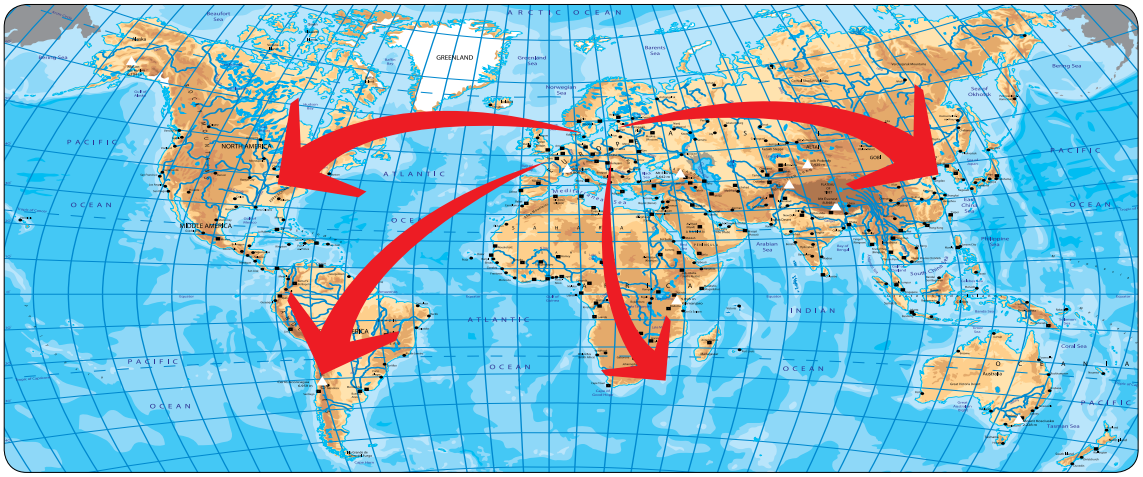
The Commission sent a request to EFSA on 8 May 2007 to obtain an urgent opinion on the risks for animal health and public health of the presence of melamine and structurally related compounds in feed and food. On 8 June 2007 EFSA issued a statement on this topic (available at http://www.efsa.europa.eu/EFSA/Statement/efsa_statement_melamine_en_rev1,0.pdf).

Taking into account the conclusions of the EFSA statement the Member States at the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health, section Animal Nutrition, agreed on 8 June 2007 on a harmonised enforcement approach in case of a finding of presence of melamine and related compounds (ammeline, ammelide, cyanuric acid) in feedingstuffs (http://ec.europa.eu/food/committees/regulatory/scfcah/animalnutrition/summary07062007_en.pdf).

The competent authorities of China (AQSIQ) informed the Commission that they had included rice protein products into the legal inspection commodity list as of 15 May 2007 (which was previously not the case) and that therefore all rice protein products shall go through compulsory official melamine examination and will only be permitted for export after having passed examination. Furthermore the control by local authorities on the production of rice protein concentrate will be strengthened. The Chinese authorities confirmed that all consignments of rice protein concentrate which had left China after 15 May 2007 should be free of melamine.

All RASFF notifications on findings of melamine and related compounds in feed ingredients originating from China relate to shipments which left China before 15 May 2007.

The Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health, section Animal Nutrition, agreed at its meeting on 22 October 2007 that, taking into account the results of the controls, the conclusions of the scientific statement issued by EFSA and the measures taken and commitment by the Chinese authorities, there was no longer a need to maintain an increased frequency of import controls for the presence of melamine and related compounds in protein-rich feed ingredients and an 'at random' official import control regime was from then onwards sufficient and appropriate.
(http://ec.europa.eu/food/committees/regulatory/scfcah/animalnutrition/sum_22102007_en.pdf)



Information provided to third countries

In order to avoid the recurrence of the problem detected, the RASFF informs third countries of origin in a systematic way via the Commission Delegations. Member States are informed directly through the RASFF system. In 2007, third countries were informed 1957 times of a problem with a product originating from their country. Following the transmission of more details in the RASFF, 172 e-mails with additional information were sent.

The RASFF also informs the third country concerned via the same channels if it has received information that a product notified in the RASFF was distributed to a third country. Third countries were informed 306 times of a distribution of a notified product to their country.

Recurrent problems for which the Commission required specific guarantees from third countries and Member States

When a serious problem is detected the Commission has a range of measures it can take depending on the nature of the problem. The measures to be taken by the Directorate-General Health and Consumers and proposed to Member States is first discussed in the so-called Safeguard cell.

The Safeguard Cell is a group of officials meeting internally in the DG reviewing information received that might indicate a risk for which an urgent safeguard measure is needed as well as making recommendations to the Director-General for action. This information may have different sources: FVO reports, RASFF notifications, information from Member States or Third Countries, press articles, results of border checks, etc.

If the risk does not require urgent measures, a letter is sent or a meeting is convened with the mission or embassy of the country concerned. As a consequence of this feedback, third countries take measures such as delisting of establishments, suspension of exports, intensification of controls and change of legislation. In addition, Member States intensify checks at import.

When the guarantees received are not sufficient or when immediate measures are required, the Safeguard Cell may recommend to the Director-General for

the Commission to take measures such as prohibition of import, systematic control at the EU borders, mandatory presentation of health certificates, etc. Additionally, the Food and Veterinary Office uses, among other criteria, the information transmitted through the RASFF to identify the priorities for its inspections programme.

The Commission can also send a letter to a Member State when it wants to draw its attention to a recurrent problem notified in the RASFF, requesting that specific guarantees are given that the problem is being or has been dealt with. There were however no such letters sent in 2007.

Country report: China

The number of RASFF notifications on Chinese products has increased significantly over the years and the share of Chinese products in the RASFF notifications has never been as high as in 2007. As many as 12% of the total of notifications received in 2007 concern products of Chinese origin (355, not including products originating from Hong Kong).

Notifications on Chinese products report on a variety of problems. Most important are: residues of veterinary medicinal products, irregularities at import (improper health certificates, illegal import etc.), mycotoxins, migration of organic compounds and of heavy metals from food contact materials and food additives.

residues of veterinary medicinal products

Problems with residues of veterinary medicinal products were primarily encountered for honey, crustaceans, animal casings and fish (in decreasing order). A decreasing trend can be observed for most product categories but in 2007 figures are on the rise again for fishery products and for honey and royal jelly. However few notifications were received in the second half year, suggesting that firm measures may have been taken by the Chinese government.

illegal imports

The number of irregularities notified in the RASFF remains at the same level, although high (>20). In addition, a control programme in Chinese warehouses in France found a high number of illegally imported products.

mycotoxins

Notifications on mycotoxins in products from China are almost exclusively about aflatoxins in peanuts. Since 2005, the number of notifications has decreased moderately each year (60 in 2007). Peanuts from China are still subject to a 10% systematic sampling at the border.

food contact materials

The number of notifications on food contact materials from China has increased in 2007 (to 90 notifications in 2007) and remains high.

The migrating organic compounds reported in the notifications are most often primary aromatic amines migrating from nylon kitchen utensils but also phthalates from lids of jars or a too high level of total migration. Many products are dispatched from Hong Kong but are likely to have been manufactured in mainland China.

Notifications on heavy metals in products from China are almost entirely based on samples taken of food contact materials, and more in particular, metal kitchen utensils and cutlery. Some Member States have national legislation imposing limits for the migration of chromium and nickel from these materials.

food additives

Problems with food additives are being signalled for various Chinese products in the RASFF, but most notably for fish and fruit and vegetables. In fish, most notified cases concern too high levels of polyphosphates in frozen fish. Dried fruit and vegetables often have too much sulphite added.

other problems

Other sensitive problems notified to the RASFF

- Since 2006, 20 notifications were issued (9 in 2007) on rice products containing the genetically modified strain "Bt63". Three of these were about feed materials ("rice protein concentrate").

- Since the problem was signalled to Member States in a news notification at the end of April 2007 and the Commission had requested Member States to increase controls, the presence of melamine was notified eleven times in total in "rice protein concentrate" and in "corn gluten" from China. Switzerland (not yet a member of the RASFF system) reported two findings of falsified maize gluten – in reality a mix of cereal by- products – containing melamine, urea and cyanuric acid. Five notifications reported the presence of melamine in processed feeds from Italy, Spain, the United States and South Africa that were or may have been manufactured using raw material from China. Information on measures taken can be found in the story on the melamine contamination in the feed section of this report.

cooperation with China in the field of RASFF

China has shown an interest in developing its own domestic Rapid Alert System for Food that would involve all relevant Chinese ministries.

- A RASFF workshop funded by the Commission was held in China on 6-8 November 2007 was well received and attended by the Chinese authorities competent for the safety of the food chain. The aim of the workshop is to explain the functioning of the EU RASFF and to promote the idea of a national Chinese Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed.

- The Commission has prepared an online application that will allow the Chinese authorities to consult, search and download RASFF notifications regarding Chinese products at the latest one day after their transmission in the RASFF (see the chapter on "RASFF connecting with the world" below).

3

RASFF working on the future

3. RASFF working on the future

RASFF information systems

Given that the planned information system for RASFF had incurred serious delay, the Commission has provided an alternative online application to RASFF member countries for easier access to the library of RASFF notifications. This application was baptised "RASFF Window". It allows persons in the official food and feed authorities to search for and download RASFF notifications, including follow-up notifications. It has primarily been developed to provide third countries, and in particular China, with more direct access to notifications concerning them. A first version of the system was finalised at the end of 2007.

RASFF connecting with the world

In many developing countries, national control systems lack resources and many cases notified through the RASFF concern products imported from or exported to third countries. A system similar to the RASFF could both enhance controls on products intended for the domestic market and correct problems with exports quickly. For these reasons the Commission decided to start a programme for informing developing countries in other regions of the world of the EU RASFF and supporting them in developing their own alert system.

This programme was launched in 2007 to provide third countries with information on the RASFF and discuss the desirability of and requirements for setting up similar systems elsewhere in the world.

In 2007 three workshops were held: the first in Bangkok, with a focus on the creation of an ASEAN Rapid Alert System for Food (see below). Another two workshops were held in Buenos Aires for Latin-American countries and in Beijing, China. Each of the RASFF workshops gave an overview of the system and discussed the possibility

of introducing a similar system within one country and as a regional network of countries. The overview covered the history, principles and infrastructure of the RASFF, collection and treatment of information and the notification process.

Parallel sessions detailed the functioning of the RASFF in different EU Member States, collection and verification of information and data, creating notifications and reactions, decision making and surveillance. Practical exercises related to rapid alert systems covered operational steps from getting started, through the creation, submission and evaluation of notifications, to searching for, and reacting to notifications.

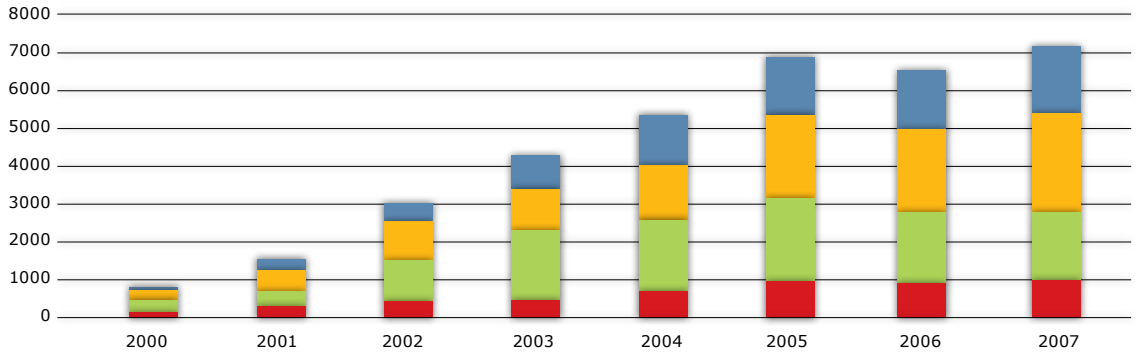
With the financial support of the European Commission, a pilot Rapid Alert System for Food was set up between six ASEAN member countries: Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, Cambodia, Philippines and Myanmar. An online web platform was developed for the notification to the system and the participating countries are in the process of establishing the operation procedures for the rapid alert system.

4

Detailed statistical breakdown

Detailed statistical breakdown

Evolution of the number of notifications since 2000



YEAR	ALERT	INFORMATION	ADDITION TO ALERT	ADDITION TO INFORMATION	Total
1997	67	14	54	8	143
1998	74	156	54	20	304
1999	97	263	279	59	698
2000	133	339	253	98	823
2001	302	406	549	310	1567
2002	434	1092	1032	466	3024
2003	454	1856	1098	878	4286
2004	692	1897	1449	1329	5367
2005	959	2204	2230	1522	6915
2006	912	1962	2157	1563	6594
2007	**953**	**1972**	**2440**	**1774**	**7139**
% increase	+4,5	+0,5	+13,1	+13,5	+8,3

Rejected notifications in 2007

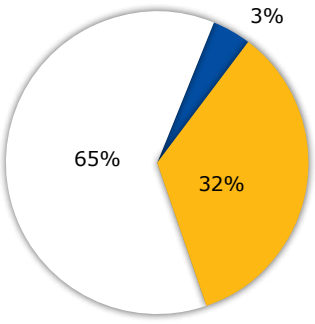
Notifications rejected for the following reasons

the notification contains inaccurate information	1
the notification contains insufficient evidence of a direct or indirect risk to consumer health	25
levels found are below the legal limits	2
levels found do not pose a risk to public health	3
the notification contains insufficient information to perform a proper evaluation	4
the notification is outdated	6
the notification does not fall within the scope of the RASFF system	14
in the context of Regulation (EC) N° 183/2005, the notification contains no evidence of a serious risk to animal health or the environment	3
in the context of Regulation (EC) N° 2073/2005, the microbiological criteria upon which the notification is based, cannot be used as food safety criteria	5
there is insufficient evidence to deem the food to be unsafe as according to Art. 14 of Regulation (EC) N° 178/2002	18
Total	**81**

Type of hazards identified in the rejected notifications

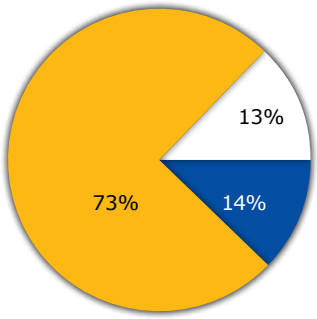
allergens	1
chemical contamination (other)	2
foreign bodies	2
labelling absent/incomplete/incorrect	11
microbiological contamination	7
not determined / other	19
organoleptic aspects	1
radiation	3
pesticide residues	3
(potentially) pathogenic micro-organisms	20
biocontaminants (other)	1
composition	2
migration	1
Total	**81**

2007 - Alert notifications by product origin



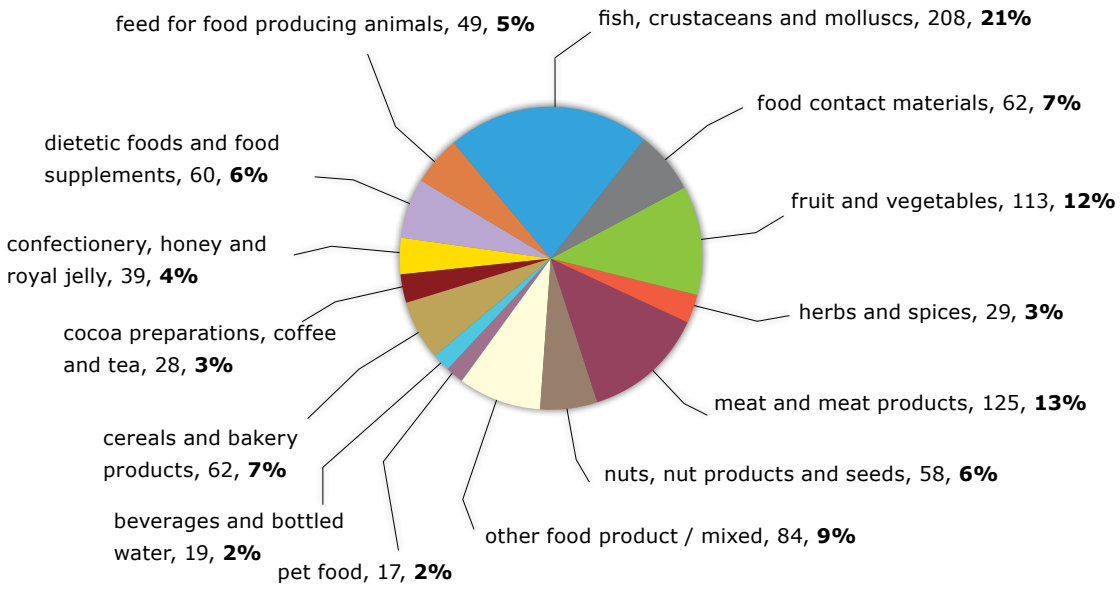
- Third countries, 314, 32%.
- Member states (EU+EFTA/EEA), 645, 65%.
- Candidate countries (Croatia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey), 26, 3%.

2007 - Information notifications by product origin

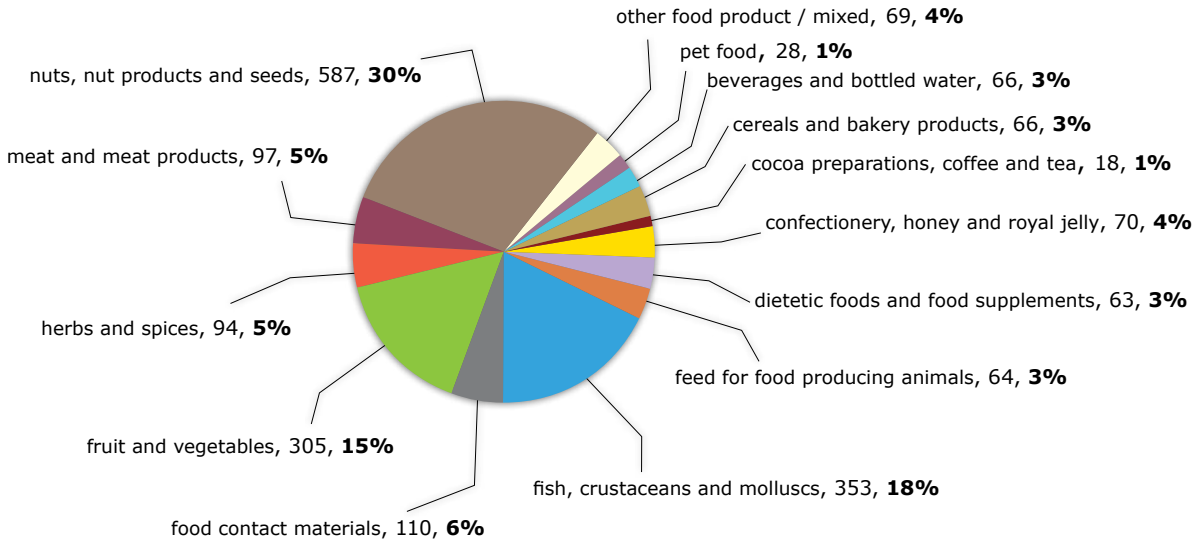


- Third countries, 1447, 73%.
- Member states (EU+EFTA/EEA), 261, 13%.
- Candidate countries (Croatia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey), 276, 14%.

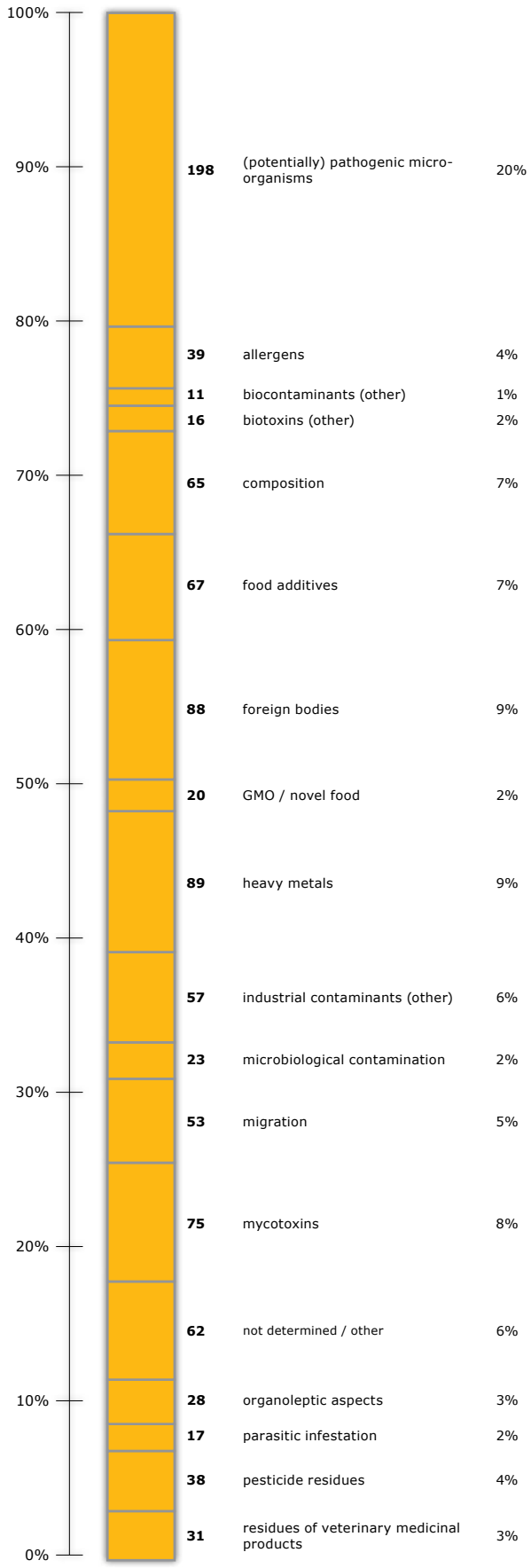
2007 Alert notifications according to product category



2007 Information notifications according to product category



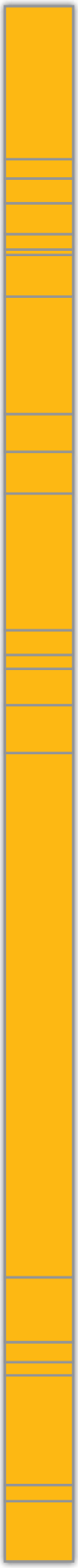
2007
Alert notifications by identified risk



198	(potentially) pathogenic micro-organisms	20%
39	allergens	4%
11	biocontaminants (other)	1%
16	biotoxins (other)	2%
65	composition	7%
67	food additives	7%
88	foreign bodies	9%
20	GMO / novel food	2%
89	heavy metals	9%
57	industrial contaminants (other)	6%
23	microbiological contamination	2%
53	migration	5%
75	mycotoxins	8%
62	not determined / other	6%
28	organoleptic aspects	3%
17	parasitic infestation	2%
38	pesticide residues	4%
31	residues of veterinary medicinal products	3%

Total=977

2007
Information notifications by identified risk



198	(potentially) pathogenic micro-organisms	10%
25	allergens	1%
32	bad or insufficient controls	2%
40	biocontaminants (other)	2%
20	biotoxins (other)	1%
7	chemical contamination (other)	0%
54	composition	3%
152	food additives	8%
49	foreign bodies	2%
54	GMO / novel foods	3%
177	heavy metals	9%
32	industrial contaminants (other)	2%
18	Labelling absent/incomplete/incorrect	1%
47	microbiological contamination	2%
62	migration	3%
679	mycotoxins	34%
84	not determined / other	4%
26	organoleptic aspects	1%
17	parasitic infestation	1%
142	pesticide residues	7%
21	radiation	1%
78	residues of veterinary medicinal products	4%

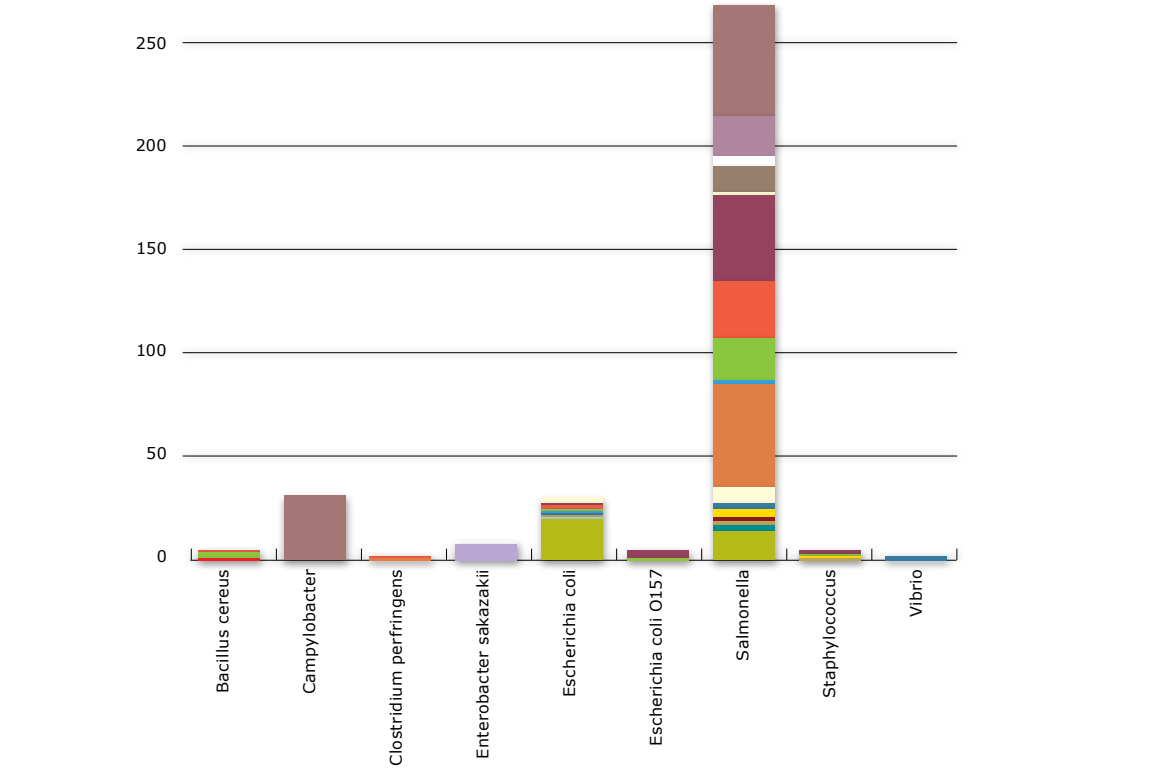
Total=2014

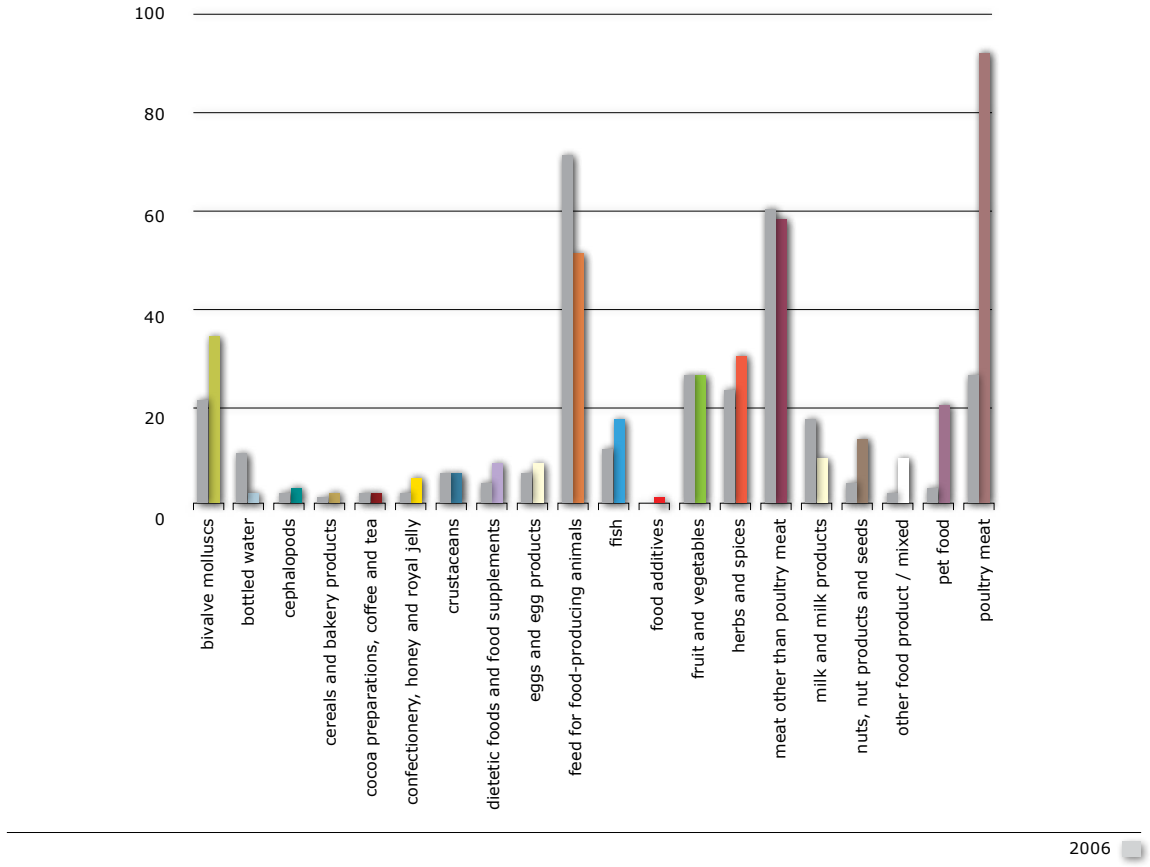
Breakdown of 2007 notifications by hazard and product category

Overview

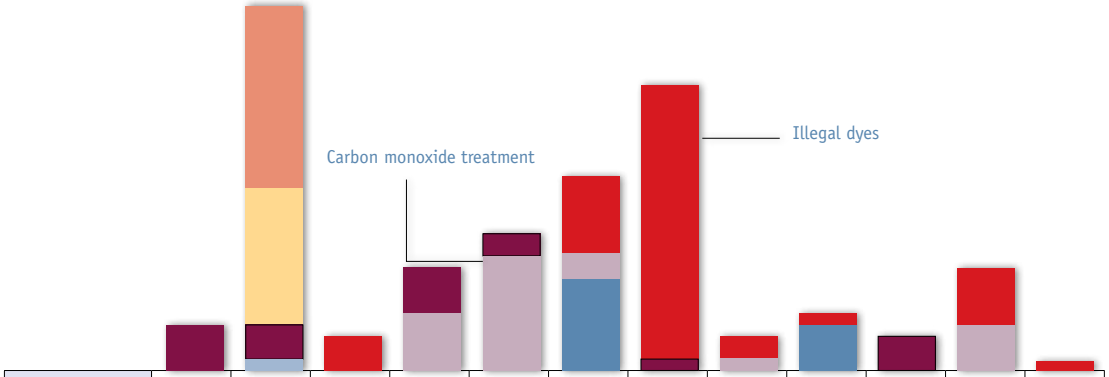
hazard category	Total	bivalve molluscs	cephalopods	cereals and bakery products	cocoa preparations, coffee and tea	confectionery, honey and royal jelly	crustaceans	dietetic foods and food supplements	eggs and egg products	fats and oils	feed for food-producing animals	fish	food additives	food contact materials	fruit and vegetables	herbs and spices	meat other than poultry meat	milk and milk products	natural mineral water	non-alcoholic beverages	nuts, nut products and seeds	other food product / mixed	pet food	poultry meat	prepared dishes and snacks	soups, broths and sauces	water for human consumption (other than natural mineral water)	wine
(potentially) pathogenic micro-organisms	**396**	34	3	2	2	5	6	8	8		51	17	1		26	30	58	9	2		13	4	20	92	3	2		
adulteration	**1**								1																			
allergens	**64**			14	12	11	1	3			1	2			2		1			3	2	2			7	3		
bad or insufficient controls	**38**			1			2			7		9			5		7			1	1	2		2			1	
biocontaminants (other)	**51**									1		45			4											1		
biotoxins (other)	**29**	16			1										5		1	1			2		1		2			
chemical contamination (other)	**29**			1		2	1	1			13			3	3					2			2	1				
composition	**121**			4		2		31		3	7	10		1	17	24	3		1		5		1			9	3	
feed additives	**4**								2		2																	
food additives	**217**			5		34	45	7				22			42	12	1			33	2	2			2	9		1
foreign bodies	**137**		2	14	14	10	1	1			7	4		1	40	2	2	3	1		22	1	1	1	4	5		1
GMO / novel food	**74**			30				26			7				3						1		5		1	1		
heavy metals	**266**	8	7	2			20	8			7	134	1	58	11	3	4		2		1							
industrial contaminants (other)	**89**				1			7		14	10	49	1		1	1										5		
labelling absent/incomplete/incorrect	**23**			1	1	4		1		1		6			1		1			1	5				1			
microbiological contamination	**70**	1		3	3	2			2		1	2			8	3	3	3	1	4	19		10		2		3	
migration	**115**												2	108	4	1												
mycotoxins	**754**			44	7	6					8	1			76	43		1			563		4			1		
not determined / other	**99**	10	3		5	10	4	5	1	2	2	8		2	2	1	12	1	2	1	12	8	2	4		2		
organoleptic aspects	**54**		1	1		1	2			1	1	4		1	11	2	11	3	1	4	7		1	1				1
packaging defective / incorrect	**9**			1				1				2			1		3									1		
parasitic infestation	**34**											28			1		5											
pesticide residues	**180**			2	1	2		5					3		162	3					1							1
radiation	**30**	1		4	2		1	15							3	2	1								1			
residues of veterinary medicinal products	**109**			1		26	43	4			2	15	1				14	1						2				
TSEs	**4**										2						2											
total	**2997**	**70**	**16**	**130**	**49**	**115**	**126**	**123**	**14**	**29**	**121**	**358**	**9**	**174**	**428**	**127**	**129**	**22**	**10**	**49**	**656**	**19**	**47**	**103**	**23**	**39**	**7**	**4**

(Potentially) pathogenic micro-organisms:





Composition



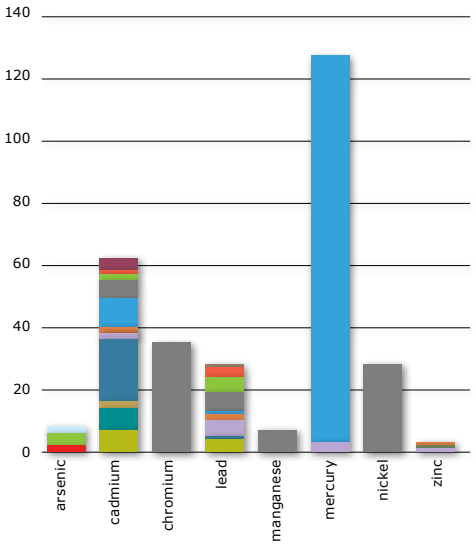
	cereals and bakery products	dietetic foods and food supplements	fats and oils	feed	fish	fruit and vegetables	herbs and spices	meat other than poultry meat	nuts, nut products and seeds	bottled water	soups, broths and sauces	other
high content	-	-	-	-	-	8	-	-	4	-	-	-
risk of overdosage	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
too high content	4	3	-	3	2	-	1	-	-	3	-	-
unauthorised product	-	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
unauthorised colour	-	-	3	-	-	7	24	2	1	-	5	1
unauthorised ingredient	-	16	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
other	-	-	-	5	10	2	-	1	-	-	4	-

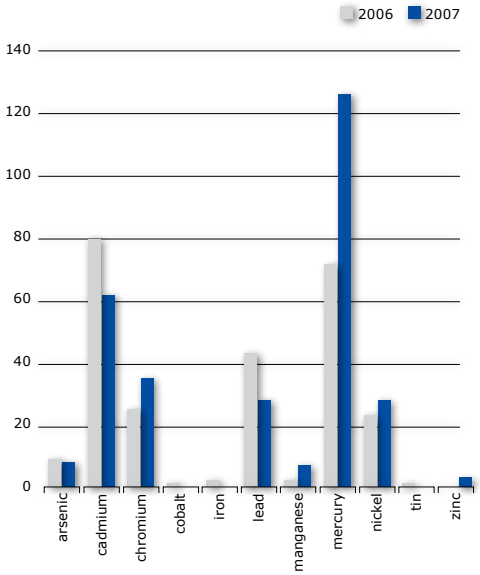
Note: the "too high content" category refers to chemical substances, other than food additives, for which thresholds existing in food law, as to the quantity present in a specific foodstuff, were exceeded, e.g. nitrates in leafy vegetables, spore elements in drinking water etc.

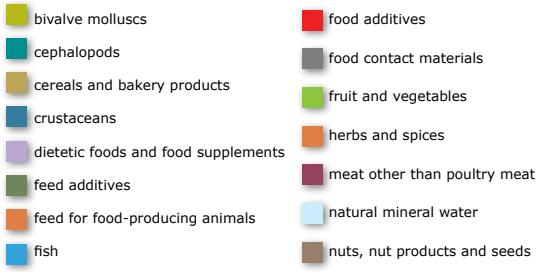
Food additives

	alcoholic beverages	cereals and bakery products	confectionery	crustaceans	dietetic foods and food supplements	fish	fruit and vegetables	herbs and spices	non-alcoholic beverages	other food product / mixed	soups, broths and sauces	**total**
too high content of colour			17			1		6		1		**25**
too high content (other)			3	2	8	12	5		25	2	8	**65**
too high content of sweetener			1		1		2		3		2	**9**
too high content of sulphite	1	1	2	37		2	16				1	**60**
unauthorised use of colour		4	10	1	1		7	5		1		**29**
unauthorised use (other)		1	1	1		7	6		3			**19**
unauthorised sweetener									2		1	**3**
unauthorised use of sulphite					1			1				**2**
undeclared colour			2									**2**
undeclared sulphite	1		1	6			10		1	1	2	**22**
undeclared (other)			1				4					**5**
unidentified colour			1							1		**2**
total	**2**	**6**	**39**	**47**	**11**	**22**	**50**	**12**	**34**	**6**	**14**	**243**

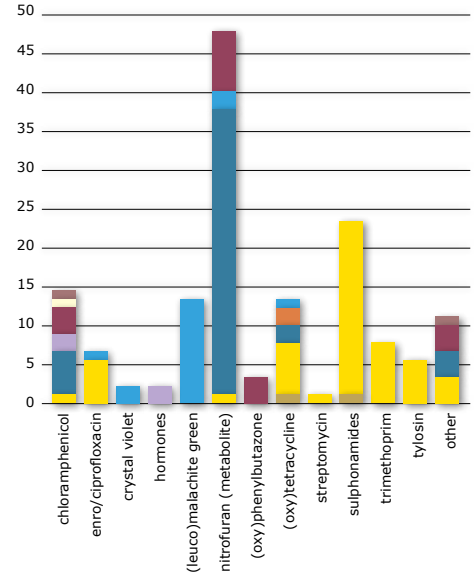
Heavy metals

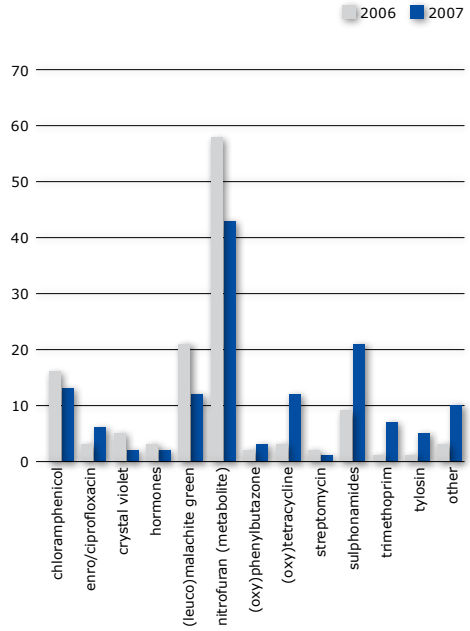


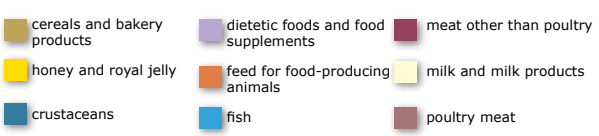




Residues of veterinary medicinal products







Notifications by product category

	TOTAL 2005	Alert 2005	Information 2005	TOTAL 2006	Alert 2006	Information 2006	TOTAL 2007	Alert 2007	Information 2007
Beverages and bottled water	49	18	31	71	25	46	67	19	48
Alcoholic beverages (other than wine)	5	2	3	5	3	2	3		3
Non-alcoholic beverages	39	13	26	62	22	40	60	16	44
Wine	5	3	2	4		4	4	3	1
Feed	86	22	64	129	70	59	163	69	94
Fish, crustaceans and molluscs	559	196	363	521	174	347	561	208	353
Molluscs	87	11	76	93	34	59	84	31	53
Crustaceans	161	42	119	141	31	110	125	38	87
Fish	311	143	168	287	109	178	352	139	213
Meat, game and poultry	316	171	145	184	113	71	222	125	97
Meat other than poultry	209	126	83	141	87	54	121	73	48
Poultry meat	107	45	62	43	26	17	101	52	49
Other products									
Cereals and bakery products	64	41	23	197	103	94	128	62	66
Cocoa preparations, coffee and tea	18	9	9	43	23	20	46	28	18
Confectionery, honey and royal jelly	114	44	70	85	33	52	109	39	70
Dietetic foods and food supplements	54	35	19	90	59	31	123	60	63
Eggs and egg products	10	7	3	14	10	4	14	7	7
Fats and oils	63	31	32	17	10	7	29	10	19
Food additives	1		1	2		2	8	4	4
Fruit and vegetables	293	65	228	319	71	248	418	113	305
Herbs and spices	304	108	196	153	44	109	123	29	94
Ices and desserts	1	1		6	3	3	1		1
Milk and milk products	55	38	17	37	26	11	21	18	3
Nuts, nut products and seeds	886	52	834	725	40	685	645	58	587
Prepared dishes and snacks	32	22	10	26	10	16	23	18	5
Soups, broths and sauces	48	31	17	43	12	31	39	19	20
Other food products / mixed	11	3	8	18	6	12	13	5	8
Food contact materials	191	61	130	191	78	113	172	62	110
TOTAL	**2964**	**894**	**2070**	**2680**	**832**	**1848**	**2753**	**891**	**1862**

Notifications by hazard category

hazard category	total	alert	information	border control - import rejected	border control - screening sample	company's own check	consumer complaint	market control
(potentially) pathogenic micro-organisms	396	198	198	51	31	61	12	241
adulteration	1	1						1
allergens	64	39	25	9	2	7	5	41
bad or insufficient controls	38	6	32	29		1		8
biocontaminants (other)	51	11	40	18	8	1	4	20
biotoxins (other)	29	16	13	5		1	9	14
chemical contamination (other)	29	9	20	9	2	9	1	8
composition	119	65	54	25	1	5	2	86
feed additives	4	2	2					4
food additives	219	67	152	99	12	1	2	105
foreign bodies	137	88	49	27		17	45	48
GMO / novel food	74	20	54	35	4			35
heavy metals	266	89	177	100	32	2	2	130
industrial contaminants (other)	89	57	32	14	10	1	2	62
labelling absent/incomplete/incorrect	23	5	18	14			4	5
microbiological contamination	70	23	47	31	8	3	11	17
migration	115	53	62	20		2	1	92
mycotoxins	754	75	679	604	30	10		110
not determined / other	99	22	77	56	6		7	30
organoleptic aspects	54	28	26	19	2	6	12	15
packaging defective / incorrect	9	5	4	2	2	1		4
parasitic infestation	34	17	17	7	3	4	3	17
pesticide residues	180	38	142	28	17	7	2	126
radiation	30	9	21	4	1	1		24
residues of veterinary medicinal products	109	31	78	40	21	3		45
TSE's	4	3	1			1		3
Total:	2997	977	2020	1246	192	144	124	1291

Please note that a consignment might originate from more than one country.

Notifications by notifying country

COUNTRY	number of notifications			Alert notifications			Information notifications		
	2007	2006		2007	2006		2007	2006	
AUSTRIA	62	71	↓	36	38	↓	26	33	↓
BELGIUM	98	80	↑	57	44	↑	41	36	↑
BULGARIA	10		↑	4		↑	6		↑
CYPRUS	52	41	↑	19	15	↑	33	26	↑
CZECH REPUBLIC	73	76	↓	57	44	↑	16	32	↓
DENMARK	130	114	↑	68	61	↑	62	53	↑
ESTONIA	17	25	↓	10	17	↓	7	8	↓
FINLAND	82	79	↑	25	30	↓	57	49	↑
FRANCE	124	94	↑	43	43	=	81	51	↑
GERMANY	376	421	↓	142	163	↓	234	258	↓
GREECE	168	110	↑	26	12	↑	142	98	↑
HUNGARY	29	33	↓	19	15	↑	10	18	↓
ICELAND	4	3	↑	2	1	↑	2	2	=
IRELAND	24	14	↑	20	11	↑	4	3	↑
ITALY	499	556	↓	147	143	↑	352	413	↓
LATVIA	13	19	↓	6	6	=	7	13	↓
LIECHTENSTEIN	0	0	=	0	0	=	0	0	=
LITHUANIA	40	27	↑	11	5	↑	29	22	↑
LUXEMBOURG	10	7	↑	3	5	↓	7	2	↑
MALTA	38	16	↑	2	3	↓	36	13	↑
NETHERLANDS	156	163	↓	32	30	↑	124	133	↓
NORWAY	68	54	↑	18	18	=	50	36	↑
POLAND	122	103	↑	16	13	↑	106	90	↑
PORTUGAL	24	20	↑	6	6	=	18	14	↑
ROMANIA	7		↑	5		↑	2		↑
SLOVAKIA	61	49	↑	51	38	↑	10	11	↓
SLOVENIA	48	61	↓	20	29	↓	28	32	↓
SPAIN	169	223	↓	15	16	↓	154	207	↓
SWEDEN	55	61	↓	24	37	↓	31	24	↓
UNITED KINGDOM	360	351	↑	63	66	↓	297	285	↑
COMMISSION SERVICES	6	3	↑	6	3	↑			
Total	2925	2874		953	912		1972	1962	

Notifications by country of origin of the product

COUNTRY	Number		COUNTRY	Number		COUNTRY	Number		COUNTRY	Number	
CHINA	352	↑	BANGLADESH	15	↓	GAMBIA	4	↑	GREENLAND	1	↑
TURKEY	293	↑	SENEGAL	15	↑	F.Y.R.OF MACEDONIA.	4	↓	GUINEA	1	=
THE UNITED STATES	191	↓	RUSSIAN FEDERATION	15	↓	MEXICO	4		HAITI	1	
SPAIN	177	↑	AUSTRALIA	14	↓	SAUDI ARABIA	4	↑	ICELAND	1	
IRAN	133	↓	LATVIA	14	↓	SEYCHELLES	4		JORDAN	1	
GERMANY	122	↑	THE PHILIPPINES	13	↓	GEORGIA	3	↓	MACAO	1	
INDIA	113	↑	CANADA	12	↓	KENYA	3	↓	MONACO	1	
FRANCE	109	↑	CYPRUS	12	↑	REPUBLIC OF KOREA	3	↓	SAN MARINO	1	
THAILAND	92	↑	IRELAND	11	↓	MALTA	3	↑	YEMEN	1	
POLAND	77	↑	PANAMA	11	↑	MAURITIUS	3	↑	ZIMBABWE	1	=
ITALY	75	↓	AUSTRIA	10	↓	REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA	3	↓			
BRAZIL	58	↓	IVORY COAST	10	↓	MOZAMBIQUE	3	↑			
THE NETHERLANDS	52	↑	NICARAGUA	10		ROMANIA	3	↓			
UNITED KINGDOM	52	↓	PORTUGAL	10	↓	SLOVENIA	3	↓	AZERBIJAN		
CHINA (HONG KONG)	50	↑	SINGAPORE	10	↑	ALGERIA	2	↑	AFGHANISTAN		
NIGERIA	49	↑	SWEDEN	10	↑	BOLIVIA	2	↑	BENIN		
ARGENTINA	48	↓	SWITZERLAND	10	↑	CAMEROON	2		CAMBODIA		
VIETNAM	45	↓	SYRIA	10		ETHIOPIA	2	=	COMOROS		
BELGIUM	40	↑	JAPAN	9	↑	FIJI	2	↓	CONGO		
UKRAINE	40	↑	SOUTH AFRICA	8	↑	GABON	2		EL SALVADOR		
EGYPT	35	↑	ECUADOR	7	↓	JAMAICA	2		ERITREA		
DENMARK	34	↑	NAMIBIA	7	↑	MALAWI	2	↓	GRENADA		
GREECE	32	↑	ANGOLA	6	↑	MYANMAR	2	↑	HONDURAS		
CZECH REPUBLIC	31	↑	BULGARIA	6	↓	NEW ZEALAND	2	↓	KOSOVO (UNSCR1244)		
GHANA	31	↓	COLOMBIA	6	↓	OMAN	2	↓	KUWAIT		
PAKISTAN	27	↑	COSTA RICA	6	↑	PARAGUAY	2	↓	LUXEMBOURG		
INDONESIA	26	↓	LITHUANIA	6	↓	SIERRA LEONE	2	=	MADAGASCAR		
SRI LANKA	24	↑	SURINAME	6	↑	SUDAN	2	↓	THE MALDIVES		
UNKNOWN ORIGIN	23	↑	URUGUAY	6	↑	UGANDA	2	↑	MONGOLIA		
MALAYSIA	22	↑	CROATIA	5	↓	UZBEKISTAN	2	↓	REUNION		
MOROCCO	22	↓	ISRAEL	5	↓	ALBANIA	1	=	SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO		
PERU	21	↑	KAZAKHSTAN	5	↑	ARMENIA	1		TOGO		
LEBANON	19	↑	NORWAY	5	↓	BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	1	=	TONGA		
CHILE	18	↑	SERBIA	5	↑	CAPE VERDE	1		UNITED ARAB EMIRATES		
SLOVAKIA	17	↑	TAIWAN	5	=	CUBA	1	=	VENEZUELA		
HUNGARY	16	↑	TANZANIA	5	↑	ESTONIA	1	↓	YEMEN		
TUNISIA	16	↑	DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	4	=	FINLAND	1	↓	ZAMBIA		

Please note that a consignment might originate from more than one country.

Countries that were listed in 2006 but that are no longer appearing in the list in 2007

↓ Green arrow down = more than 5 notifications less

Countries that were not listed in 2006

↑ Red arrow up = more than 5 notifications plus

Notifications by notifying country and hazard category

Hazard category	AT	BE	BG	CY	CZ	DE	DK	EE	ES	FI	FR	GB	GR	HU	IE	IS	IT	LT	LU	LV	MT	NL	NO	PL	PT	RO	SE	SI	SK	CS [15]
(potentially) pathogenic micro-organisms	12	21	2	2	4	35	84	1	11	20	30	32	6			2	54	3			1	2	21	20			21	5	6	1
adulteration														1																
allergens	2	1		19		1	1	1	1			16	7		3		1	1			5						2	3		
bad or insufficient controls						6	1		1		2	1					11	3	1		1			10			1			
biocontaminants (other)	1			3		9			2	1	6	8	3				14		1				2	1						
biotoxins (other)	2	1				1			12		1	3					6											1	2	
chemical contamination (other)		2				4			4	1	2	4	4	1	1		2							2				1		1
composition	2	1			4	27	4	1	7		6	6	6	5		1	27		3	1		5	6	3		1		1	2	
feed additives		1				2													1											
food additives	1	1		1	12	14	5	6	30	8	14	40	16		1		36	8		1			3	9	1			1	11	
foreign bodies	2	2		2	17	8	4					24	4	4	5		12	4	2	2	2	2	4	26	1		1	1	7	1
GMO / novel food	3		1	3	1	11	1	2		4	1	1	3		1		6				21	3					11		1	
heavy metals		13	1	1	1	10	1		24	8	12	9	11		2		133			1		6	2	6	8			13	4	
industrial contaminants (other)	18	5			1	15		2	2	9	8	2	3	1	5	1	3	4		2		3		1					2	2
labelling absent/incomplete/ incorrect			1			1	1	1	4				5				4				2			3					1	
microbiological contamination		8			8	2	3		2	1	2	4	4		1		7	2	2			3		18			1	1	1	
migration	2	6			4	18	3		2	5			36		1		8					1	19					8	2	
mycotoxins	14	10	5	9	8	134	11	1	29	9	33	131	52	3	1		137	1	1		1	98	7	14	12		11	3	19	
not determined / other	1	7		1	1	15	6	1	10	1	1	13	6	1			10	4		2	4	1	2	8				2	2	
organoleptic aspects		1		2	6	7	1		1	1	2	4	1				7	1		1	1	2		11				4	1	
packaging defective / incorrect		1	1						1		2	3	1																	
parasitic infestation	1				1	7			2		2						12	1						1	1	6				
pesticide residues	2	10		9	3	40	2	1	10	11		21	1	9	2		9	6		1		22	3	4	1		7	4	1	1
radiation					1	4				5	2	14	1		1				2											
residues of veterinary medicinal products		11			4	13	2		16		2	26	4	3			8	1	1	3	1	9		4						1
TSEs						1						1		1				1												
total	**63**	**102**	**11**	**52**	**76**	**385**	**130**	**17**	**171**	**84**	**128**	**363**	**174**	**29**	**24**	**4**	**507**	**40**	**14**	**14**	**39**	**157**	**69**	**141**	**24**	**7**	**55**	**48**	**62**	**7**

Please note that notifications that reported on more than one hazard category are counted more than once.

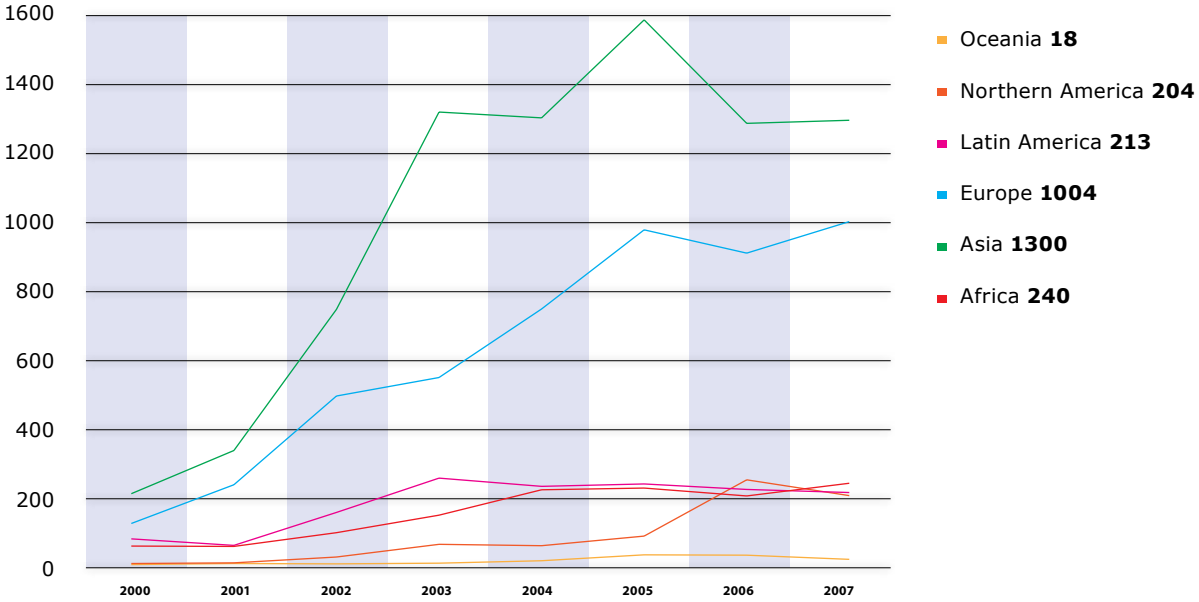
15 CS: Commission Services (RASFF team).

Notifications by origin of the product, classified by world region

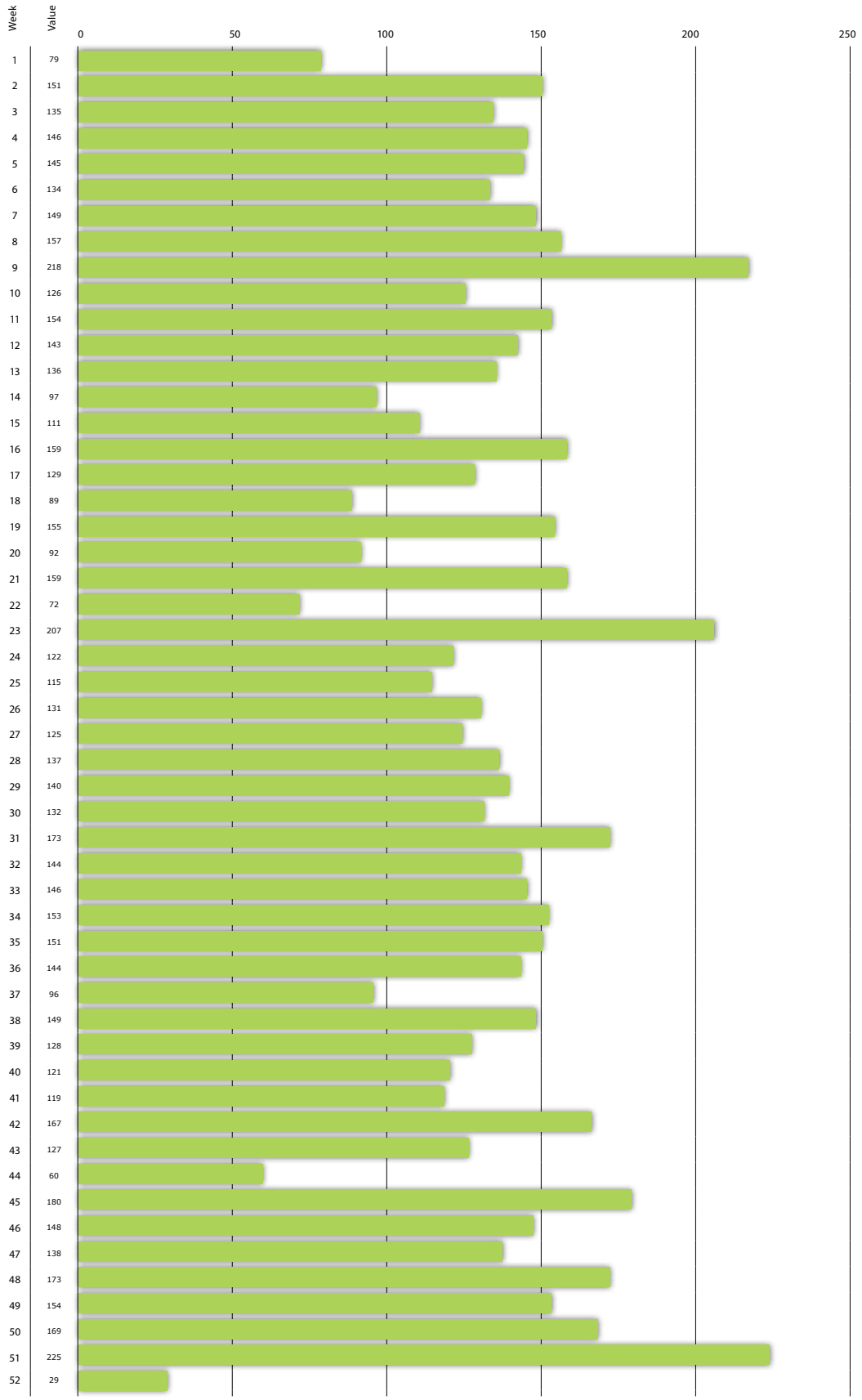
World region	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	TOTAL
Eastern Africa	8	4	8	15	6	21	22	25	**109**
Middle Africa	2		4	1	1	10	3	10	**31**
Northern Africa	18	28	32	73	67	61	71	77	**427**
Southern Africa	6	7	32	25	33	25	10	15	**153**
Western Africa	23	17	20	33	114	109	97	113	**526**
Eastern Asia	49	82	163	180	203	316	317	420	**1730**
South-central Asia	73	100	150	649	655	675	412	319	**3033**
South-eastern Asia	53	100	280	270	224	325	261	210	**1723**
Western Asia	35	54	155	225	225	277	301	351	**1623**
Eastern Europe	11	11	42	57	91	155	173	208	**748**
Northern Europe	25	38	85	109	157	156	158	135	**863**
Southern Europe	28	108	145	162	221	330	265	317	**1576**
Western Europe	59	79	223	221	280	339	316	344	**1861**
Caribbean	2			4	2	2	7	8	**25**
Central America	8	3	10	10	19	17	10	31	**108**
South America	68	56	145	241	210	219	205	174	**1318**
Northern America	6	8	25	62	58	86	250	204	**699**
Australia and New Zealand	3	6	4	7	13	31	25	16	**105**
Melanesia			1		1		4	2	**8**
Polynesia							1		**1**
									16667

A product might originate from more than one country/world region.

Notifications by world regions 2000 - 2007



Overview of total exchanges in 2007



The Commission's RASFF Team members are:

From left to right:
Magdalena Blaszkowska, Jan Baele, Anna Mlynarczyk, José Luis De Felipe, Paola Ferraro, Magdalena Havlíková, Adrianus ten Velden.

European Commission

The Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) Annual Report 2007

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities

2007 — 65 pp. — 21.0 x 29.7 cm

ISBN 978-92-79-08594-9

ND-AC-08-001-EN-C

The Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF)

Annual Report **2007**

Publications Office
Publications.europa.eu

ISBN 978-92-79-08594-9