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Directorate-General for Health & Consumers

30 YEARS Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed

The Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF)

Annual Report 2009

RASFF
Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed

The Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF)

Annual Report 2009

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 2009.

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http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_consumer/index_en.htm
and on the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed at:
http://ec.europa.eu/RASFF

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FOREWORD

It is a great pleasure for me to provide this year's foreword to the RASFF annual report. Another year brings another report illustrating that we cannot rest on our laurels when it comes to food safety, even if 2009 is the first year since long without any incidents of significant proportion being reported in the RASFF.

Still, the number of notifications issued by Member States in the RASFF has again reached an all time high. And this is reassuring at the same time because it shows that Member States are very willing to cooperate beyond their national borders to safeguard our high level of food safety in the EU. The figures show that Member States are sending more follow-up notifications, thereby giving other countries, including third countries, the information they need to act quickly and protect their consumers.

Great effort was done for countries that are not member of RASFF. More than 60 countries outside the EU connect to RASFF Window, a new online platform, to download RASFF notifications concerning them. It is only a beginning. The Commission continues its efforts to support these countries in setting up their alert systems, through the Better Training For Safer Food programme, to enable them to tackle food safety incidents that gradually become more global in nature.

In 2009 the RASFF celebrated its 30th birthday. It was a memorable event celebrated not only with Member States but with representatives of countries from all over the world. The international conference took stock of what was achieved and identified the challenges ahead. Apart from the global dimension of food safety, another conclusion of the conference was that involvement of stakeholders such as professional operators and consumers needed to be increased. To enable this, first the RASFF should become more transparent giving more detailed information on the product.

A tool that may prove to be invaluable in reaching this objective, RASFF Portal, was inaugurated during the opening of the 30 years-conference. Now citizens can use an online tool to find information on any RASFF notification issued since the beginning of RASFF in 1979.

The RASFF system only works due to the strong commitment and enthusiasm of all actors involved, both in the Member States and within the European Commission. To all, my heartfelt gratitude and encouragement to continue on their quest to keep our consumers safe.

John Dalli
Commissioner for Health and Consumer Policy

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Acronyms used in this report

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BIP	Border Inspection Post
BTSF	Better Training for Safer Food
CS	Commission Services
ECDC	European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control
EC	European Commission
EEA	European Economic Area
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EFSA	European Food Safety Authority
EU	European Union
EMA	European Medicines Agency
EPN	Ethyl p-nitrophenyl phenylphosphorothioate
EWRS	Early Warning Response System
FSA	UK Food Standards Agency
FDA	U.S. Food and Drug Administration
FVO	Food and Veterinary Office
GMO	Genetically Modified Organism
HACCP	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points
IHR	International Health Regulations
INFOSAN	International Food Safety Authorities Network
MERCOSUR	Mercado Común del Sur (Southern Common Market)
MPA	Medroxyprogesterone acetate
MRL	Maximum Residue Limit
OJ	Official Journal
PCB	Polychlorinated biphenyls
RASFF	Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed
SEM	Semicarbazide (nitrofurazone)
TRACES	Trade Control and Expert System
TWI	Total Weekly Intake
WHO	World Health Organisation

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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, EFSA[1], EEA[2] 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 member and 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 lays down additional 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.

1 European Food Safety Authority, www.efsa.europa.eu
2 EFTA Surveillance Authority, http://www.eftasurv.int

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 and their home pages can be consulted on the internet from the following RASFF web page: http://ec.europa.eu/comm/food/food/rapidalert/members_en.htm

THE MEMBERS

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 Food

CYPRUS
- Ministry of Health – Medical and Public Health Services

CZECH REPUBLIC
- Státní zemědělská a potravinářská 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
- Direction générale de la concurrence, de la consommation et de la répression des fraudes – Ministère de l'Economie, de l'Industrie et de l'Emploi
- Ministère de l'Alimentation, de l'Agriculture et de la Pêche

GERMANY
- Bundesamt für Verbraucherschutz und Lebensmittelsicherheit (BVL)

GREECE
- Hellenic Food Authority (EFET)

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

ICELAND
- The Icelandic Food and Veterinary Authority – MAST

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

ITALY
- Ministero della Salute (Ministry of Health)

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
- OSQCA: Organisme pour la sécurité et la qualité de la chaîne alimentaire

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

SLOVENIA
- Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food

SPAIN
- Ministerio de Sanidad y Consumo – Ministry of Health and Consumption
- Ministry of Environment, Rural and Marine Affairs

SWEDEN
- Livsmedelsverket
- National Food Administration

SWITZERLAND
- Bundesamt für Gesundheit (BAG)

UNITED KINGDOM
- Food Standards Agency

Market notifications

These notifications report on health risks identified in products that are placed on the market in the notifying country. The notifying country reports on the risks it has identified, the product and its traceability and the measures it has taken. According to the seriousness of the risks identified and the distribution of the product on the market, the market notification is classified after evaluation by the Commission Services as alert notification or information notification before the Commission transmits it to all network members.

Alert notifications

An 'alert notification' or 'alert' is sent when a food or a feed presenting a serious risk is on the market or when rapid action is required. Alerts are triggered by the member of the network that detects the problem and has initiated the relevant measures, such as withdrawal/recall. The notification aims at giving all the members of the network the information to verify whether the concerned product is on their market, so that they 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

An 'information notification' concerns a food or a feed on the market of the notifying country for which a risk has been identified that does not require rapid action, e. g. because the food or feed has not reached the market or is no longer on the market (of other member countries than the notifying country).

Border rejection notifications

A 'border rejection notification' concerns a food or a feed that was refused entry into the Community for reason of a risk to human or animal health.

News notifications

A 'news notification' concerns any type of information related to the safety of food or feed which has not been communicated as an alert, information or border rejection notification, but which is judged interesting for the food and feed control authorities in the Member States.

News notifications are often made based on information picked up in the media or forwarded by colleagues in food or feed authorities in third countries, EC delegations or international organisations, after having been verified with the Member States concerned.

Two types of notifications are identified:

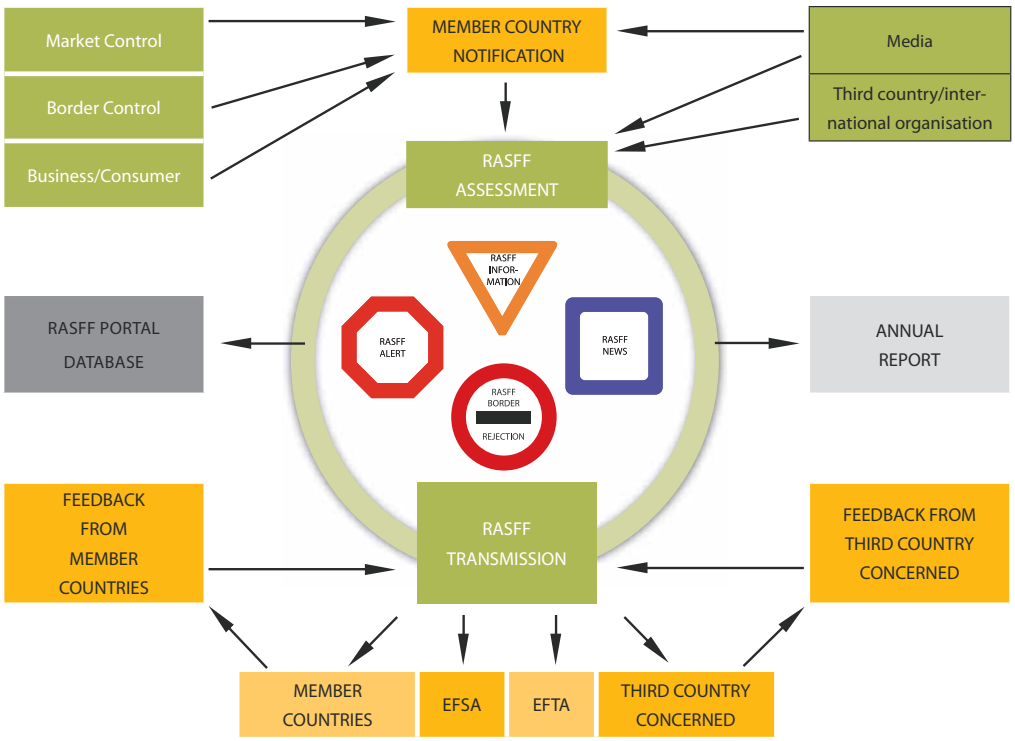
- an 'original notification' is a notification referring to one or more consignments of a food or a feed that were not previously notified to the RASFF;
- a 'follow-up notification' is a notification, which is transmitted as a follow-up to an original notification.

An original notification sent by a member of the RASFF network can be **rejected** from transmission through the RASFF, 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 intention not to transmit the information through the RASFF 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 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.

Schematic representation of the information flow of the RASFF:

SCHEMATIC REPRESENTATION OF THE INFORMATION FLOW OF THE RASFF



2

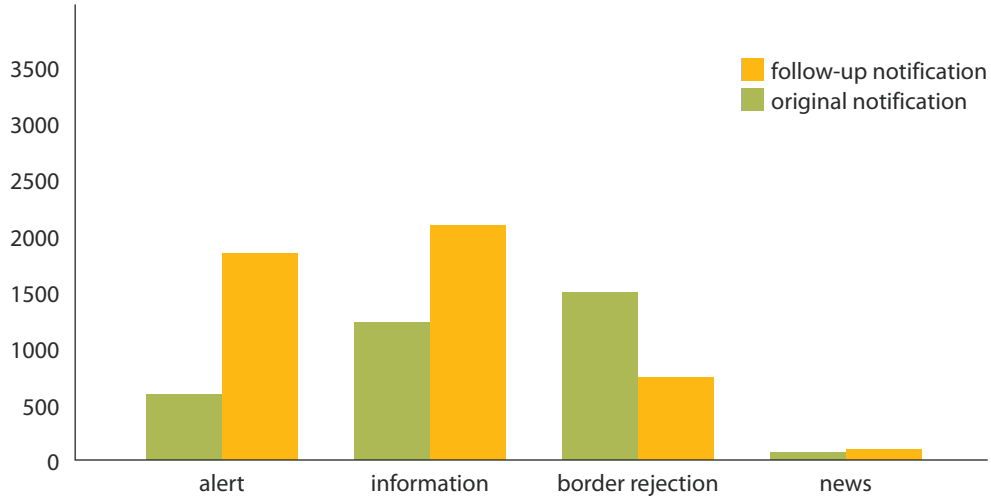
RASFF notifications in 2009

2009: RASFF NOTIFICATIONS BY NUMBERS

In 2009, a total of 3322 original notifications were transmitted through the RASFF, of which 1796 market notifications, 1484 border rejections and 42 news notifications. 578 market notifications were classified as alerts, and 1218 as information notifications. These original notifications gave rise to 4767 follow-up notifications, representing on average about 1.4 follow-ups per original notification.

These figures represent a 5.8 % increase in original notifications and more importantly, a 17.7 % increase in follow-up notifications; resulting in an overall increase of 13.4 %.

2009 NOTIFICATIONS CLASSIFICATION



After receipt of additional information, 21 alert notifications, 27 information notifications and 28 border rejections were withdrawn[3]. Notifications that were withdrawn and news notifications are further excluded from statistics and charts.

The European Commission decided, after consulting the notifying countries, not to upload 67 notifications onto the system since, after evaluation, they were found not to satisfy the criteria for a RASFF notification (rejected notifications).

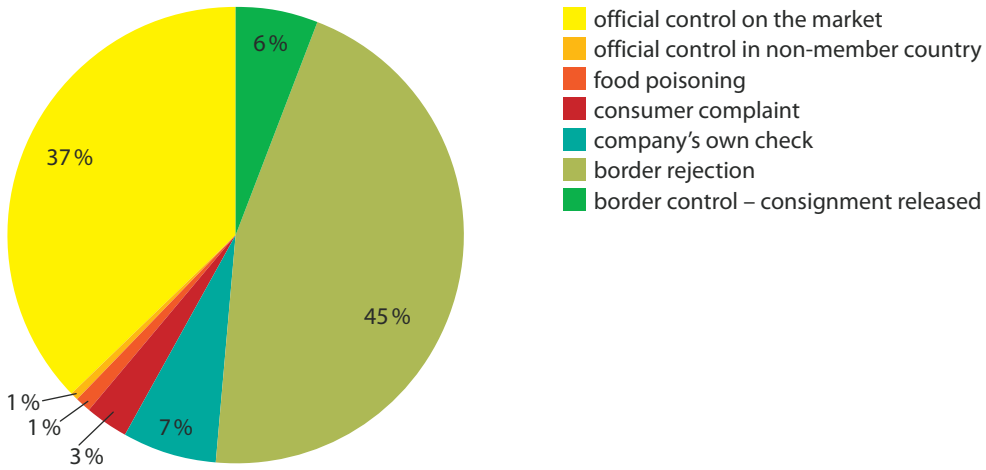
RASFF notifications are triggered by a variety of things. When notifications are classified according to the basis of the notification, the chart below is obtained. Most notifications concern controls at the border posts of the outer EEA borders[4], in most cases when the consignment was not accepted for import ("border rejection"). In some cases, a sample was taken for analysis at the border

3 State of play on 5 January 2010
4 Since 2009, including Switzerland for products of animal origin

(screening) and the consignment was released ("border control – consignment released"). The second largest category of notifications concerns official controls on the internal market[5]. Three special types of market notifications are identified: when a consumer complaint, a company notifying the outcome of an own-check, or a food poisoning was at the basis of the notification.

Finally, a new basis for notification identified in 2009 is "official control in non-member country". If a third country informs a RASFF member of a risk found during its official controls concerning a product that may be on the market in one of the member countries, the RASFF member may notify this to the Commission for transmission to the RASFF network. In 15 of the 18 identified notifications, the information was provided by Switzerland, in two notifications by the United States and in one by Canada.

2009: BASIS FOR NOTIFICATION

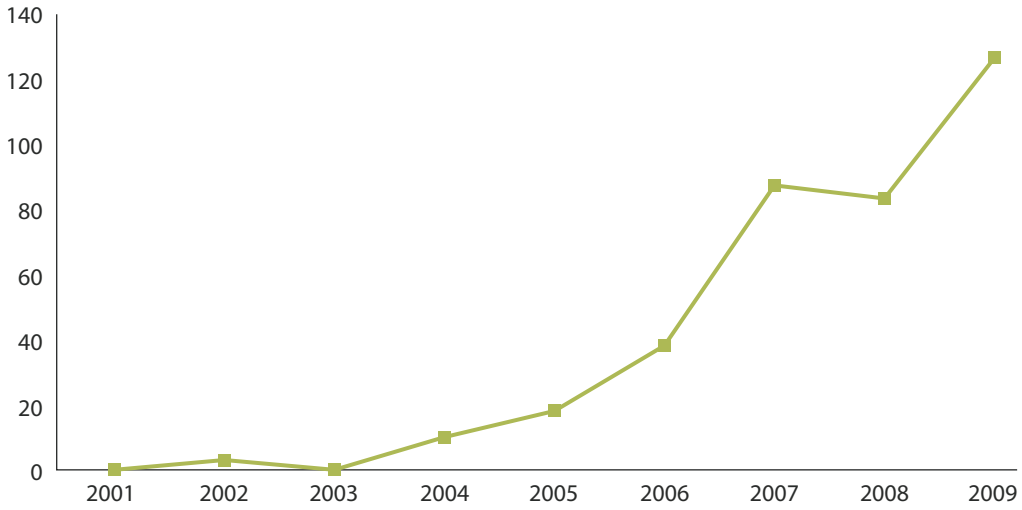


Allergenic substances

Directive 2003/89/EC[6], amending Directive 2000/13/EC[7] which sets out the rules on the labelling, presentation and advertising of foodstuffs, added a list of allergenic substances that are required to be mentioned on the labelling of food products if they are present in the ingredients. This laid down an EU-wide protection of consumers who suffered allergic reactions to substances that, for them, could be life-threatening. Allergenic substances did not get much attention in food safety programmes until then as shown in the chart below. Quickly over the years that followed the implementation of this Directive, the number of RASFF notifications steadily grew and after a status quo in 2008, the number of notifications on allergens jumped well above the 100-mark in 2009.

5 Products placed on the market in one of the member countries including the EEA countries Norway, Liechtenstein and Iceland
6 OJ L 308, 25.11.2003, p. 15–18
7 OJ L 109, 6.5.2000, p. 29–42

NOTIFICATIONS ON ALLERGENS



The rise in notifications in 2009 is mainly due to a higher reporting of undeclared milk ingredient. Most of those notifications report the presence of milk ingredient in products on the basis of dark chocolate, the majority of which were reported by Austria, which has obviously carried out a sampling programme on this.

	almond	barley	celery	crustaceans	egg	fish	gluten	lupin	milk ingredient	molluscs	mustard	nuts	peanut	sesame	soya	sulphite	wheat
alcoholic beverages																3	
cereals and bakery products					4		3		12			2	2	1	1		
cocoa, coffee and tea	1								33				3		1		
confectionery							1		1			1	3				
crustaceans																9	
dietetic foods, food supplements									5								
fish and products thereof					1												
fruits and vegetables																5	
herbs and spices			1				1										
meat and meat products					1		3		2						4		
milk and milk products																	
nuts, nut products and seeds									1				2				
prepared dishes and snacks		1	1		1				4		1				1	2	2
soups, broths and sauces				1	2				2	1						1	
TOTAL	1	1	2	1	9	0	8	0	60	1	1	3	10	1	7	20	2

Nonetheless, as can be seen from the table above, not only undeclared milk ingredient is reported. The second most reported is undeclared sulphite, in shrimps but also in preserved vegetables and alcoholic beverages. The RASFF database makes a distinction between cases of undeclared sulphite, where the presence of sulphite is not mentioned on the label, and cases of unauthorised or too high content of sulphite, where sulphite is added as a food additive. Of course, only "undeclared sulphite" is considered an allergen-type problem.

All allergenic substances listed in 2003/89/EC have been reported to RASFF in 2009, apart from lupin and fish. Undeclared lupin has never been reported to RASFF so far.

If you wish to find out more about allergens in food but also about the allergies and their clinical characteristics, the InformAll[8] database is recommended, a searchable database on allergenic food developed with funding from the European Union.

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.

	cereals and bakery products	cocoa and cocoa preparations, coffee and tea	dietetic foods, food supplements, fortified foods	feed materials	fruit and vegetables	herbs and spices	nuts, nut products and seeds	pet food	total
aflatoxins	13	1		9	64	23	517	11	638
deoxynivalenol (DON)	3								3
fumonisins	1								1
ochratoxin A	5	1	2		5	12	2		27

8 http://foodallergens.ifr.ac.uk/

Aflatoxins

in general

The number of notifications in 2009 (638) on aflatoxins has significantly decreased compared to 2008 (902). The reduction can be seen in all food categories, but in feed materials and pet food an increase in notifications can be observed.

cereals

The findings of aflatoxins in cereals and bakery products relate mainly to findings in (basmati) rice (8) and corn meal (4) from different origins and constitute a significant decrease compared to 2008 when there were 46 notifications on aflatoxins in cereals and bakery products of which 28 in (basmati) rice and 18 in corn meal.

figs

The 63 notifications on aflatoxins in the food category "fruit and vegetables" are all on dried figs of which 60 notifications are on dried figs from Turkey. Although still a high number of notifications, this is a significant decrease compared to 2008 with 98 notifications on aflatoxins in dried figs from Turkey.

spices

The 23 notifications in the category "herbs and spices" relate to different spices such as chilli powder, clove powder, nutmeg, etc. of which 12 notifications concern products originating from India.

nuts and seeds

The 518 notifications on aflatoxins in nuts, nut products and seeds can be subdivided into

- 218 notifications on groundnuts (peanuts) mainly from Argentina (73 notifications), China (58 notifications), the United States (19 notifications), Brazil (16 notifications), Egypt (15 notifications) and South Africa (9 notifications)
- 136 notifications on pistachios mainly from Iran (57 notifications), Turkey (35 notifications) and the United States (32 notifications)
- 63 notifications on hazelnuts nearly all from Turkey (61 notifications)
- 55 notifications on almonds mainly from the United States (46 notifications) and a few from Australia (4 notifications)
- 7 notifications on Brazil nuts with 4 notifications on Brazil nuts in shell from Brazil and 3 notifications on Brazil nut kernels from Bolivia.
- 12 notifications on melon seeds mainly from Nigeria (7 notifications)
- 6 notifications on apricot kernels from Turkey (3 notifications) and Algeria (3)

feed

The 9 notifications on aflatoxins in feed materials relate to groundnuts (4 notifications), organic maize (4 notifications) and sunflower seeds (1 notification).

The 11 notifications on aflatoxins in pet food are all on groundnuts for bird feed mainly from Brazil (5 notifications) and India (4 notifications).

These findings have resulted in changes in EU legislation. With the adoption of Commission Regulation (EC) No 1152/2009 of 27 November 2009 imposing special conditions governing the import of certain foodstuffs from certain third countries due to contamination risk by aflatoxins and repealing Decision 2006/504/EC, the control frequencies at import were increased, kept or decreased mainly based on the findings reported through the RASFF.

- The control frequency at import was increased for peanuts from China (from 10 to 20 % of imported consignments), hazelnuts from Turkey (from 5 to 10 % of imported consignments), for pistachios from Turkey (from 10 % to 50 % of imported consignments) and for dried figs (from 10 to 20 % of imported consignments).
- The control frequency remained unchanged for Brazil nuts in shell from Brazil (100 %) and peanuts from Egypt (20 %).
- The control frequency decreased for pistachios from Iran (from 100 to 50 % of imported consignments) and for almonds from US (from 5 % to random control).

The RASFF findings also resulted in the listing of a number of mycotoxin related topics for increased frequency of control at import in the Annex to Commission Regulation (EC) No 669/2009 of 24 July 2009 implementing Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the increased level of official controls on imports of certain feed and food of non-animal origin and amending Decision 2006/504/EC. The listing includes:

- peanuts from Argentina with 10 % control at import for aflatoxins
- peanuts from Brazil with 50 % control at import for aflatoxins
- peanuts from Ghana with 50 % control at import for aflatoxins
- spices from India with 50 % control at import for aflatoxins
- peanuts from India with 10 % control at import for aflatoxins
- melon seeds from Nigeria with 50 % control at import for aflatoxins
- dried vine fruit from Uzbekistan with 50 % control at import for ochratoxin A
- peanuts from Vietnam with 10 % control at import for aflatoxins
- basmati rice from India with 10 % control for aflatoxins
- basmati rice from Pakistan with 50 % control for aflatoxins

Ochratoxin A

The 13 notifications on ochratoxin A in herbs and spices are mainly paprika powder of which 8 notifications concern paprika originating from Peru. The problem had been notified previously in 2007 (8 notifications).

The 4 notifications on ochratoxin A in fruits and vegetables relate to dried figs (3 notifications) and raisins (1 notification) from Turkey. The finding of high levels of ochratoxin A in 2 consignments of pistachios from the United States is an unusual finding and, with the exception of a notification in 2005 on ochratoxin A in pistachios from the United States, these are the only notifications ever made on the presence of ochratoxin A in the food category “nuts, nut products and seeds”.

Dioxins

In 2009, there were 13 notifications on the presence of dioxins and dioxin-like PCBs in feed and food.

Six notifications related to the presence of dioxins and dioxin-like PCBs in cod liver of which 4 originated from Poland, 1 from Latvia and 1 from Lithuania.

One notification concerned the presence of high levels of dioxins and dioxin-like PCBs in lamb liver. The presence of increased levels of dioxins and dioxin-like PCBs in lamb and sheep liver appears to be a more general problem and investigations are ongoing to identify the reasons for this.

Furthermore there were 3 findings of dioxins and dioxin-like PCBs in unusual feed or food commodities: 1 in peanuts and sunflower seeds, 1 in the feed additive sulphur and 1 in ground dried flowers of Tagetes erecta intended for animal feed.

The other 3 notifications related to a finding of dioxins in bentonite clay, in a feed premixture and in anglerfish liver.

Unauthorised genetically modified food and feed

In order to be authorised in food or feed, a new genetically modified (GM) ingredient needs to pass through very strict and detailed authorisation procedures. Sufficient proof needs to be given that the product does not pose any risk to human health or the environment. Nonetheless, unauthorised GM food or feed is sometimes discovered at import or on the market. Usually it concerns only traces that are present in a non-GM product that is imported into the EU. The GM variety is often authorised in the producing country but not in the EU.

The type of GM food or feed is characterised by the "GM event", a name given to a characteristic strand of "foreign" DNA that was introduced in the genome of the plant. The table below gives an overview of notifications by GM event.

As can be observed from the table, the number of RASFF notifications in GM food and feed somewhat exploded in 2009. Of the notifications, 25 concerned feed, the remaining 118 concerned food products. A large proportion of the notifications in 2009 concerned the unauthorised linseed event FP967, first detected in Europe in 2009, which appeared to be present in a substantial number of shiploads imported into the EU.

linseed

The genetically modified linseed, called "Triffid", had been authorised in Canada in the late nineties, but was never commercialised. Its authorisation was withdrawn in 2001 probably for fear of cross-contamination of the non-

2009		2008	
BT63 in rice products	17	BT63 in rice products	19
LLRice 601	0	LLRice 601	9
LLRice 62	0	LLRice 62	1
MIR604 maize	12	MIR604 maize	3
papaya	3	Unidentified	2
linseed FP967	95		
MON88017 maize	17		
Yieldgard VT maize	2		
unidentified	4		
total events (notifications*)	149 (143)	Total	34

* some notifications reported on multiple events

GM linseed that is a major export to the EU. The linseed contamination was first discovered by Germany and reported to RASFF in September 2009. Soon other countries followed in detecting this new GM event. Germany reported 43 RASFF notifications on this GM linseed, which is less than half of the total (95). These notifications have often generated a lot of follow-up detailing distribution to several countries and reporting important withdrawal and recall operations of the linseed and product containing it such as bakery mixes. Following the reports in the RASFF, the Canadian Grain Commission set up a sampling protocol to prevent contaminated linseed exports to the EU. When all contaminated linseed in storage in the EU has been examined, it is expected that the number of notifications on this GM event will decline, as it is ensured that imports of linseed are GM-free. According to EUROSTAT figures, there has not been a dramatic effect on linseed exports from Canada. In 2009, there was a decline by only 14 % of imports and the month with highest import figures (56 280 tons) was November, after the problem had surfaced. A prompt setting up of appropriate border controls might have avoided some of the numerous market notifications leading to important product recalls in several Member States.

border rejections

GM event	origin	% border rejections
Bt63	China	35 %
MIR604	United States Columbia	45 %
FP967	Canada	1 %
MON88017	United States	53 %

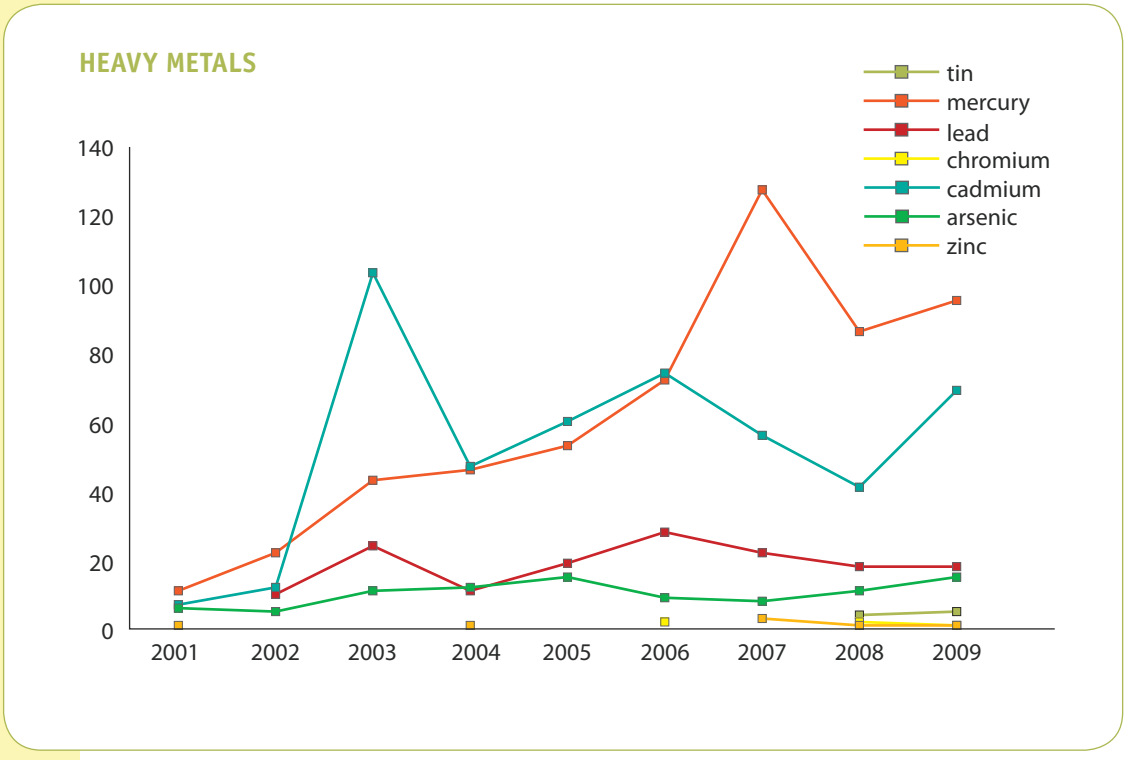
The table above shows the proportion of border rejections in the notifications on the most reported GM events. Although for most of them a substantial proportion is detected at the border, it would be a costly and likely ineffective measure testing all imported consignments for possible GM contamination.

maize

Also the unauthorised GM events MIR604 and especially MON88017 were reported more frequently in maize. EFSA adopted an opinion on 21 April 2009 on MON88017 and on 2 July 2009 on MIR604, concluding that these GM events are unlikely to have any adverse effect on human or animal health or on the environment in the context of their intended uses. After the publication of these opinions, the Commission classified market notifications on the GM events MIR604 and MON88017 as information notifications considering that there is no serious risk associated with their presence. However, since the GM events were still unauthorised, the non-compliances continued to be reported. Finally, the Commission adopted Decisions on 30 October 2009 authorising both GM events, which effectively put a stop to their reporting in the RASFF.

Heavy metals

The chart below shows that over the years an increasing number of notifications on mercury contamination is reported.



This increase may in part reflect the general increase in notifications but other factors may have had an influence: e. g. increased import of fish species from a fishing territory in which higher levels of mercury are known to be present. Further analysis of e. g. trade and control figures would be required to draw any conclusions from this increase in notifications.

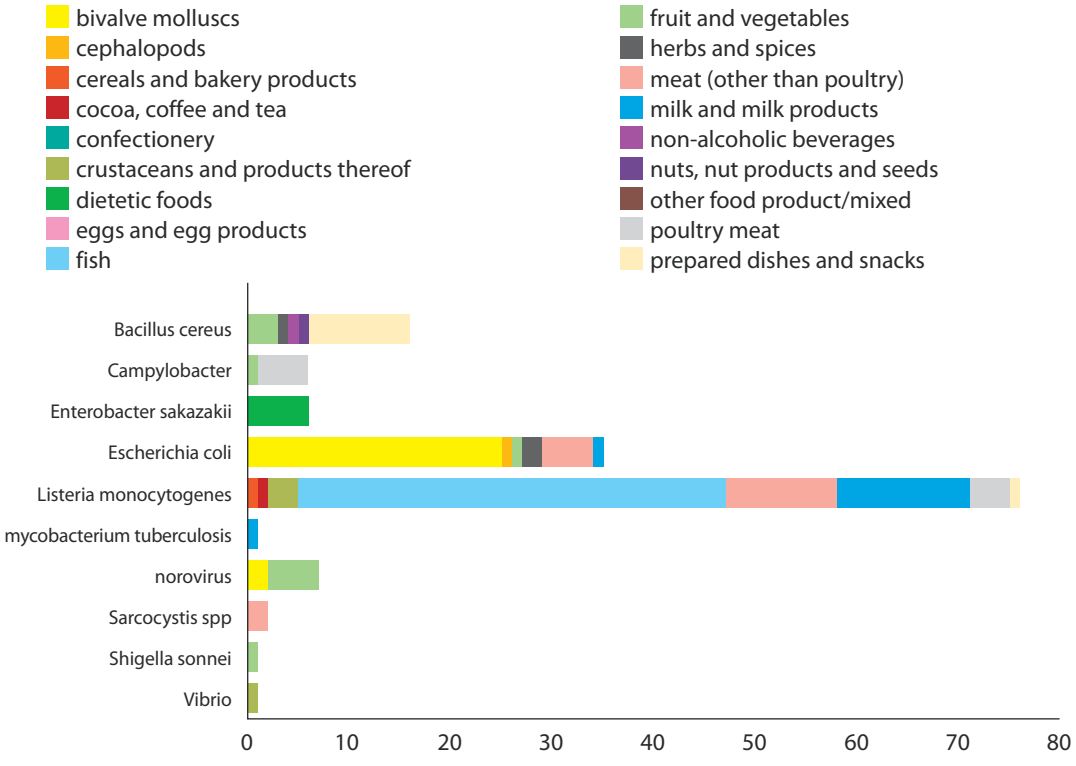
Cadmium and mercury are reported predominantly in fishery products: cadmium in crabs (notified by Italy) and in squid and mercury in fish, as can be observed from the table below detailing notifications during 2009. The high number of notifications on crustaceans highlights an identified issue with different interpretations of EU legislation with regard to the maximum level for

cadmium in crabs. Work is currently ongoing to clarify this issue in legislation and to ensure its uniform application across Member States.

	arsenic	cadmium	lead	mercury	tin
bivalve molluscs		1			
cephalopods		15			
cereals and bakery products		2			
cocoa, coffee and tea			1		
compound feeds				1	
crustaceans		37			
dietetic foods	8		8	2	
feed additives	1	2	1		
feed materials	2	2	1		
fish		6		92	
fruit and vegetables	4	4	6		5
meat			1		

Pathogenic micro-organisms

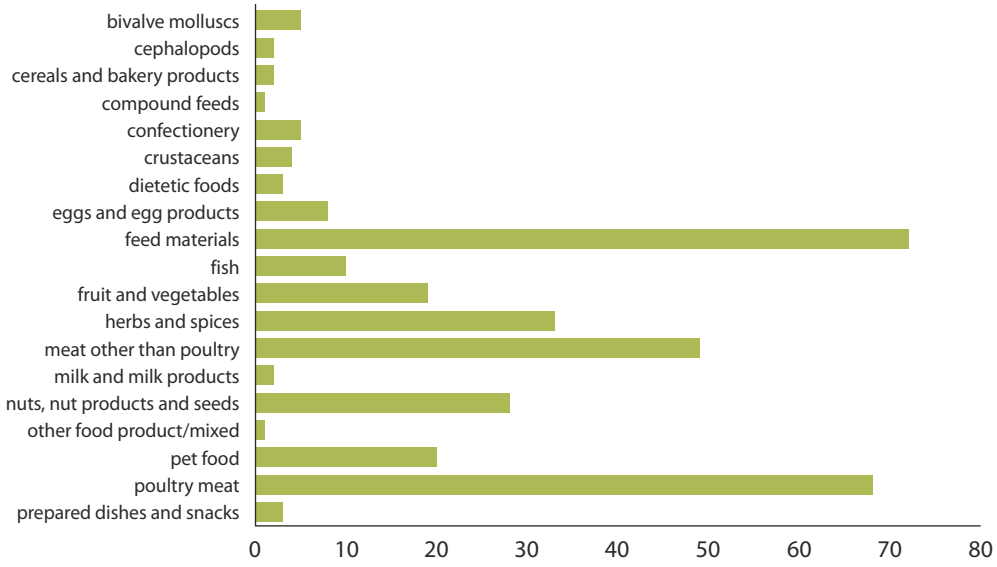
PATHOGENIC MICRO-ORGANISMS



Listeria monocytogenes was reported more frequently in 2009 because of a rise in notifications relating to processed fish. Italy notified regularly detection of Listeria monocytogenes in smoked salmon. Since most of these notifications did not report a level of above 100 CFU per gram, they were classified as information notifications. According to Regulation (EC) No 2073/2005[9], a food safety criterion is set of 100 CFU/gram at the end of the shelf life, if the product has left the immediate control of the producing food business operator.

Less notifications where reported on Campylobacter in poultry than in 2008. Although Campylobacter is an important cause of foodborne disease, it is very infrequently notified.

SALMONELLA



The reporting pattern for Salmonella in 2009 is similar to that of 2008 and shows that Salmonella contamination is common in many types of food of animal as well as non-animal origin. A decline is observed in the notifications on poultry meat but also a slight increase on feed materials. From the data it appears that feed materials may be an important source of infection of farm animals with Salmonella.

Pesticide residues

With 173 notifications compared to 178 in 2008, the level of RASFF notifications on pesticide residues has not significantly changed in 2009. Although there were much fewer notifications on amitraz in pears from Turkey, the levels reported in some of the notifications were very high: between 4 and 10 ppm with one notification reporting a level as high as 15.7 ppm. Such levels warrant

9 OJ L 338, 22.12.2005, p. 1–26

measures to be taken to protect consumers' health. A Commission Decision 2009/835/EC[10] imposed special conditions for official controls on the import of pears from Turkey requiring at least 10 % of the consignments to be tested for amitraz. The decision applied until 24 January 2010, when its requirements were taken over in Regulation (EC) No 669/2009 implementing Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 as regards the increased level of official controls on imports of certain feed and food of non-animal origin[11]. The measure clearly had an effect: not only were fewer notifications reported, but also the levels reported were much lower.

12 notifications were received on the active substance azinphos-methyl, banned in the EU since 2007, in apples from the United States and from Argentina, predominantly reported by Finland.

Dimethoate (20)/omethoate (21): both active substances, related in structure, were found together in fresh apples from Brazil and omethoate separately in various vegetables and herbs from Thailand.

Omethoate is more harmful to health than dimethoate and is not authorised for usage on crops in the EU. Dimethoate was also found in fresh mint from Morocco that was rejected at the EU border.

The unauthorised substance EPN continued to be found in yard long beans from Thailand (7 notifications). Oxamyl, a highly toxic active substance, was reported 15 times in produce on the market especially in peppers from Turkey where repeated and sometimes very high levels were reported. Oxamyl was also repeatedly found in peaches from Egypt. Regulation (EC) No 669/2009 requires, since 25/01/2010 a 10 % check at import of consignments of peppers, courgettes and tomatoes from Turkey for oxamyl and methomyl. Already in 2009 however, findings of methomyl in RASFF dropped considerably.

Extremely high levels, up to 55 mg/kg, of triazophos, also a highly toxic substance, were found in curry leaves from India (6 notifications). Curry leaves are not used in the curry spice but are leaves of the curry tree (Murraya koenigii) that are used to season certain types of dishes in Indian cooking. Even if only a few leaves are used in the dish, the very high levels found could lead to acute poisoning, especially of children. Triazophos was also found in okra from India but at much more moderate levels. When calculating the acute toxicity of okra, a short term intake[12] is calculated and compared with the acute reference

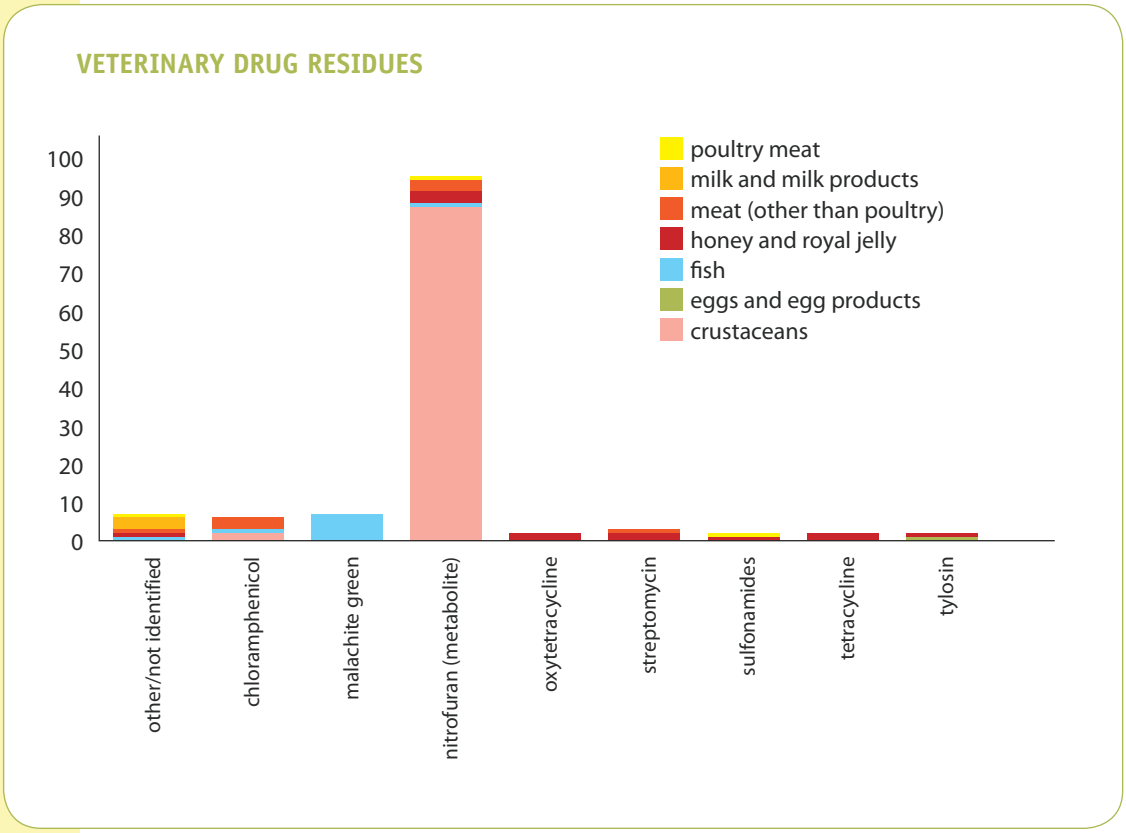
10 OJ L 299, 14.11.2009, p. 15
11 OJ L 194, 25.7.2009, p. 11–21
12 The short term intake is calculated assuming that a consumer with extreme food habits regarding the food item under consideration (in this case okra), 1) consumes a big portion of the item in one meal or over one day and that 2) the level of pesticide in the item corresponds to that in the notification.

dose[13] for triazophos. An intake above the acute reference dose could lead to acute poisoning effects. Consumption data are used to calculate the short term intake. For okra however, consumption data do not exist in Europe. It is therefore common practice to use intake data of a comparable vegetable, in this case e. g. green beans. At the levels found, the intake calculated exceeded the acute reference dose considerably.

Another problem with the enforcement of safe pesticide residue levels in food on the market is the short shelf life of fresh fruit and vegetables. When samples are taken from produce, usually the produce is not detained pending the results. When the results are available, the produce is often already sold and consumed.

Market notifications are only transmitted if the levels found present a risk to the consumer. A calculation is made comparing short term intake with acute reference dose. However, when the product is stopped at the EU border and sampled for pesticide residues, it remains blocked until results are available. If the results are unfavourable, meaning that one or more residues were found above the MRL, then the consignment is destroyed or redispatched according to the decision of the competent authority and a border rejection notification is transmitted.

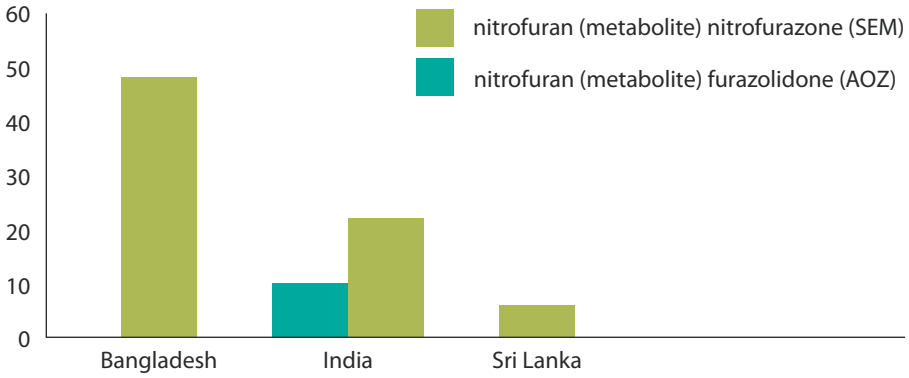
Veterinary drug residues



13 The acute reference dose is the quantity of an active substance below which acute effects can be excluded.

Even more so than in 2008, the majority of notifications on veterinary drug residues reported on nitrofuran metabolites in crustaceans. For other residues, the number of notifications was in further decline but for nitrofuran metabolites, there was a sharp increase. Therefore it is worthwhile looking a little closer at those notifications.

NITROFURANS IN SHRIMPS



The chart above shows the number of notifications on nitrofurans in shrimps. Three countries are reported, mostly regarding semicarbazide (SEM). Semicarbazide is a relatively simple organic molecule whose presence in the environment can have several causes. It is also used as an indicator for the use of nitrofurans in fishery products. Nitrofuran nitrofurazone is detected through its metabolite semicarbazide. Although semicarbazide is not harmful at the levels found, nitrofurazone and other nitrofurans are considered carcinogenic.

All crustacean consignments from Bangladesh presented for import into the EU must be analysed at origin for nitrofurans and some other substances. From October 2009, the same measure applies to India[14].

14 Commission Decision 2009/727/EC, OJ L 258, 1.10.2009, p. 31–33

3

Focus on ...

Border rejections

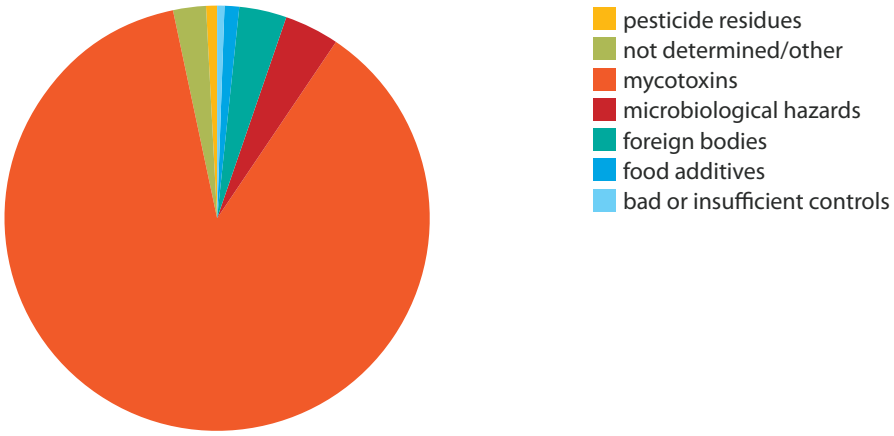
Members of RASFF are required to notify rejections of food or feed at the border if the consignment is rejected for reason of a direct or indirect risk to human (food or feed) or animal (feed) health. This requirement was introduced with Regulation (EC) 178/2002 in its article 50 which sets the basis for the RASFF.

In 2009, the number of notifications on products originating from outside the EEA amounted to 2372, which is 75 % of the total number of notifications. This number is influenced by the border rejections, which obviously are all about products from third countries. In market notifications, still 53 % of notifications concern third country products.

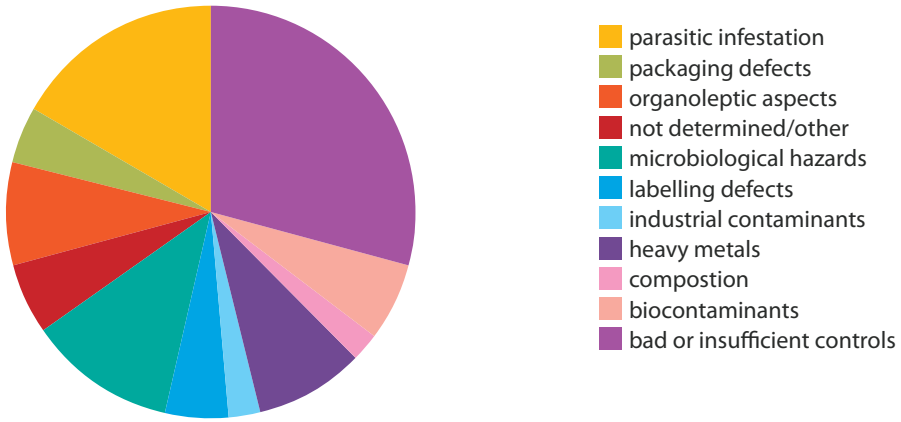
Border rejections represent just under half of the original notifications to RASFF but controls at the border generate more than border rejections alone. Monitoring samples taken at the border can lead to RASFF notifications, when the results become known after the product is released on the market ("border control – consignment released"). The RASFF notification is then used to exchange information enabling the withdrawal of the product from the market if this is necessary.

Border rejection notifications concern all kinds of products: food of animal origin, food of non-animal origin but also feed (5 %) and food contact materials (4 %). In 2009, there were about twice as many border rejection notifications on food of non-animal origin than of animal origin. The most important type of food of non-animal origin notified concerns "nuts, nut products and seeds". Fish are the biggest category of food of animal origin notified in border rejections (see chart on page 60 for details).

BORDER REJECTIONS OF NUTS, NUT PRODUCTS AND SEEDS



BORDER REJECTIONS OF FISH AND PRODUCTS THEREOF



Above charts show that the reasons for rejection are more evenly distributed for fish than for nuts. This illustrates the difference in the way border controls are organised for food of animal origin compared to food of non-animal origin. For food of animal origin, every consignment must be checked by the official veterinarian at a border inspection post. Of every consignment, a documentary and physical check is carried out. The veterinary inspector verifies the authenticity of the health certificate or other official documents and checks whether the products mentioned on the documents correspond to the products in the consignment. The inspector visually verifies the good condition of the products. In line with a monitoring plan or based on the decision of the inspector, samples of some consignments are taken for organoleptic investigation or to be analysed in the laboratory. The consignment may be released onto the market pending the results or it stays in storage under customs' control until the results are known.

food of non-animal origin

For food of non-animal origin, such border controls are not harmonised at EU-level. The level and organisation of border controls may vary between Member States. For some particular products however, Commission Decisions have been adopted requiring specific controls prior to import. For several types of nuts coming from particular countries, such Decisions exist (see page 21). These Decisions require that the products are imported through designated entry points and that a certain percentage of consignments must be sampled for analysis of mycotoxins.

Commission Regulation (EC) No 669/2009 as regards the increased level of official controls on imports of certain feed and food of non-animal origin and amending Decision 2006/504/EC was adopted in July 2009. This Regulation provides a quicker and more comprehensive way to step up controls on food

of non-animal origin or feed if an emerging risk is detected. A list of products that require an increased level of official controls at import is given in Annex I of the Regulation. The products will be required to enter through designated entry points and will be subjected to documentary and physical checks, including laboratory analysis, at a frequency related to the risk identified. RASFF notifications are an important source of information to establish the list, which is reviewed quarterly. Other sources include reports of the Food and Veterinary Office, information from official controls and monitoring in Member States, etc.

Apart from mycotoxins, other hazards reported in border rejections of food of non-animal origin concerned:

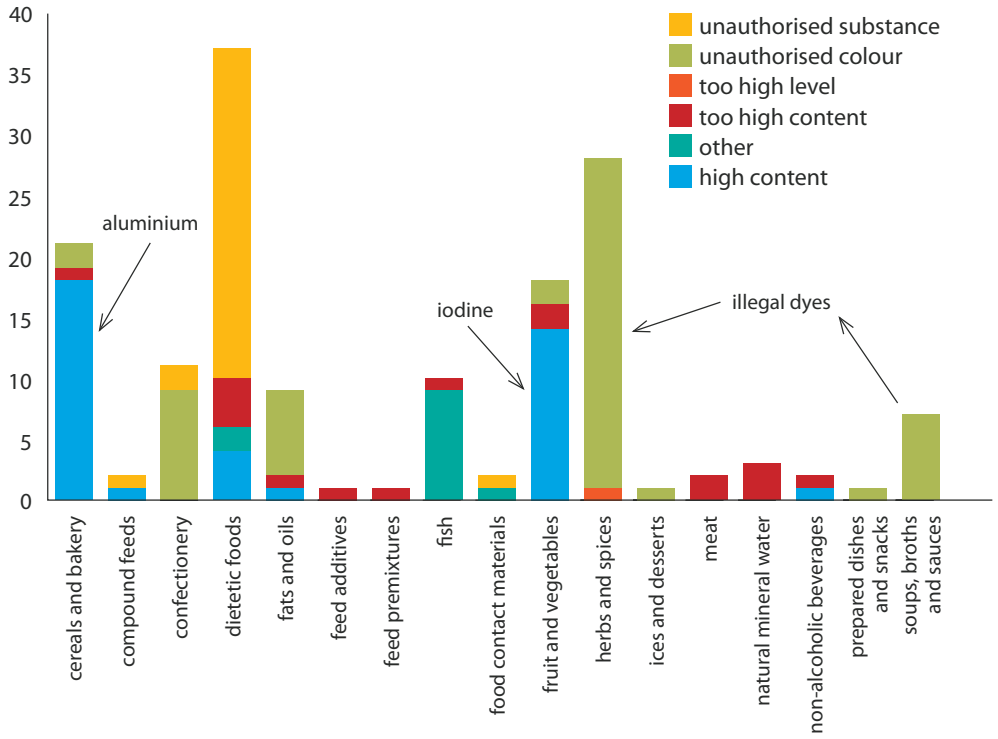
- the composition of these foods, although most of these notifications are made for products controlled on the market (only 36 border rejections out of 129 notifications or 28 %, see also the next heading "composition of food")
- organoleptic aspects or microbiological contamination such as spoilage or infestation with moulds
- foreign bodies, mostly (larvae of) insects or rodent excrements, in bulk fruits, nuts, vegetables or cereals
- pesticide residues in fresh fruits and vegetables
- pathogens, especially Salmonella in sesame and pine seeds and Bacillus cereus in soybean curd

foods of animal origin

For foods of animal origin, border rejections most often concern fishery products, for reason of heavy metals, veterinary drug residues, bad hygienic state or parasitic infestation. There has been a remarkable increase in notifications reporting bad hygiene and bad temperature control of consignments in 2009. This is not due to increased problems but because the RASFF notifications are reported through TRACES. TRACES is a web-based veterinarian certification tool controlling the import and export of live animals and products of animal origin to and from the European Union. This network is under the responsibility of the European Commission. Veterinarian inspectors in border inspection posts (BIPs) are required to certify consignments of animal origin using the TRACES application. If they reject a consignment because of a potential risk to human or animal health, they not only have to signal this in TRACES but they are also required to report through RASFF. To improve the efficiency of reporting, since 2009, they can make their RASFF notification in TRACES, thereby avoiding having to re-enter certain information. A rejection of a consignment for reason of a "physical hygiene failure" requires the BIPs to fill out a RASFF notification which is made available to the RASFF national contact point through TRACES.

Composition of food

COMPOSITION



Issues with the composition of foods, reported to RASFF in previous years were still reported in 2009 such as the high content of iodine in seaweed and illegal dyes in spices and sauces. A new concern surfaced with the find of high levels of aluminium in rice noodles from China. The problem was first discovered by Germany in November 2008 and confirmed in controls carried out by several other Member States. The levels of aluminium found ranged between 50 and 150 ppm, much higher than natural levels of aluminium would be in this type of product. In its press release[15], EFSA stated that its experts estimated that intakes of aluminium may exceed the total weekly intake (TWI) in a significant part of the European population. In the light of this, such high levels of aluminium in noodles are unacceptable. It is suspected that the aluminium is added to enhance certain quality aspects of the noodles.

Another disquieting evolution is the rise in notifications for unauthorised substances in food supplements. Products sold as food supplements, often through the internet, contain medicinal substances that should not be taken without prescription. There were 6 notifications on supplements containing sibutramine, originating from China. Sibutramine is a medicine prescribed for weight reduction. However, EMA has recommended Member States to suspend marketing authorisations for sibutramine-containing medicines because of a cardiovascular risk. A similar risk may occur when taking sildenafil

15 http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/press/news/afc080715.htm

or its analogues without a prescription. Sildenafil is the active substance of the drug Viagra. Four notifications reported the presence of these substances in products sold as food supplements and one in chewing gum, all originating from China.

Food poisoning

Since 2008, the RASFF can identify those cases when a food poisoning lies at the basis of a RASFF notification. In 2009, there were 54 such cases recorded. This is more than double the number in 2008 and can probably be explained because of the improved identification of the basis for the notification. Details are given in the table below. The term food poisoning covers a broader spectrum of disease symptoms than the "classical" food poisoning caused by pathogenic bacteria or viruses. As can be seen from the table below, also undesirable chemicals, the wrong composition of a food supplement or a deficient labelling not mentioning an allergenic substance can be the cause of a food poisoning. In the table below, a food poisoning incident is called an outbreak when more than one person is involved. It is called a large outbreak if the symptoms reported in different geographical locations can be linked back to the same food. The table does not cover all outbreaks of food poisoning incidents that occurred in the EU in 2009. It does try to cover those incidents that lead to a RASFF notification. It is possible that there were food poisoning incidents that were the basis of a RASFF notification that were not identified as such. It is also possible that an incident was not reported to RASFF because the product and outbreak had a local character and had no consequences for other RASFF members.

Case No	Date Of Case	Notification Reference	Country	Subject	persons affected*
1	14/01/2009	2009.0039	GB	arsenic (12 mg/kg – ppm), lead (3.8 mg/kg – ppm) and thallium (1.4 mg/kg – ppm) in mineral supplement drink from Austria	2
2	16/01/2009	09-520	CS	foodborne outbreak of Salmonella Typhimurium in the USA possibly due to the consumption of peanut butter	large outbreak
3	21/01/2009	2009.0063	GB	peanut butter flavoured snack bars from the United States possibly contaminated with Salmonella typhimurium	N/A
4	30/01/2009	2009.0105	IT	histamine (1910/2051/104/2066/2229 mg/kg – ppm) in canned tuna fillets in olive oil from Portugal	1
5	02/02/2009	2009.0108	CS	suspicion of Salmonella in snack bars containing peanut butter from the United States	N/A
6	04/02/2009	2009.0125	CS	suspicion of Salmonella in snack bars containing peanut ingredients from the United States	N/A
7	11/02/2009	2009.0167	CS	Salmonella in dietetic meals containing peanut paste from the United States	N/A
8	19/02/2009	2009.0210	CS	suspicion of Salmonella in honey roasted peanuts and chipotle peanuts from the United States	N/A
9	20/02/2009	2009.0219	SI	suspicion of Salmonella (in peanut ingredient) in candy bars from the United States	N/A
10	20/02/2009	2009.0214	GB	suspicion of Salmonella in protein balls from the United Kingdom, with raw material from the United States	N/A

Case No	Date Of Case	NotificationReference	Country	Subject	persons affected*
11	26/02/2009	2009.0242	DE	Listeria monocytogenes (2100 CFU/g) in gorgonzola cheese from Italy, processed in Germany	1
12	26/02/2009	2009.0244	SE	unauthorised substance nimesulide in food supplement containing an extract of Curcuma longa (turmeric) and DL-phenylalanine processed in Mexico, with raw material presumably from India, packaged in the United States	9
13	09/03/2009	2009.0290	ES	Chinese star anise (Illicium verum) from Vietnam contaminated with Japanese star anise (Illicium anisatum)	2
14	23/03/2009	2009.0340	NO	norovirus in Gigas oysters from Sweden	19
15	14/04/2009	2009.0468	HU	undeclared gluten (53.9; 76.5 mg/kg – ppm) in organic gluten free bread mix from Ireland	1
16	24/04/2009	2009.0524	GB	undeclared nuts (>200 mg/kg – ppm) in organic puffed rice from the United Kingdom	1
17	24/04/2009	2009.0520	ES	high level of acidity (citric acid:4.41–4.95; pH (D100): 2.95–2.98 %) in liquid candy from Colombia	2
18	28/05/2009	09-563	FI	adverse liver effects reported for users of Hydroxycut food supplement products	1
19	03/06/2009	2009.0696	NO	Shigella sonnei in fresh sugar peas from Kenya, via Denmark	12
20	04/06/2009	2009.0712	ES	foodborne outbreak caused by escolar (Lepidocybium flavobrunneum) from Panama	2
21	09/06/2009	2009.0732	FI	norovirus (presence/25g) in frozen raspberries from Poland	20
22	03/07/2009	2009.0854	FI	norovirus (genogroup 2) in frozen raspberries from Poland	large outbreak
23	27/07/2009	2009.0984	DK	histamine (>1000 mg/kg – ppm) in fresh tuna fillets (Thunnus thynnus) dispatched from Germany	4
24	30/07/2009	2009.1005	IT	foodborne outbreak (histamine poisoning) caused by fresh tuna loin from Sri Lanka	7
25	07/08/2009	2009.1041	IT	histamine (643 mg/kg – ppm) in tuna in sunflower oil from Colombia	1
26	13/08/2009	2009.1058	IT	histamine (3600 mg/kg – ppm) in fresh tuna loin (Thunnus albacares) from Sri Lanka	3
27	14/08/2009	2009.1064	IT	histamine (1218; 1378 mg/kg – ppm) in fresh tuna from Sri Lanka	2
28	14/08/2009	2009.1062	FR	foodborne outbreak (salmonellosis) caused by eggs from Germany	4**
29	19/08/2009	2009.1082	FI	foodborne outbreak suspected (Salmonella bovismorbificans) to be caused by alfalfa seeds for sprouting from Italy, via Sweden	20
30	19/08/2009	2009.1085	FR	foodborne outbreak suspected (Salmonella enteritidis) to be caused by eggs from Spain	30**
31	21/08/2009	09-573	FR	unknown toxin (impairment symptoms and/or temporary loss of taste) in pine seeds from China and Pakistan, via China (Hong Kong)	not known
32	26/08/2009	2009.1104	IT	histamine (488 mg/kg – ppm) in fresh yellow fin tuna vacuum packed sashimi loins (Thunnus albacares) from Sri Lanka	2
33	10/09/2009	2009.1187	DE	unauthorised substance sibutramine suspected in slimming product from the United Kingdom	1

Case No	Date Of Case	NotificationReference	Country	Subject	persons affected*
34	11/09/2009	2009.1197	FR	suspicion of Clostridium botulinum (type E) in vacuum packed smoked whitefish (Coregonus lavaretus) from Finland, with raw material from Canada	3**
35	14/09/2009	2009.1205	IT	histamine (147 mg/kg – ppm) in raw white sashimi tuna carpaccio from Spain	1
36	13/10/2009	2009.1345	IT	histamine (329.3; 220.3; 240.1; 245.2 mg/kg – ppm) in canned sardine fillets in sunflower oil (Sardinella aurita) from Tunisia	1
37	15/10/2009	2009.1361	SE	norovirus (isolated from affected persons) in frozen raspberries from Serbia	19
38	19/10/2009	2009.1371	FI	norovirus (genogroup 1) in frozen raspberries from Poland	large outbreak
39	20/10/2009	2009.1395	DK	histamine (<5 to 208; <50 to 1000 mg/kg – ppm) in escolar fillets (Lepidocybium flavobrunneum) from Vietnam	10
40	23/10/2009	2009.1431	IT	undeclared peanut in hazelnut spread cream from Italy	1
41	23/10/2009	2009.1424	FR	Salmonella enteritidis and Salmonella typhimurium in eggs from Spain	8**
42	26/10/2009	2009.1437	GB	Salmonella enteritidis phagetype 1 (detected) in raw shell eggs from Spain	2
43	27/10/2009	2009.1454	NL	too high content of vitamin D (between 1220 and 1432 µg per tablet) in food supplement from the Netherlands	3
44	04/11/2009	2009.1504	IT	suspicion of adverse reaction caused by hemp oil from Italy	1
45	04/11/2009	2009.1503	IT	adverse reaction caused by herbal food supplement from China, via the United States	1
46	04/11/2009	2009.1500	IT	histamine (sgombroid syndrome) in fresh tuna fillets (Thunnus albacares) from Sri Lanka	2
47	11/11/2009	2009.1545	SE	undeclared egg in pancakes from the Netherlands	1
48	13/11/2009	09-580	CS	Outbreak of hepatitis A associated with semi-dried tomatoes from Turkey	32
49	13/11/2009	2009.1567	FR	Staphylococcal enterotoxin (presence in 5 samples/25g) in raw milk cheese from France	18
50	13/11/2009	2009.1574	GB	Salmonella enteritidis (Phagetype 14B) in raw shell eggs from Spain	large outbreak
51	19/11/2009	2009.1603	IT	histamine (suspected) in chilled yellowfin tuna from Sri Lanka	large outbreak**
52	24/11/2009	2009.1620	DK	norovirus in frozen raspberries from Serbia, via Belgium	6
53	30/11/2009	2009.1656	IT	histamine (1000 mg/kg – ppm) in fresh yellowtail amberjack (Seriola lalandi) from Australia	1
54	04/12/2009	2009.1683	ES	undeclared milk ingredient (>25 mg/kg – ppm) in organic pure chocolate covered cereal cakes from the Czech Republic	1

* persons affected, reported at the time of the original notification i.e. the figure does not represent the total number of persons affected

** there was insufficient evidence linking the food with the patients' symptoms

Case No 2 concerns a news notification based on a press release by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on an outbreak in the US linked to the consumption of peanut butter. It turned out that a major peanuts producer in the US had a serious problem with Salmonella contamination. With information obtained from FDA, notifications followed on diverse products containing potentially contaminated peanuts (cases 3 and 5–10).

Case 12 concerns the presence of nimesulide, an anti-inflammatory drug, in a food supplement. Nimesulide had previously been withdrawn as medicine for its known toxicity to the liver. Serious cases of liver damage occurred, some with fatal consequences. Apart from in Sweden, the supplement had also been distributed to five other member countries and was immediately withdrawn from the market and press releases were issued to warn consumers.

Cases 14, 21, 22, 37, 38 and 52 all are related to the presence of norovirus. Only case 14 concerns oysters; in all five other cases frozen raspberries from Poland and from Serbia were involved. Also in previous years, frozen raspberries were reported as a cause for large outbreaks.

In relation to case 17, two children were reported in Spain with mouth lesions as a consequence of consuming a roll-on liquid candy with a very high acidity.

The FDA published on 1 May 2009 a warning on their website, urging consumers to discontinue the use of Hydroxycut food supplement products immediately due to suspicions of serious liver injuries. Hydroxycut products are suspected of having caused liver damage to several patients in Finland, reported in case 18.

Case 19 reported on an unusual foodborne outbreak in Norway caused by sugar peas from Kenya (also called snow peas) contaminated with Shigella sonnei. These bacteria can cause serious dysentery but are killed if food is thoroughly cooked. Faecal contamination due to bad hygienic practice usually lies at the basis of the problem. More detailed information was published in the Eurosurveillance journal[16].

In the course of the summer, Denmark and especially Italy reported cases of histamine poisoning (scombroid fish poisoning) after consuming tuna (cases 23–27, 32, 35, 36, 46 and 51). High levels of histamine (>200 ppm) will be formed in the fish if not properly chilled and stored for too long at an unsuitable temperature. Thorough cooking of the fish will not solve the problem as histamine is heat-resistant. Histamine can also occur in other types of fish (e.g. case 39 and 53).

In case 31, consumers reported experiencing a bitter taste or loss of taste after having consumed pine seeds. What is unusual and has not been explained

16 http://www.eurosurveillance.org/ViewArticle.aspx?ArticleId=19243

to date is that these symptoms only occurred one or two days after having consumed the pine seeds. The pine seeds in question originated from China and Pakistan. In Europe, most pine seeds on the market are produced in the Mediterranean area, mainly from the Pinus pinea species. The pine nuts imported from Asia may be harvested from other Pinus species. The substances that are responsible for the effect have however not yet been identified[17].

Case 43 relates to high levels of vitamin D in a food supplement that has lead to hypercalcaemia and kidney failure. The cause of such a high level of vitamin D was a miscalculation in the production process.

In case 50, Salmonellosis outbreaks in various regions of the UK could be linked to eggs from a particular flock in Spain, thought to be infected with Salmonella. As a precaution, eggs from that flock were no longer sold as shell eggs but were heat treated to destroy any possible presence of Salmonella. More details in the FSA "Annual Report of Incidents 2009"[18].

Hepatitis A

Case 48: news notification 09-580

In November 2009, the IHR National Focal Point of Australia notified WHO of a multi-jurisdictional outbreak of hepatitis A affecting over 250 people linked to semi-dried tomatoes. After having received an alert through the INFOSAN network, the Commission made a news notification to draw the attention of RASFF contact points to this information.

On 29 January 2010, the Commission's RASFF contact point received information through its Public Health Directorate and the EWRS[19] about a hepatitis A outbreak in France. 43 cases were registered between November 2009 and February 2010; most of the cases were epidemiologically linked to semi-dried tomatoes.

In addition, authorities in the Netherlands reported 13 cases of hepatitis A which could also be connected to semi-dried tomatoes. The Netherlands started a comprehensive tracing investigation into the semi-dried tomato products that had been consumed.

From the various investigations it turned out that the products at the source of the outbreaks were most likely frozen semi-dried tomatoes that had not undergone any pasteurisation process. The frozen product is bought as an intermediate product by processors who thaw portions of the product, add oil, herbs and spices to sell onwards. Samples taken of remaining product or other batches could not confirm any contamination with hepatitis A in France

17 More information on the website of AFSSA: http://www.afssa.fr/Documents/RCCP2009sa0166.pdf
18 http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/incidents09.pdf
19 Early Warning and Response System on communicable diseases

nor in the Netherlands. In Australia, one sample of semi-dried tomatoes was found to contain hepatitis A.

The products could mainly be traced back to exporting companies in Turkey; in particular one company occurred in both investigations in France and in the Netherlands. Under the co-ordination of INFOSAN, Turkey provided feedback on the products that had been exported to the EU in the period under investigation. It has also given details on investigations into exporters and producers of the semi-dried tomato products and on processes, HACCP procedures and hygiene measures in place. No hepatitis A-infected material could however be found.

Fraud

Why fraud is also relevant for food safety is amply illustrated with examples in recent and not so recent memory. Often the perpetrators in their search for quick profit do not have much thought for the serious harm their actions may cause to human health. Important food incidents in the past, such as the dioxin crisis in Belgium in 1999, the "MPA"-crisis in 2002, the illegal dyes problems in 2005 and the melamine crisis in 2008 had in common that their root cause was an intentional fraud for economic gain. The table below sets out fraud incidents reported through RASFF. Because of the fraud, the safety of these products could not be guaranteed and products needed to be withdrawn or recalled if they were already placed on the market.

	2007	2008	2009
expiry dates changed (MS*)	2	1	4
false health mark (MS)	2	1	3
illegal import (TC**)	16	13	13
false health certificate (TC)	3	6	18
meat unfit for human consumption (MS)	4	4	1
unauthorised establishment	MS: 7, TC: 4	MS: 3, TC: 8	MS: 3, TC: 10

* Member States ** Third Countries

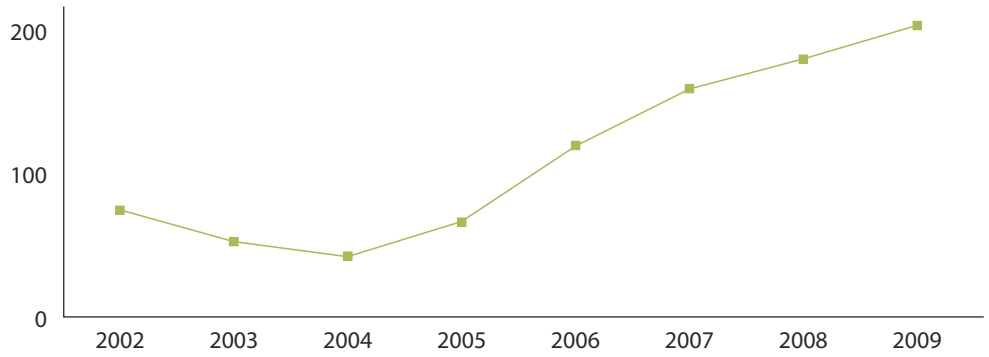
All above cases, except expiry date changes, concern only products of animal origin. Such products can only be marketed if produced by authorised establishments (both for products produced in the EU and imported) and a health mark is placed on the packaging (only if produced in the EU). Some important cases of fraud were uncovered with falsified health certificates for products posing to originate from authorised establishments but most likely having an entirely different origin. Such fraud often can only be effectively uncovered with the assistance of the country declared as the country of origin. This country can acknowledge or denounce the authenticity of the

documents. The electronic certification system TRACES can be of great help in this co-operation with the exporting countries in fighting this kind of fraud. The Commission provides access to TRACES to exporting countries and trains them as part of its "Better Training for Safer Food programme".

Feed

The chart below shows that feed is getting more reported every year since 2004. This should not mean that problems with feed are on the rise. It is more likely that reporting procedures for feed have matured over the years. More

EVOLUTION OF NOTIFICATIONS CONCERNING FEED

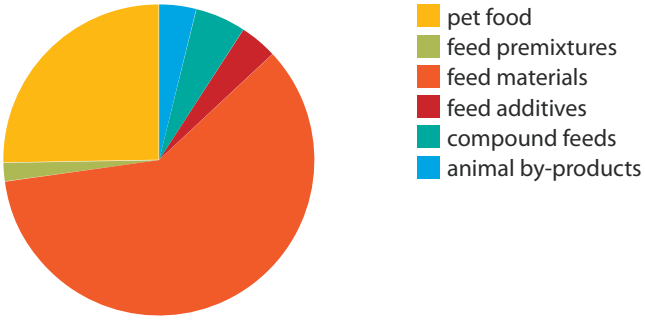


countries are reporting regularly on risks in relation to feed than before but when looking at individual countries, no clear trends can be observed.

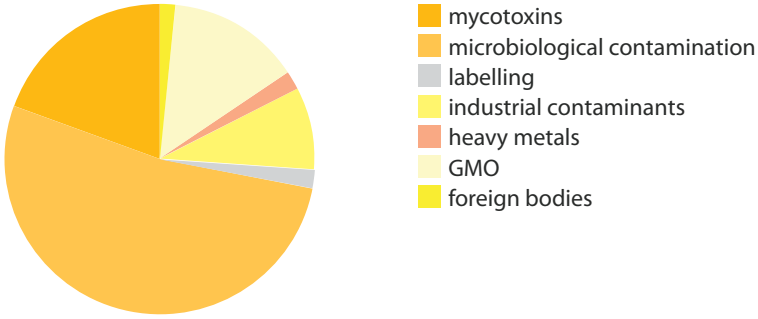
Spain and the United Kingdom have reported considerably more on feed than the years before. Most of the Spanish and British notifications were about rejections at the border. Spain reported Salmonella or Enterobacteriaceae, but also some notifications for unauthorised genetically modified maize MON88017 found in consignments of soybean feed material. This raised high concern in Europe because of the dependence of the animal production in the EU on imports of soybean. There was great fear that rising feed prices would seriously impact the meat production cost. After a favourable opinion by EFSA, the authorisation procedure of this GM maize was accelerated and negative consequences for the animal production in the EU were avoided. The United Kingdom reported 13 border rejections of groundnuts for bird feed, mostly from Brazil and from India.

In the category "feed additives" there were again some notifications reporting unacceptable levels of heavy metals arsenic, lead and cadmium and two notifications for presence of dioxins and dioxin-like PCBs in bentonite clay and in sulphur. The sulphur that was produced in Poland turned out not to have been sold for feed purpose.

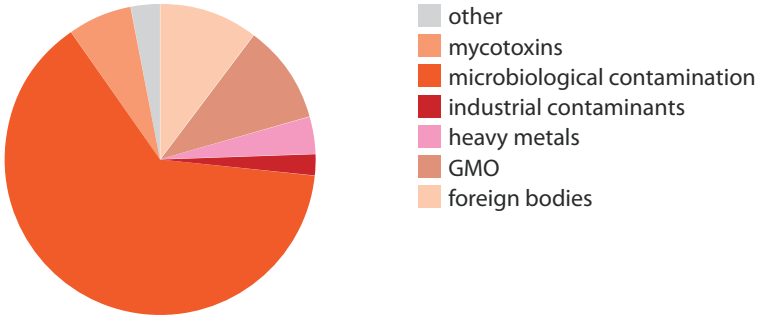
RASFF FEED NOTIFICATIONS IN 2009: PRODUCTS AND HAZARDS



PET FOOD



FEED MATERIALS



In relation to animal by-products, there were four notifications by Denmark on porcine and bovine cartilages for technical use that were improperly labelled. They were rejected at the border. For pet food, most notifications concerned Salmonella and Enterobacteriaceae. Notifications about industrial contaminants concerned findings of melamine.

In feed materials, most notifications reported contamination with Salmonella. The GMO notifications concerned GM linseed and traces of GM maize in soybean.

Two notifications reported contamination with dioxins and dioxin-like PCBs. One notification, reporting high levels of dioxins contamination, concerned dried Tagetes flowers for pigmentation of egg yolks. The product and feed produced with it was distributed to several countries in Europe and globally.

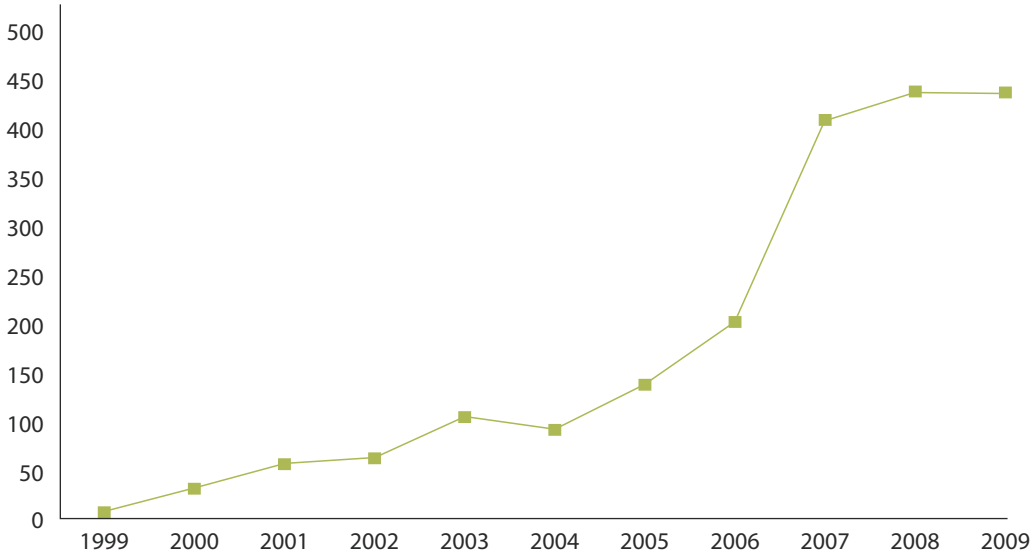
Switzerland: a new partial member of RASFF

On the first of January 2009, an amendment to the agreement on the trade of agricultural products[20] entered into force, adding two BIPs in Switzerland. With this, Switzerland has become part of the European market for products of animal origin and live animals. As part of the package, Switzerland became a member of RASFF for border rejections of products of animal origin with a view to becoming a full member once the full body of EU law is adopted.

Increased participation of third countries in RASFF

Already for several years, RASFF has become less of a secret to countries that are not a member of it. The Commission improved its communication with them over the years (read more under the heading on RASFF Window), as can be seen in the chart below.

FOLLOW-UP NOTIFICATIONS RECEIVED FROM THIRD COUNTRIES



New technologies for RASFF

RASFF Window

RASFF Window is a web interface that has been developed in order to improve the speed of transmission of the information between the European Commission and third countries in the context of the RASFF. The application provides authorities of concerned third countries with direct access to the notifications.

20 Decision No 1/2008 of the joint veterinary committee set up by the agreement between the European Community and the Swiss Confederation on trade in agricultural products, O.J. L 6, 10.1.2009, p. 89–116

With a login and password to the RASFF Window, notifications are directly available to competent authorities of a third country represented by a nominated contact point. Also the country's embassy in Brussels, the delegation of the European Union in that country and desk officers responsible for this third country at the Commission are given access to the notifications. The transmission is rapid and effective: notifications are uploaded within 24 working hours from their issuing in the RASFF.

The condition for becoming a "RASFF Window country" is identifying a single contact point in the third country that is responsible for assigning logins to the competent authorities or for monitoring the RASFF Window itself and forwarding notifications to the ministries or agencies involved. All the concerned parties, that had been given a login and password, receive automatic e-mails informing them about new notifications or follow-up notifications in RASFF Window for their country of interest that can be checked online immediately.

The system became operational in 2008, but the majority of the countries started using it in 2009.

In cases where it has not yet been possible to identify a single contact point, as an intermediate solution, the EU delegation in the country downloads the notifications from RASFF Window and transmits them to the appropriate competent authority. The final goal is for all third countries to use RASFF Window either directly or through the EU delegations.

RASFF Portal

At the celebration of RASFF's 30th birthday (see chapter four), the new RASFF Portal website was inaugurated. It marked the opening of the publicly searchable RASFF Portal database. The database is identical to the RASFF Window database, but only a limited set of data for each notification are made available to the public. Nonetheless, all market and border rejection notifications are searchable going back to 1979, the first year of operation of the system.

iRASFF: the "i" for "interactive"

While the systems mentioned above were finalised and put in place, work continued on a new generation platform for RASFF member countries to transmit and work together on RASFF notifications: iRASFF.

The new software will provide an online and real-time platform allowing countries to notify in a clear, detailed and structured way. The major novelty in this application is the possibility for countries to add their follow up into the original notification rather than appending it. This allows for a better overview of the current state of a notification as it evolves. The system is foreseen to be implemented in early 2011.

RASFF: a source of global inspiration

In 2009, the worldwide RASFF project continued, as part of the Better Training for Safer Food programme (BTSF), run by DG SANCO. The project was set up around the same time as BTSF. Its objective is to explain RASFF in detail to third countries for a better understanding of the system and to stimulate other regions of the world to set up a similar system. For the EU, this could result in the important benefit of safer imports of food and feed and better coordination with third countries should any problems arise. Since much of these objectives are in common with BTSF, the worldwide RASFF project was integrated into the BTSF training programme.

RASFF seminars

RASFF seminars are designed to inform participants in depth of the functioning of EU RASFF and its role in food safety management in the EU. Through lectures by tutors from the Commission and Member States, participants are provided with detailed information on how the system is operated. Using case studies, they learn how food safety incidents are reported and followed-up. They also get a hands-on experience with RASFF software systems.

Three seminars have taken place, the first one in Hanoi, Vietnam, focused on the ASEAN RASFF system. The ASEAN RASFF, having been a pilot project between 7 countries of ASEAN, seeks now to be endorsed by the ASEAN secretariat and become part of the ASEAN working programme. For this, terms of reference of the ASEAN RASFF steering committee were written and revised during the meeting. At the request of the authorities in Macao, a back-to-back workshop was held in Macao, including participants from Hong Kong and mainland China. Once the EU RASFF model was explained and illustrated with exercises, participants reflected if and how they could implement such a model in their region.

The seminar in December in Johannesburg, South Africa, found participants of African countries joined together for 3 days in a very good – African – atmosphere to explore the RASFF. There was ample time to examine case studies and to practice with the software. But even more important was the opportunity to exchange experiences and to discuss the current challenges in the area of food safety and the role of the RASFF in this. South Africa and other countries of the region showed an interest in building a regional system to strengthen their cooperation in the field of food safety.

Sustained training

Sustained training missions are a second phase in the worldwide RASFF project. After the seminars explaining RASFF, countries expressing an interest in setting up a national RASFF system can be supported by a longer mission of experts who can discuss with the competent services and provide their advice on the steps to be taken for setting up the system.

In 2009, a sustained training mission on RASFF took place in Indonesia on the request of National Agency for Food and Drug Control of Indonesia (BPOM). The mission detected what are the main challenges for Indonesia to implement such a system and was a way to get all parties around the table and discuss the setting up of protocols for exchanging information between all authorities competent for food safety.

4

30 years of RASFF: a celebration

When realising in 2009 that it was going to be exactly 30 years ago that the first RASFF notification was "created", the RASFF team at DG SANCO thought it was the perfect occasion for a celebration. And so it was. The idea to organise a RASFF conference to take stock of what had been achieved in previous years and to look ahead to the future of RASFF had existed already for a while. Soon a couple of other ideas emerged: making a special publication about 30 years RASFF and inviting contacts in countries all over the world to celebrate with us: the mix was ready to be cooked. It all happened as follows:

Special celebration booklet: "30 years of keeping consumers safe"

Nothing better to commemorate a special date than to make a special publication around it. This special booklet first introduces the policy and procedures of RASFF, and then goes on to give an account of the history of 30 years of RASFF, providing some background on various milestones and technological revolutions that not only reshaped food safety policy in the EU and society in general, but also boosted the RASFF to its next level. A recommended read!

Technical meeting on 15 July 2009

The three-day event kicked off with a technical meeting with RASFF members, contact points and representatives of third countries and WHO discussing the future of RASFF and other alert systems around the world and how cooperation between these systems could be enhanced.

At the start of the meeting, the EC RASFF team explained the state of ongoing activities in RASFF and how it is preparing for the future. It also explained the work already done and its plans for activities under the Better Training for Safer Food programme to support countries and world regions outside the EU to set up their own alert systems inspired by the RASFF.

Following this, two examples of regional networks were presented: in MERCOSUR and ASEAN. While the ASEAN RASFF is already up and running with 7 countries participating in the platform, the MERCOSUR RASFF is still in preparation. The presentation by WHO – INFOSAN brought everything together on a global scale. A dynamic conclusion to the technical meeting, which showed that work can be done in parallel at national, regional and global level.

International conference "Keeping An Eye On Your Food" on 16 July 2009

On 16 July 2009, DG Health & Consumers organised a high-level conference in which representatives of more than 90 countries participated to learn more about the role RASFF has played in the turbulent past of food safety in Europe and to take stock of what plans RASFF has in store for the future. The different speeches and presentations are available on the RASFF website at http://ec.europa.eu/rasff

Commissioner Vassiliou opened the conference remembering how RASFF has evolved over 30 years as a communication tool on food safety. In the 21st century, this communication needs to be extended to global level and RASFF is ready to play an important part in this.

Commissioner Rhoda Tumusiime of the African Union gave her views on the challenges Africa faces in relation to food safety. Where the safety of food is not being taken seriously, it is often a matter of life or death. A rapid alert system could be of great benefit in Africa but there is a more urgent need for infrastructure, standards, training and enforcement to establish the required traceability of food and feed and consumer awareness.

The following **keynote speeches** were delivered:

Deputy Director General Paola Testori Coggi explained how RASFF had helped achieve in Europe one of the highest levels of food safety in the world and gave her views on the further developments of the system in the years to come.

Mrs Inger Andersson, Director General of the Swedish National Food Administration gave a view on what RASFF meant from the national perspective and she pleaded for more openness in the system while ensuring that confidential information is protected and for RASFF data to be more and better used when deciding on future controls.

Dr Somsak Pipoppinyo, Assistant Director and Head of the Natural Resources Unit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) explained how ARASFF – the ASEAN RASFF system – fitted very well in the evolution of ASEAN from an Association into a Community.

Mrs Monique Goyens, Director General of the European Consumers' Organisation (BEUC), was there to give the consumers' view on the RASFF. She said that the EU is one of the safest places in the world to eat and drink and that RASFF plays a very important part in this and is trusted to deliver good work. She pleaded for more information to flow back to the consumer from the RASFF. She highlighted the use of nanotechnology as an emerging food safety concern.

Dr Andrea Ellis of the World Health Organization's International network of food safety authorities "INFOSAN" presented the conference with questions over how global alert systems should be organised in order to respond to the challenges faced at global level. She said that cooperation between public health and food safety authorities is pivotal to managing hazards in food.

Afternoon discussion panels

Three discussion panels were organised around the following themes:

- **Stakeholder expectations of the RASFF**
  Mrs Beate Kettlitz of the Confederation of Food and Drink Industries (CIAA) asked that food business operators should be given a role in the system as they have key information regarding the food safety incidents reported. She also made a case for more harmonisation between Member States in the use of the system and increased global cooperation.

  Mr. Robert Remy of the consumer organisation "Test-Achats" in Belgium asked that consumers be given more information to allow them to identify the products that are the subject of a RASFF notification.

- **Global food safety and alert systems**
  Mr Sanchai Tontyaporn, team leader of the ARASFF (ASEAN RASFF) project, explained the project that was run with the support of the European Commission. With seven out of ten ASEAN countries participating, it has a solid basis for growth, although compared to the RASFF, it is still in its infancy. Implementation of the ARASFF should greatly contribute to the improvement of overall food safety within the network member countries and at the regional level as a whole. The next challenges for ARASFF are further improvement of the ARASFF software, building stronger national networks and getting the ARASFF endorsed by the ASEAN secretariat.

  Dr Andrea Ellis of WHO – INFOSAN explained the need for collaboration on food safety on a global scale. Countries have an obligation to report important food safety events to INFOSAN under the International Health Regulations (IHR).

Mr Emilio Vento of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)'s trade building capacity (TCB) branch illustrated the usefulness of RASFF data in its approach to support developing country farms and firms to bring their products to markets by upgrading supply capacity and quality infrastructure. RASFF data analysis will greatly contribute to a better understanding of compliance challenges and ultimately to more effectively targeted TCB interventions.

- **Future challenges for the EU food safety system and the role of RASFF**
  Mr. Andrea Altieri of EFSA presented a system EFSA has developed to analyse trends in RASFF notifications and to generate reports and charts.

  Mr. George Georgallas, head of the RASFF contact point in Cyprus, pointed out that new food technologies and climate change may place new challenges on the RASFF. An example of an area already affected is the problem of food allergens. Another area is food fraud.

  Mr Kim Vandrup, head of the RASFF contact point in Denmark, identified two internal challenges for RASFF in the future: the volume of information to be managed as more countries become members or exchange information with RASFF and another challenge is the right balance between transparency and confidentiality of the information in RASFF.

Director General Robert Madelin asked rapporteurs of the three panels to give an account of the discussions that had taken place and drew the following summary conclusions before closing the conference:

1. the process has to be both local to Europe and global in its openness;

2. involvement of stakeholders should be increased;

3. ensuring that all players at global level are committed to immediate sharing of information;

4. a successful RASFF is enabled by teamwork, at different levels, be it political or technical and with dedicated teams we will together enable this global network we need, to ensure food safety.

Mr. Madelin's conclusions

This special day was closed with a festive dinner, in the presence of European Commissioner Vassiliou, Commissioner Tumusiime of the African Union and Commissioner Hamburg of the United States' Food and Drug Administration. Invited guests were contact persons of the RASFF from the past as well as the present, from Member States as well as from third countries.

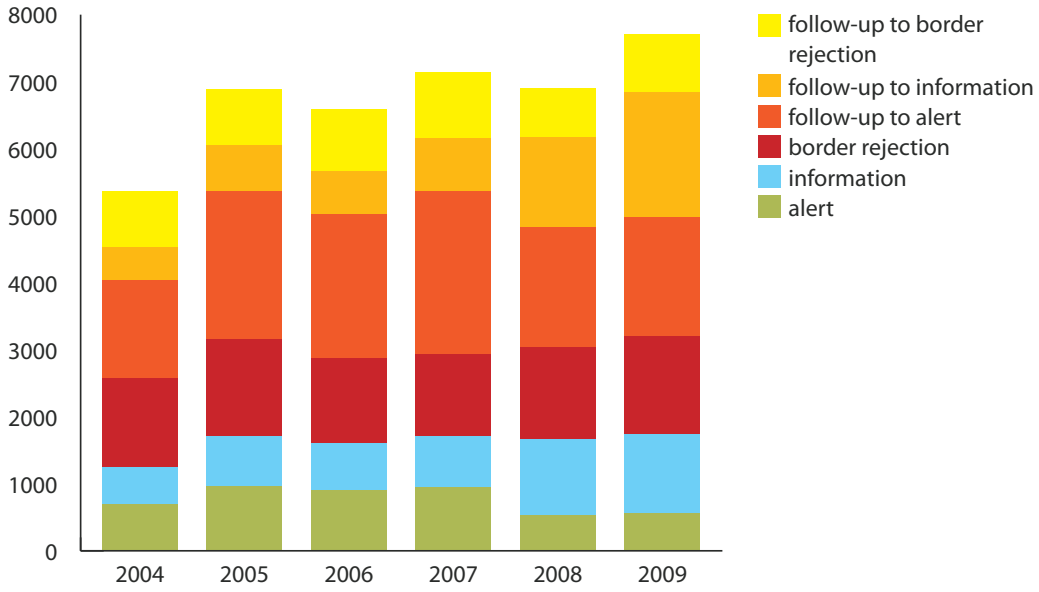
Field trip

On 17 July, the event was closed with a visit to the fruit and vegetable auction in Mechelen, the largest farmers' cooperative in Europe for the sale of fresh fruits and vegetables. More than one hundred participants from RASFF contact points and food safety authorities from around the world could see how traceability is implemented on the spot and what programs exist for monitoring the safety of the products, including demonstrations and presentations by the Belgian Food Safety Agency.

5

More charts and tables

EVOLUTION OF THE NUMBER OF NOTIFICATIONS SINCE 2004



In 2009, the number of notifications rose again to record levels. The number of original notifications increased by a moderate 5 % for the three types: alert, information and border rejection. But the follow-up notifications' number was boosted, especially for information notifications: by no less than 40 %! Overall, there was an increase by nearly 12 %.

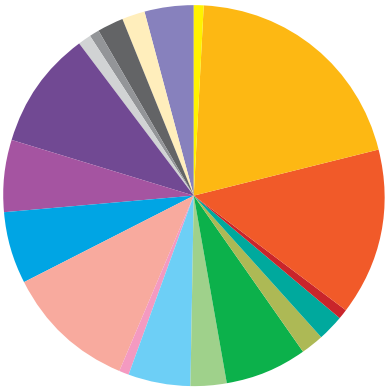
year	alert	information	border rejection	news	follow-up to alert	follow-up to information	follow-up to border rejection	follow-up to news	total
2004	690	553	1338	89	1449	504	825	0	559
2005	955	747	1453	86	2218	679	842	0	6894
2006	910	687	1274	72	2157	640	923	0	6591
2007	952	761	1211	43	2440	796	978	0	7138
2008	528	1138	1377	47	1789	1329	743	76	7027
2009	557	1191	1456	42	1775	1861	871	87	7840
%	**+5.5**	**+4.7**	**+5.7**	**-10.6**	**-0.8**	**+40**	**+17.2**	**+14.5**	**+11.6**

NOTIFICATIONS BY NOTIFYING COUNTRY

COUNTRY	withdrawn	rejected	alert	border rejection	information	news
AUSTRIA	4	2	40	14	56	0
BELGIUM	8	2	35	47	35	1
BULGARIA	1	0	0	25	1	0
COMMISSION SERVICES	0	0	13	0	9	27
CYPRUS	2	2	6	20	27	0
CZECH REPUBLIC	0	1	25	9	34	1
DENMARK	1	7	33	9	81	1
EFTA SURVEILLANCE AUTHORITY	0	0	0	0	0	0
ESTONIA	0	0	2	1	10	0
EUROPEAN FOOD SAFETY AUTHORITY	0	0	0	0	0	0
FINLAND	1	2	15	84	42	2
FRANCE	5	2	44	53	60	3
GERMANY	7	2	83	154	177	4
GREECE	3	7	11	120	29	1
HUNGARY	0	0	3	1	6	0
ICELAND	0	0	0	0	1	0
IRELAND	0	1	14	3	13	1
ITALY	42	12	70	192	204	4
LATVIA	0	1	6	1	7	0
LIECHTENSTEIN	0	0	0	0	0	0
LITHUANIA	0	1	3	14	16	0
LUXEMBOURG	0	0	7	0	9	0
MALTA	0	1	1	4	13	0
NETHERLANDS	11	2	13	161	38	0
NORWAY	0	2	2	19	9	2
POLAND	4	5	13	98	30	0
PORTUGAL	0	1	1	3	4	0
ROMANIA	0	6	0	10	8	0
SLOVAK REPUBLIC	0	1	26	7	19	0
SLOVENIA	0	0	19	13	41	1
SPAIN	7	3	17	220	18	2
SWEDEN	0	1	10	3	47	0
SWITZERLAND	0	1	0	3	1	0
UNITED KINGDOM	5	8	44	154	136	8

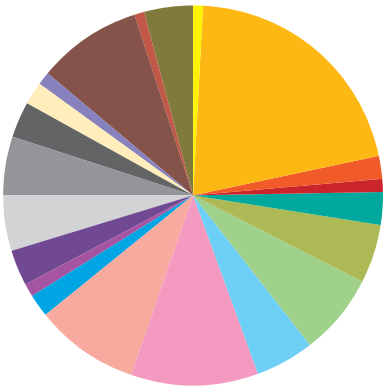
Remark: figures updated on 9 June 2010, before the report went to print.

2009 – ALERT NOTIFICATIONS BY HAZARD CATEGORY



- TSEs
- (potentially) pathogenic micro-organisms
- allergens
- bad or insufficient controls
- biocontaminants
- biotoxins
- composition
- food additives
- foreign bodies
- GMO/novel food
- heavy metals
- industrial contaminants
- migration
- mycotoxins
- not determined/other
- packaging defective/incorrect
- parasitic infestation
- pesticide residues
- residues of veterinary medicinal products

2009 – INFORMATION NOTIFICATIONS BY HAZARD CATEGORY



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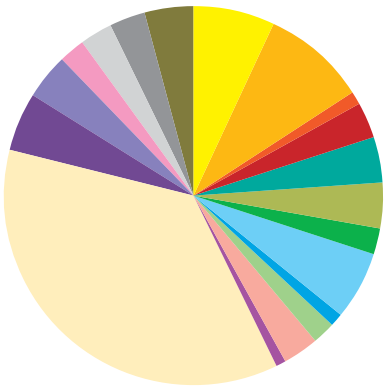
- microbiological contamination
- migration
- mycotoxins
- not determined/other
- organoleptic aspects
- parasitic infestation
- pesticide residues
- radiation
- residues of veterinary medicinal products

2009 – BORDER REJECTIONS BY HAZARD CATEGORY



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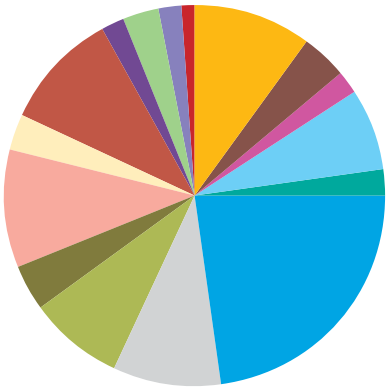
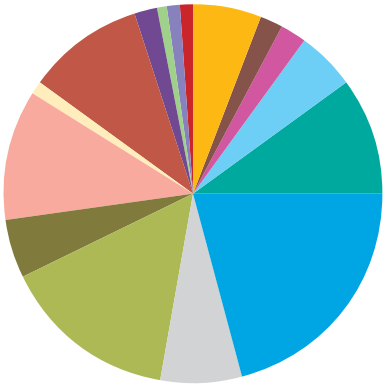
2009 – ALERT NOTIFICATIONS BY PRODUCT CATEGORY



- cereals and bakery products
- cocoa preparations, coffee and tea
- confectionery
- dietetic foods, food supplements, fortified foods
- feed
- fish, crustaceans and molluscs
- food contact materials
- fruit and vegetables
- herbs and spices
- meat and meat products
- milk and milk products
- nuts, nut products and seeds
- other food product/mixed
- prepared dishes and snacks
- soups, broths and sauces
- beverages and bottled water

2009 – INFORMATION NOTIFICATIONS BY PRODUCT CATEGORY



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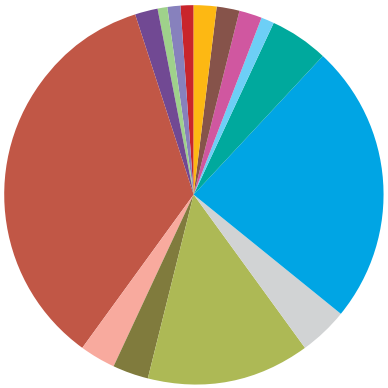
- beverages and bottled water

2009 – BORDER REJECTIONS BY PRODUCT CATEGORY



- cereals and bakery products
- cocoa preparations, coffee and tea
- confectionery
- dietetic foods, food supplements, fortified foods
- feed
- fish, crustaceans and molluscs
- food contact materials
- fruit and vegetables
- herbs and spices
- meat and meat products
- milk and milk products
- nuts, nut products and seeds
- other food product/mixed
- prepared dishes and snacks
- soups, broths and sauces
- beverages and bottled water

2009 – NOTIFICATIONS BY HAZARD CATEGORY AND PRODUCT CATEGORY

hazard category	total	alcoholic beverages (other than wine)	animal by-products	bivalve molluscs	cephalopods	cereals and bakery products	cocoa preparations, coffee and tea	compound feeds	confectionery	crustaceans	dietetic foods and food supplements	eggs and egg products	fats and oils	feed additives	feed materials	feed premixtures	fish	food additives	food contact materials	fruit and vegetables	herbs and spices	honey and royal jelly	ices and desserts	meat (other than poultry)	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	471			31	2	3	1	1	5	8	8	9			69		54			29	34			65	17		1	30	1	18	70	15			
allergens	96					24	34		8		5						1				1			7	1		2	3			1	7	3		
bad or insufficient controls	145		1		13	2				12	1		2			1	74			17			1	7	1			4	2		6		1		
biocontaminants	59					1											50																8		
biotoxins (other)	13			8													2			1								1							
composition	144					20		2	8		37		9	1		1	10		2	19	20		1	2		2	2					2	6		
feed additives	10											1																			9				
food additives	163	2				10			29	21	5						6	1		34	8		1	7			22	7				2	7		1
foreign bodies	156	1			2	18	22	3	3		4				14		3			34	4		2	3	4			25		1	1	8	3	1	
GMO / novel food	175					49	6	3	1		23				14			2		5	1						2	62		8			1		
heavy metals	255			1	15	2	9			37	12			4	4		96		60	18				2						1			1		
industrial contaminants	74					6			1	1	7		6	2	2	1	21	2	7	2				1	1			4		3		1	6		
labelling absent / incomplete / incorrect	38		4					1	1	2	1	1				1	17		1	1					2			1	2	1	1		1		
microbiological contamination	76					6	2		1	2	1	1			13		7			12	3			3	3		2	11		10		2		1	
migration	116																		113	1														1	
mycotoxins	665					21	2				2				9		1			68	34	1						515		11		1			
not determined/ other	97			9	1	2	5		8	2	5	2	5				11	1	4	5		1		15	5		2	8	2		4				
organoleptic aspects	87			4	5	2		1	1	4	1		1		1		22		6	21	5			2	3		1	3	2		1		1		
packaging defective / incorrect	36		4	1	1		1		1	2	1				1		13		1	4				5				1							
parasitic infestation	77																69							6				2							
pesticide residues	173					2	1					1		1	2		2			142	19							3							
radiation	16						1				9									2	2			1									1		
residues of veterinary medicinal products	122									88		1					8					12		7	3						3				
TSEs	10																							10											
TOTAL	3274	3	9	54	39	168	76	12	67	177	121	15	23	8	129	4	467	6	194	414	132	14	5	146	40	2	30	680	9	53	96	38	39	3	1

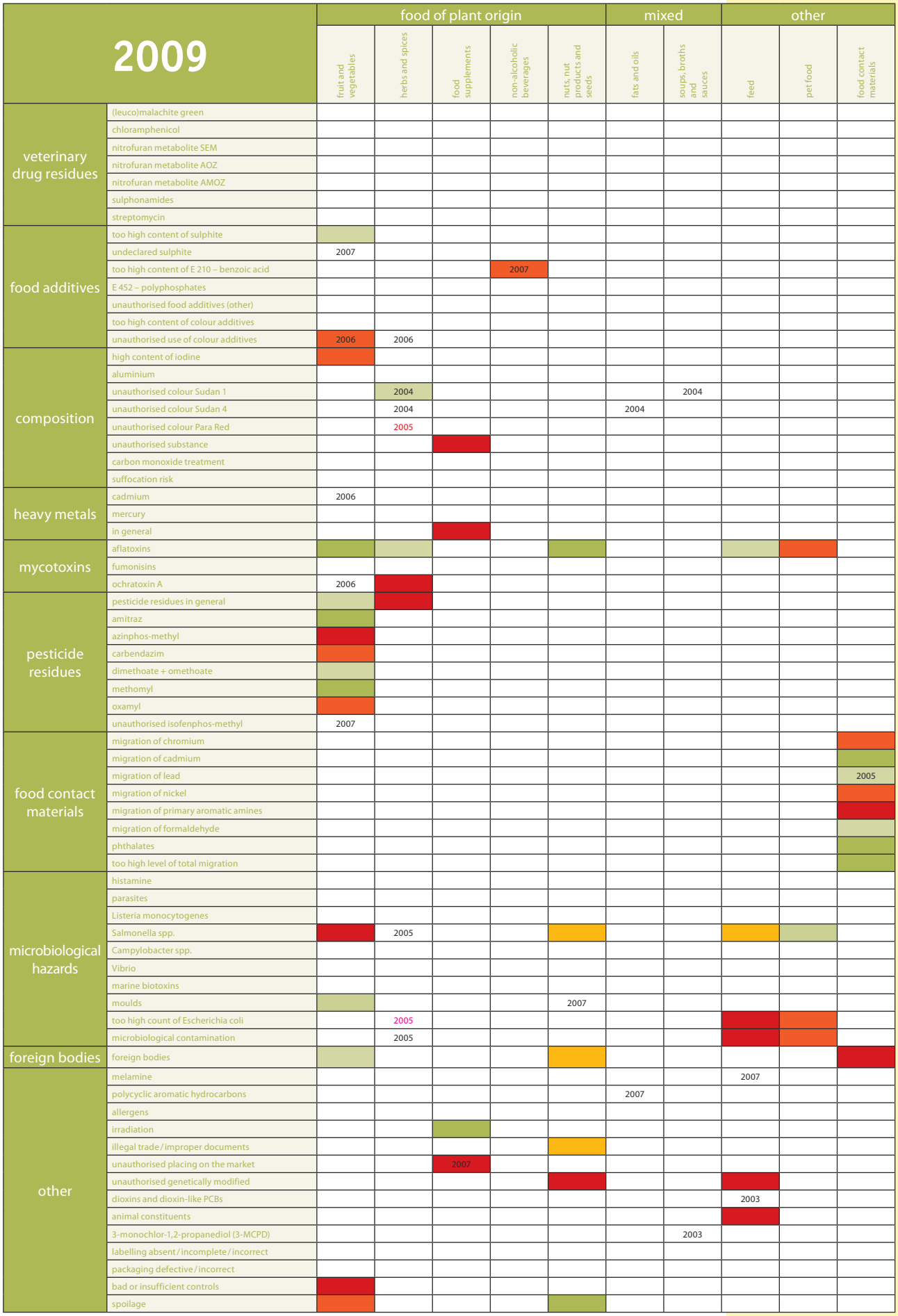
ANALYSIS OF TRENDS IN HAZARDS NOTIFIED THROUGH THE RASFF IN 2009

2009		food of animal origin					food of plant origin		
		fishery products	honey and royal jelly	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	2003	2005	2003	2003				
	nitrofuran metabolite SEM					2003			
	nitrofuran metabolite AOZ	2003							
	nitrofuran metabolite AMOZ					2003			
	sulphonamides		2007						
	streptomycin		2003						
food additives	too high content of sulphite								
	undeclared sulphite								
	too high content of E 210 – benzoic acid								
	E 452 – polyphosphates	2007							
	unauthorised food additives (other)	2004							
	too high content of colour additives								2007
	unauthorised use of colour additives						2005		
composition	high content of iodine								
	aluminium						new		
	unauthorised colour Sudan 1						2004		
	unauthorised colour Sudan 4								
	unauthorised colour Para Red								
	unauthorised substance								
	carbon monoxide treatment	2005							
	suffocation risk								
heavy metals	cadmium								
	mercury	2007							
	in general								
mycotoxins	aflatoxins								
	fumonisins						2006		
	ochratoxin A						2006	2006	
pesticide residues	pesticide residues in general								
	amitraz								
	azinphos-methyl								
	carbendazim								
	dimethoate + omethoate								
	methomyl								
	oxamyl								
	unauthorised isofenphos-methyl								
food contact materials	migration of chromium								
	migration of cadmium								
	migration of lead								
	migration of nickel								
	migration of primary aromatic amines								
	migration of formaldehyde								
	phthalates								
	too high level of total migration								
microbiological hazards	histamine								
	parasites								
	Listeria monocytogenes			2005		2004			
	Salmonella spp.			2005				2003	
	Campylobacter spp.					2007			
	Vibrio	2004							
	marine biotoxins	2006							
	moulds								
	too high count of Escherichia coli								
	microbiological contamination	2003							
foreign bodies	foreign bodies								
other	melamine								
	polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons	2006							
	allergens								2007
	irradiation								
	illegal trade / improper documents					2005			
	unauthorised placing on the market								
	unauthorised genetically modified						2006		
	dioxins and dioxin-like PCBs	2007							
	animal constituents								
	3-monochlor-1,2-propanediol (3-MCPD)								
	labelling absent / incomplete / incorrect								
	packaging defective / incorrect								
	bad or insufficient controls								
	spoilage			2006					

Explanation of the symbols used:

- small increase of the number of notifications received
- small decrease of the number of notifications received
- significant increase of the number of notifications received
- significant decrease of the number of notifications received
- number of notifications follows the same trend as the year before
- year in which a "peak" number of notifications was received
- year in which a very high "peak" number of notifications was received
- new hazard in the RASFF system with a significant number of notifications

2003 2004 new


2009
food of plant origin
mixed
other
fruit and vegetables
herbs and spices
food supplements
non-alcoholic beverages
nuts, nut products and seeds
fats and oils
soups, broths and sauces
feed
pet food
food contact materials
veterinary drug residues
(leuco)malachite green
chloramphenicol
nitrofuran metabolite SEM
nitrofuran metabolite AOZ
nitrofuran metabolite AMOZ
sulphonamides
streptomycin
food additives
too high content of sulphite
undeclared sulphite
2007
too high content of E 210 – benzoic acid
2007
E 452 – polyphosphates
unauthorised food additives (other)
too high content of colour additives
unauthorised use of colour additives
2006
2006
composition
high content of iodine
aluminium
unauthorised colour Sudan 1
2004
2004
unauthorised colour Sudan 4
2004
2004
unauthorised colour Para Red
2005
unauthorised substance
carbon monoxide treatment
suffocation risk
heavy metals
cadmium
2006
mercury
in general
mycotoxins
aflatoxins
fumonisins
ochratoxin A
2006
pesticide residues
pesticide residues in general
amitraz
azinphos-methyl
carbendazim
dimethoate + omethoate
methomyl
oxamyl
unauthorised isofenphos-methyl
2007
food contact materials
migration of chromium
migration of cadmium
migration of lead
2005
migration of nickel
migration of primary aromatic amines
migration of formaldehyde
phthalates
too high level of total migration
microbiological hazards
histamine
parasites
Listeria monocytogenes
Salmonella spp.
2005
Campylobacter spp.
Vibrio
marine biotoxins
moulds
2007
too high count of Escherichia coli
2005
microbiological contamination
2005
foreign bodies
foreign bodies
other
melamine
2007
polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons
2007
allergens
irradiation
illegal trade/improper documents
unauthorised placing on the market
2007
unauthorised genetically modified
dioxins and dioxin-like PCBs
2003
animal constituents
3-monochlor-1,2-propanediol (3-MCPD)
2003
labelling absent/incomplete/incorrect
packaging defective/incorrect
bad or insufficient controls
spoilage

NOTIFICATIONS BY PRODUCT CATEGORY

	total **2009**	alert 2009	information 2009	border rejection 2009	total **2008**	alert 2008	information 2008	border rejection 2008
beverages and bottled water	39	7	15	17	59	8	26	25
alcoholic beverages (other than wine)	4	3	1		2		2	
non-alcoholic beverages	28	3	13	12	37	6	13	18
water	7	1	1	5	17	1	9	7
wine					3	1	2	
feed	201	10	123	68	175	12	121	42
feed for food-producing animals	148	7	100	41	123	8	92	23
pet food	49	1	21	27	52	4	29	19
feed additives	4	2	2		7	2	5	
fish, crustaceans and molluscs	716	121	244	351	451	109	188	154
molluscs	48	16	17	15	49	29	14	6
cephalopods	39	1	12	26	17	3	4	10
crustaceans	176	16	78	82	128	16	63	49
fish	453	88	137	228	257	61	107	89
meat, game and poultry	232	58	132	42	244	75	144	25
meat other than poultry	141	36	72	33	126	46	67	13
poultry meat	91	22	60	9	118	29	77	12
other products								
cereals and bakery products	212	46	129	37	161	40	58	63
cocoa preparations, coffee and tea	82	31	28	23	47	15	22	10
confectionery, honey and royal jelly	75	16	33	26	130	23	53	54
dietetic foods and food supplements	123	37	65	21	77	20	44	13
eggs and egg products	14	5	8	1	9	3	6	
fats and oils	24	4	5	15	24	6	6	12
food additives	6		4	2	9	2	5	2
fruit and vegetables	401	44	160	197	446	49	205	192
herbs and spices	127	23	57	47	98	20	41	37
ices and desserts	8	3	2	3	6	1	4	1
milk and milk products	40	17	17	6	62	26	33	3
nuts, nut products and seeds	623	55	63	505	770	36	65	669
prepared dishes and snacks	32	14	11	7	26	10	13	3
soups, broths and sauces	44	13	12	19	27	8	13	6
other food products/mixed	14	4	5	5	20	5	7	8
food contact materials	191	49	78	64	197	58	79	60
TOTAL	**3204**	**557**	**1191**	**1456**	**3045**	**528**	**1138**	**1379**

Remark: From 2008, market notifications receive a risk evaluation. Alert classification is only made when a serious risk is identified.

NOTIFICATIONS BY HAZARD CATEGORY AND BASIS FOR THE NOTIFICATION

	control	market		border control		market				
hazard category	total	alert	infor-mation	import rejected	consign-ment released	market control	food poisoning	company's own check	consumer complaint	official control in non-member country
(potentially) pathogenic micro-organisms	471	112	251	108	36	220	23	80	1	3
allergens	96	75	21			75	5	15	1	
bad or insufficient controls	145	4	8	133		10		2		
biocontaminants (other)	59	11	31	17	12	15	12	3		
biotoxins (other)	13	11	2			11	2			
composition	143	40	61	42	1	86	5	6	1	2
feed additives	10	2	5	3	1	4		2		
food additives	163	18	82	63	7	88		1	2	2
foreign bodies	156	30	65	61		20		20	52	3
GMO / novel food	175	8	135	32	4	107		27		5
heavy metals	255	63	106	86	34	113	1	6		15
industrial contaminants (other)	74	32	23	19	6	40		8	1	
labelling absent / incomplete / incorrect	38	1	12	25	1	11			1	
microbiological contamination	76	1	32	43	8	8		9	7	1
migration	116	36	61	19		94		1	1	1
mycotoxins	665	59	64	542	9	99		11		4
not determined / other	97	4	30	63	4	22		3	5	
organoleptic aspects	87		21	66		8	1	2	10	
packaging defective / incorrect	36	4	6	26		4		3	3	
parasitic infestation	77	13	18	46	4	18		5		4
pesticide residues	172	14	106	52	28	82		6		4
radiation	16		11	5	3	7			1	
residues of veterinary medicinal products	122	24	43	55	40	18		9		
TSE's	10	3	7			9		1		
TOTAL	3272	565	1201	1506	198	1169	69	220	86	44

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

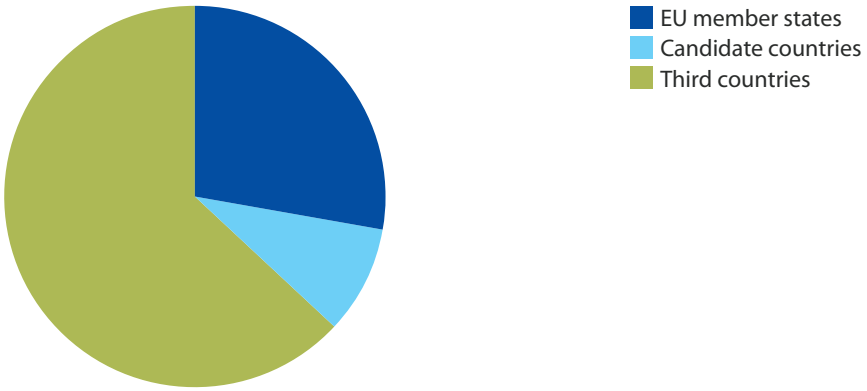
NOTIFICATIONS BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

COUNTRY of origin	2009	2008	2007	trend	COUNTRY of origin	2009	2008	2007	trend
CHINA	345	500	355	↓↓↓	SWEDEN	17	12	10	↑
TURKEY	278	308	294	↓↓	THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION	17	11	15	↑↑
THE UNITED STATES	237	153	191	↑↑↑	INDONESIA	16	15	26	↑
INDIA	165	159	86	↑↑	REPUBLIC OF KOREA	16	7	3	↑↑
GERMANY	163	137	122	↑↑	HUNGARY	15	17	16	↓
ARGENTINA	124	58	48	↑↑↑	PORTUGAL	14	6	9	↑↑
FRANCE	113	94	109	↑↑	TUNISIA	14	34	16	↓↓
THAILAND	110	106	93	↑	NEW ZEALAND	13	3	2	↑↑
SPAIN	106	115	178	↓↓	JAPAN	12	5	9	↑↑
ITALY	103	104	74	↓	NAMIBIA	12	4	7	↑↑
VIETNAM	100	56	45	↑↑	COLOMBIA	11	9	6	↑
BRAZIL	85	62	58	↑↑	GAMBIA	11	5	4	↑↑
CANADA	81	10	12	↑↑↑	IRELAND	11	11	11	
POLAND	76	73	77	↑	LEBANON	10	17	19	↓↓
THE NETHERLANDS	75	63	52	↑↑	SWITZERLAND	10	11	10	↓
IRAN	69	174	133	↓↓↓	TAIWAN	10	16	5	↓↓
UNITED KINGDOM	61	51	52	↑↑	CZECH REPUBLIC	9	11	31	↓
BANGLADESH	54	22	15	↑↑	ISRAEL	9	14	5	↓
MOROCCO	53	11	22	↑↑	MALAYSIA	8	8	22	
BELGIUM	46	38	40	↑↑	MAURITANIA	8	0		↑↑*
UKRAINE	38	37	40	↑	NORWAY	8	4	5	↑
EGYPT	36	49	34	↓↓	SLOVENIA	8	16	3	↓↓
PERU	35	7	21	↑↑	SYRIA	8	15	10	↓↓
CHILE	32	8	18	↑↑	URUGUAY	8	6	6	↑
DENMARK	32	39	34	↓	BOLIVIA	7	2	2	↑
AUSTRIA	31	29	10	↑	BULGARIA	7	6	6	↑
NIGERIA	31	25	49	↑↑	PANAMA	7	4	11	↑
CROATIA	29	18	5	↑↑	PARAGUAY	7	9	2	↓
SENEGAL	28	11	15	↑↑	THE PHILIPPINES	7	23	13	↓↓
SRI LANKA	28	23	24	↑	AUSTRALIA	6	12	14	↓↓
CHINA (HONG KONG)	26	26	47		GEORGIA	6	3	3	↑
GHANA	23	23	31		MALTA	6	4	3	↑
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN UNKNOWN	21	11	23	↑↑	MEXICO	6	6	4	
ECUADOR	19	8	7	↑↑	ROMANIA	6	6	3	
GREECE	19	20	32	↓	ALBANIA	5	5	1	
PAKISTAN	17	28	28	↓↓	FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA	5	5	4	
SOUTH AFRICA	17	8	8	↑↑	LITHUANIA	5	13	6	↓↓

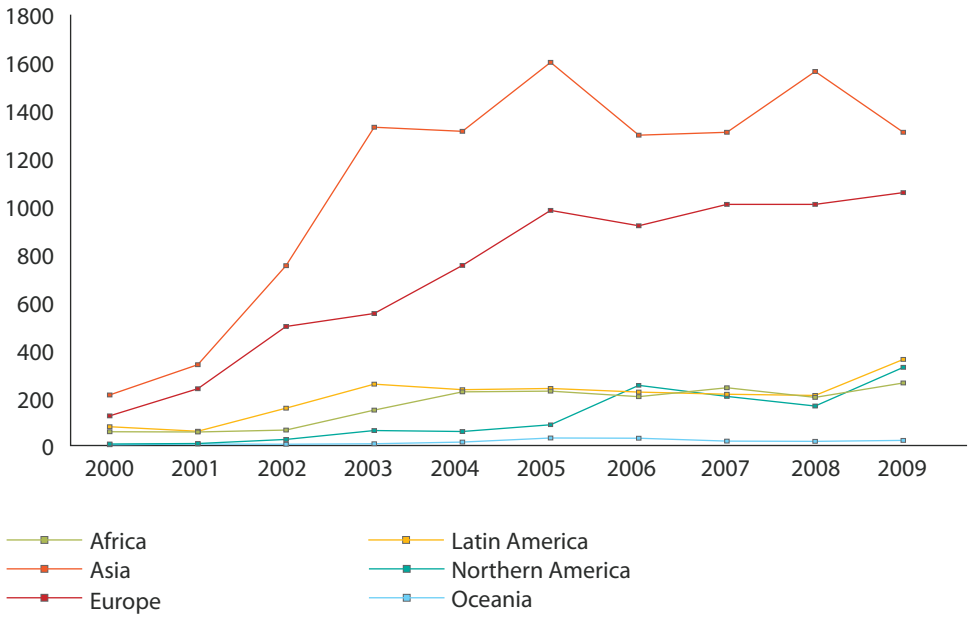
↑* : country not previously listed in 2008
↑ : increase by 5 or less than 5
↓ : decrease by 5 or less than 5
= : status quo
↓↓ : decrease by more than 5 and less than 31
↑↑ : increase by more than 5 and less than 31
↓↓↓ : decrease by more than 31
↑↑↑ : increase by more than 31

COUNTRY of origin	2009	2008	2007	trend	COUNTRY of origin	2009	2008	2007	trend
ALGERIA	4	2	2	↑	SAN MARINO	1	0		↑*
FINLAND	4	2	1	↑	SUDAN	1	0		↑*
IVORY COAST	4	4	10		SURINAME	1	1	6	
LATVIA	4	10	14	↓↓	TAJIKISTAN	1	0		↑*
MADAGASCAR	4	0		↑*	THE MALDIVES	1	2	0	↓
SERBIA	4	9	5	↓	THE SEYCHELLES	1	0		↑*
TANZANIA	4	1	5	↑	THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	1	1	0	
BELARUS	3	3	0		UZBEKISTAN	1	0		↑*
COSTA RICA	3	3	6		VENEZUELA	1	0		↑*
GUATEMALA	3	0		↑*	YEMEN	1	1	0	
MAURITIUS	3	0		↑*					
MOZAMBIQUE	3	0		↑*					
SAUDI ARABIA	3	5	4	↓					
SINGAPORE	3	6	10	↓					
SLOVAKIA	3	10	17	↓↓					
THE FALKLAND ISLANDS	3	1		↑					
AUTONOMOUS REGION OF KOSOVO	2	0		↑*	NO LONGER LISTED IN 2009				
CUBA	2	2	1		ARMENIA				
GREENLAND	2	1	1	↑	ARUBA				
NICARAGUA	2	8	10	↓↓	BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA				
REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA	2	2	3		BURKINO FASO				
UGANDA	2	1	2	↑	CYPRUS				
AZERBAIJAN	1	1	0		ETHIOPIA				
EL SALVADOR	1	0		↑*	FIJI				
ESTONIA	1	3	1	↓	GUADELOUPE				
FRENCH POLYNESIA	1	0		↑*	GUERNSEY				
HONDURAS	1	2	0	↓	GUINEA				
ICELAND	1	1	1		JAMAICA				
JERSEY	1	0		↑*	MALAWI				
JORDAN	1	2	1	↓	PAPUA NEW GUINEA				
KAZAKHSTAN	1	1	5		PUERTO RICO				
KENYA	1	6	3	↓	RWANDA				
KYRGYZSTAN	1	1	0		THE DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA				
LUXEMBOURG	1	3	0	↓	THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO				
MYANMAR	1	4	2	↓	THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC				
OMAN	1	1	2		TOGO				
QATAR	1	0		↑*	ZIMBABWE				

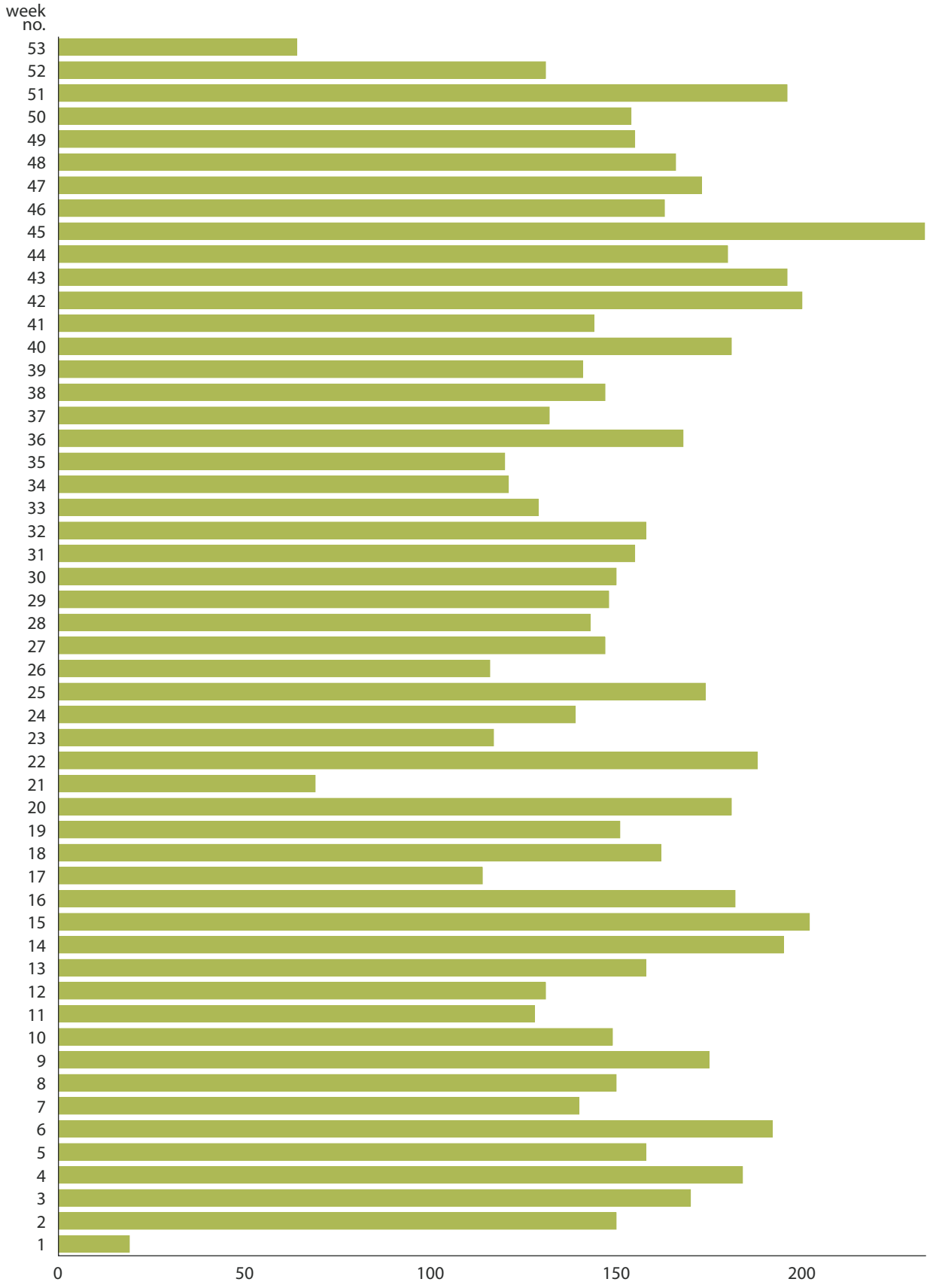
2009 – NOTIFICATIONS BY PRODUCT ORIGIN



NOTIFICATIONS BY WORLD REGION



OVERVIEW OF TOTAL EXCHANGES IN 2009



The European Commission's RASFF team, together with the director for food safety, at the occasion of 30 years of RASFF.

From left to right: José Luis de Felipe, head of sector, Anna Mlynarczyk, Albena Ilieva, Eric Poudelet, director, Nathalie De Broyer, Adrie ten Velden, Sylvia de Jong, Jan Baele

Not in the picture, because of maternity leave: Paola Ferraro, Magdalena Havlíková.

European Commission

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