



European
Commission



RASFF

The Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed

2011 Annual Report

*Health and
Consumers*

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 2011.

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Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2012

ISBN 978-92-79-23020-2

ISSN 1830-7302

doi:10.2772/96194

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RASFF

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2011 Annual Report

Foreword



It is my pleasure to present the 10th annual report of the EU's Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF). It is clear that the RASFF plays a key role in ensuring a high level of food safety for EU citizens. Through this system, food safety authorities in Europe are rapidly informed of serious risks found in relation to food or feed so that together they can react to health threats in a coordinated way.

Since the establishment of the system in 1979, RASFF has consistently proven its value as a key tool that facilitates the cross-border flow of information between food and feed authorities and the European Commission. This allows for decision makers to take protective measures in the interest of the health and safety of EU citizens. All Members of the RASFF (EU-27, European Commission, EFSA as well as Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland) have a round-the-clock service to ensure that urgent notifications are sent, received and responded to in the shortest time possible. Thanks to RASFF, many food safety risks have been averted before they could harm consumers.

The increasingly global nature of trade brings further challenges for food safety authorities who must have effective checks and balances in place to ensure the highest possible level of safety of the food chain. In 2011, there were 9 157 notifications by inspectors who checked food and feed samples and reported non-compliances with EU food and feed legislation.

The RASFF system has helped us respond to, and mitigate several serious foodborne outbreaks in recent years such as dioxin and *E. coli* crises. We have learnt many lessons along the way and we continue to enhance reporting systems which enable authorities to better target their sample-taking and inspections in line with their existing resources.

We continuously strive to improve the way the RASFF system works and the way different networks and warning systems cooperate and focus on emerging risks. One of the latest improvements is the 'iRASFF' online notification platform which will help RASFF become an even faster and more efficient communication tool than ever before.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'John Dalli'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

John Dalli
European Commissioner for
Health and Consumer Policy

Acronyms used in this report

BIOHAZ	Biological Hazards
DSP	Diarrhoeic Shellfish Poisoning
ECCP	European Commission Contact Point
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
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FVO	Food and Veterinary Office
GMO	Genetically Modified Organism
HACCP	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points
HUS	Hemolytic-Uremic Syndrome
INFOSAN	International Food Safety Authorities Network
iRASFF	IT Platform for RASFF Notifications
MRL	Maximum Residue Limit
NCP	National Contact Point
OJ	Official Journal
PAA	Primary Aromatic Amines
PCB	Polychlorinated biphenyls
RAPEX	Rapid Alert System for Non-Food Dangerous Products
RASFF	Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed
SML	Specific Migration Limits
STEC	Shiga toxin-producing <i>Escherichia coli</i>
TSEs	Transmissible spongiform encephalopathies
WHO	World Health Organization
US	United States of America

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CHAPTER 1

The Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF)

The RASFF was put in place to provide food and feed control authorities with an effective tool to exchange information about measures taken responding to serious risks detected in relation to food or feed. This exchange of information helps Member States to act more rapidly and in a coordinated manner in response to a health threat caused by food or feed. Its effectiveness is ensured by keeping its structure simple: it consists essentially of clearly identified contact points in the Commission, EFSA¹, ESA² 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) No 178/2002³. 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 Switzerland and 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>

³ OJ L 31, 1.2.2002, p. 1

RASFF implementing Regulation 16/2011

Article 51 of Regulation 178/2002 mandates the Commission to lay down implementing measures for the RASFF. Quoting from the article: 'These measures shall specify, in particular, the specific conditions and procedures applicable to the transmission of notifications and supplementary information.' Regulation (EC) No 16/2011⁴ lays down these implementing rules for the RASFF. It entered into force on 31 January 2011. The Regulation lays down requirements for members of the network and the procedure for transmission of the different types of notifications. A difference is made between notifications requiring rapid action (alert notifications) and other notifications (information notifications and border rejection notifications). Therefore definitions of these different types of notifications are added. In addition the role of the Commission as manager of the network is detailed.

The members and their duties

The RASFF members are the 27 Member States through their respective contact points plus the European Commission, the EFSA, the EFTA Surveillance Authority and the EFTA member states (Norway, Iceland, Switzerland and Liechtenstein).

Each member is responsible in its jurisdiction of the proper performance and efficient functioning of RASFF. Therefore, they have to use harmonized notification systems and ensure an effective communication between their contact points and competent authorities and the Commission contact point. By doing so, the RASFF enables an immediate transmission of a notification to the competent authorities in order to take the necessary measures eliminating the risk to the consumer.

Notifications to the Commission contact point shall not incur any undue delay. More specifically alert notifications should be submitted to the Commission contact point within 48 hours from the moment the risk was reported. The Commission contact point is required to transmit the alert to all members of the network within 24 hours after reception (and upon verification).

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 – where contact points are identified – 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 system

RASFF notifications

RASFF notifications usually report on risks identified in food, feed or food contact materials that are placed on the market in the notifying country or detained at an EU point of entry at the border with an EU neighbouring 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 RASFF notification is classified after verification by the Commission contact point as alert, information or border rejection notification before the Commission contact point transmits it to all network members.

a) alert notifications

An 'alert notification' or 'alert' is sent when a food, feed or food contact material presenting a serious risk is on the market and when rapid action is or might be required in another country than the notifying country. Alerts are triggered by the member of the network that detects the problem and has initiated the relevant measures, such as withdrawal or 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. Member States have their own mechanisms to carry out such actions, including the provision of detailed information through the media if necessary.

b) information notifications

An 'information notification' concerns a food, feed or food contact material for which a risk has been identified that does not require rapid action either because the risk is not considered serious or the product is not on the market at the time of notification.



⁴ OJ L 6, 11.1.2011, p. 7

Commission Regulation (EU) No 16/2011 has added two new sub-types of information notification to the family of notifications:

- 'information notifications for follow-up' are related to a product that is or may be placed on the market in another member country
- 'information notifications for attention' are related to a product that:
 - (i) is present only in the notifying member country; or
 - (ii) has not been placed on the market; or
 - (iii) is no longer on the market



c) border rejection notifications

A 'border rejection notification' concerns a consignment of food, feed or food contact material that was refused entry into the European Union for reason of a risk to human health and also to animal health or to the environment if it concerns feed.



d) original notifications and follow-up notifications

A RASFF notification referring to one or more consignments of a food, feed or food contact material that were not previously notified to the RASFF is an 'original' notification, classified as alert, information or border rejection notification. In reaction to such

notification, members of the network can transmit 'follow-up' notifications which refer to the same consignments and which add information to the original notification such as information on hazards, product traceability or measures taken. A notifying member can identify in its notification other members that should provide follow-up. These members are then flagged for follow-up in the system.

e) rejected and withdrawn notifications

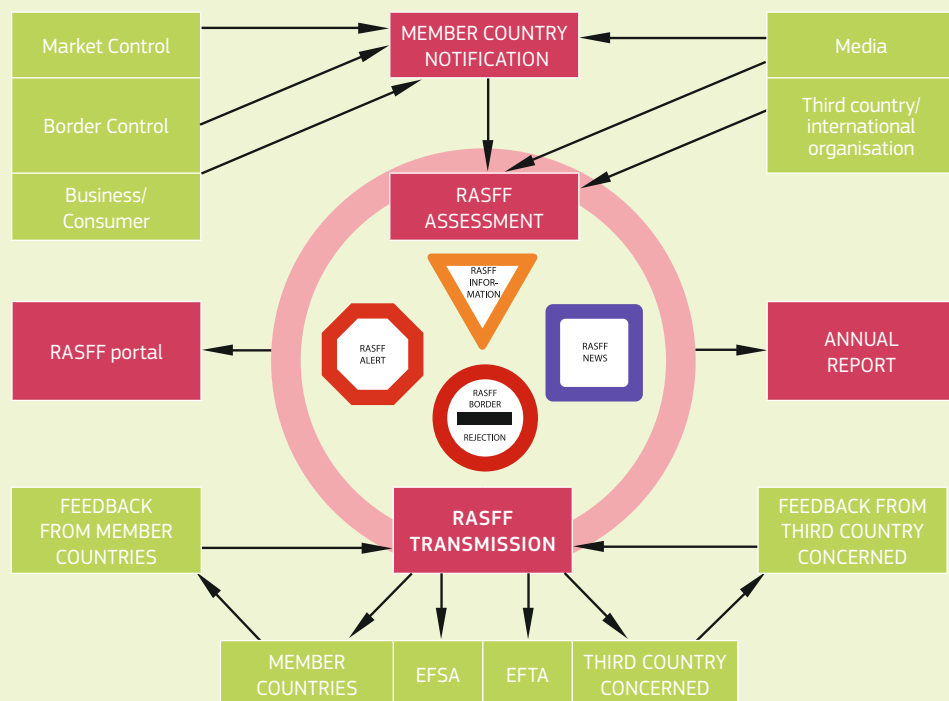
An original notification sent by a member of the RASFF can be rejected from transmission through the RASFF system, as proposed by the Commission after verification and in agreement with the notifying country, if the criteria for notification are not met or if the information transmitted is insufficient.

An original notification that was transmitted through the RASFF can be withdrawn by the Commission in agreement with 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.

RASFF news

A 'RASFF news' concerns any type of information related to the safety of food or feed which has not

Figure 1 – Schematic representation of the information flow of the RASFF





been communicated as an alert, information or border rejection notification, but which is judged interesting for the food and feed control authorities in member countries.

RASFF news are often 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 any member countries concerned.

Information to the consumer

Without prejudice that RASFF is a communication network between its members rather than a public information service, it does play a role in informing the European citizens on issues concerning our food safety and public health protection. Thanks to the work carried out by the RASFF, and depending on different technical and scientific criteria such as the nature, seriousness and extent of the risk, public health authorities can take the appropriate steps to inform the general public of the nature of the risk, type of food or feed involved and the measures taken to prevent, reduce or eliminate that risk.

More information about how the RASFF functions can be found on the RASFF Portal at <http://ec.europa.eu/rasff>. Previous copies of the RASFF annual report and other publications are available

there. More recent information about the RASFF notifications can be consulted through the RASFF Portal database which offers a wide scale of search parameters to pinpoint those notifications that a visitor could have a particular interest in or alternatively, the visitor can simply consult the notifications list to find the most recently transmitted RASFF notifications.

The RASFF Portal database does not yet allow worried consumers to identify in full those notifications concerning products that they should not consume. They should rely on the national authorities' information for that. The public should also be aware that the RASFF notifications are issued for specific batches of product in which a risk was identified. Often such risk may be present in one batch, but not in the other and may have entered the product despite the good care taken by the business operator. This is an important difference between RASFF and RAPEX, where frequently manufacturing flaws are reported concerning all product manufactured.

In order not to provoke any disproportionate actions or reactions to the information given, information about brands and operators involved is not published. Consumers are assured that any and all actions necessary to protect their health are being taken by the national competent authorities without any delay.

CHAPTER 2

RASFF notifications in 2011

In 2011, a total of 3812 original notifications were transmitted through the RASFF, of which 635 were classified as alert, 573 as information for follow-up, 744 as information for attention and 1860 as border rejection notification. These original notifications gave rise to 5345 follow-up notifications, representing on average about 1.4 follow-ups per original notification.

These figures represent a 13.5% increase in original notifications and less importantly, a 2.3% increase in follow-up notifications; resulting in an overall increase of 6.7%.

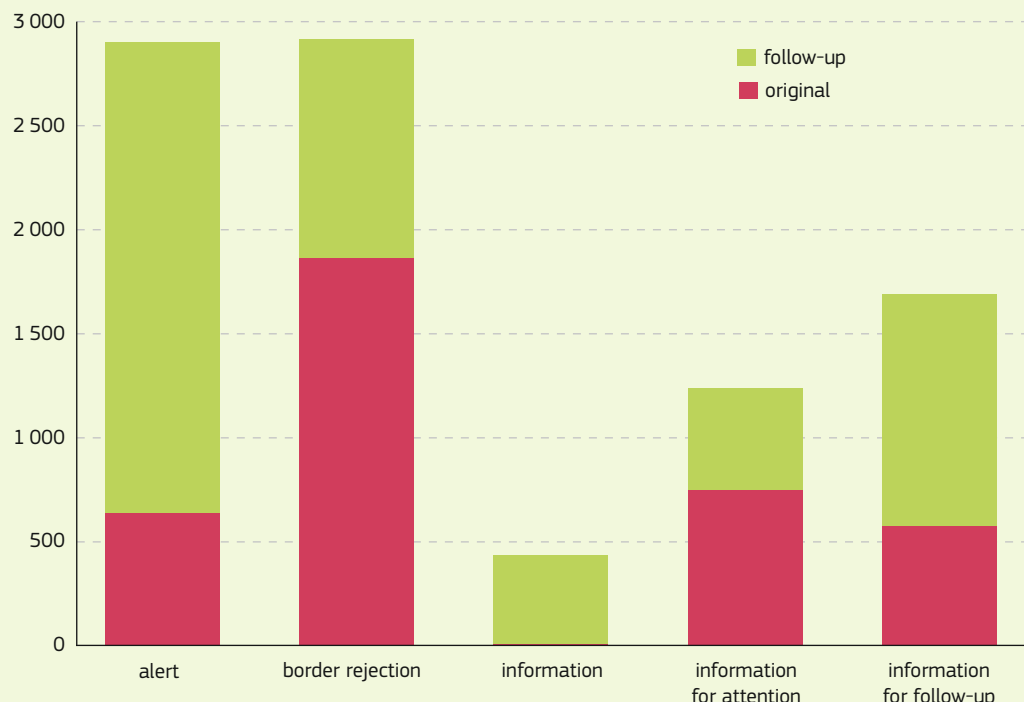
The RASFF news transmitted internally in the network are not counted in the above figures nor

represented in the charts in this report. There have been 20 RASFF news sent together with 120 follow-ups.

After receipt of follow-up information, 18 alert, 32 information and 32 border rejection notifications were withdrawn. Notifications that were withdrawn are further excluded from statistics and charts.

The European Commission decided, after consulting the notifying countries, not to upload 94 notifications onto the system since, after evaluation, they were found not to satisfy the criteria for a RASFF notification (rejected notifications).

Figure 2 – 2011 RASFF notifications classification





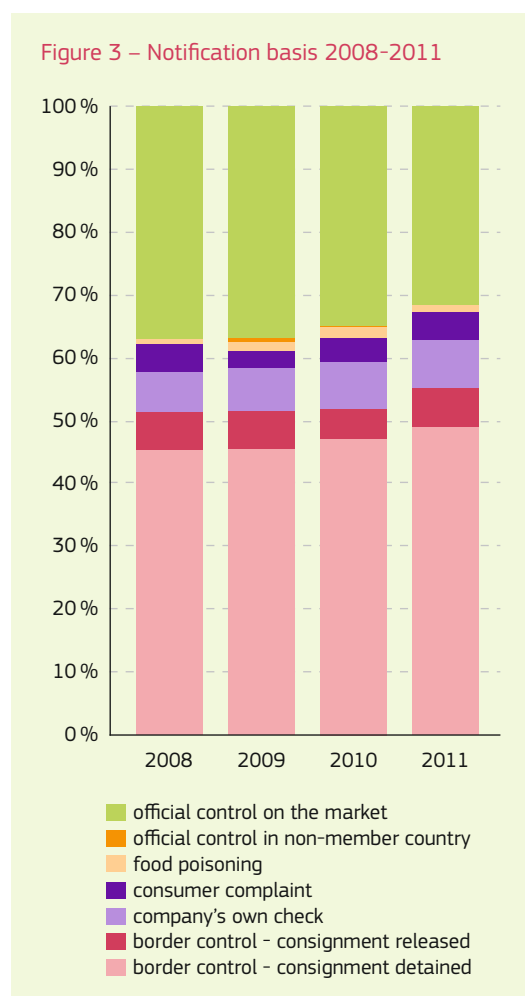
RASFF notifications are triggered by a variety of things. Most notifications concern controls at the outer EEA borders⁵ in points of entry or border inspection posts when the consignment was not accepted for import ('border control – consignment detained'). In some cases, a sample was taken for analysis at the border (screening) and the consignment was released ('border control – consignment released'). The second largest category of notifications concerns official controls on the internal

market⁶. Three special types of 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.

A small number of notifications are triggered by an official control in a non-member country. If a non-member 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 2011 there were only two such notifications: an information notification followed from information given by Australia, regarding *Listeria monocytogenes* in a French cheese, notified by France and an official control in South Korea leading to a notification by Italy on aflatoxins in pistachio paste.

2.1 Pesticide residues

In 2011, for the second year in a row, there has been a sharp increase in RASFF notifications about pesticide residues (see chart below). Analysis of the data shows a clear effect of the reinforced controls set up at the points of entry for fruits and vegetables entering the EU. Out of the 363 notifications for pesticide residues in 2011, only 46 were reported for food or feed originating from within the EU. Overall, there were less notifications resulting from a control on the market than in 2010. Although the monitoring of the market remains intensive, there are more controls now on products from outside the EU at the EU border where in most cases, the products are detained pending the results of the analysis, thereby preventing the non-compliant goods from entering the EU market.



⁵ Since 2009, including Switzerland for products of animal origin.

⁶ Products placed on the market in one of the member countries including the EEA countries Norway, Liechtenstein and Iceland.

Figure 4 – RASFF notifications on pesticide residues

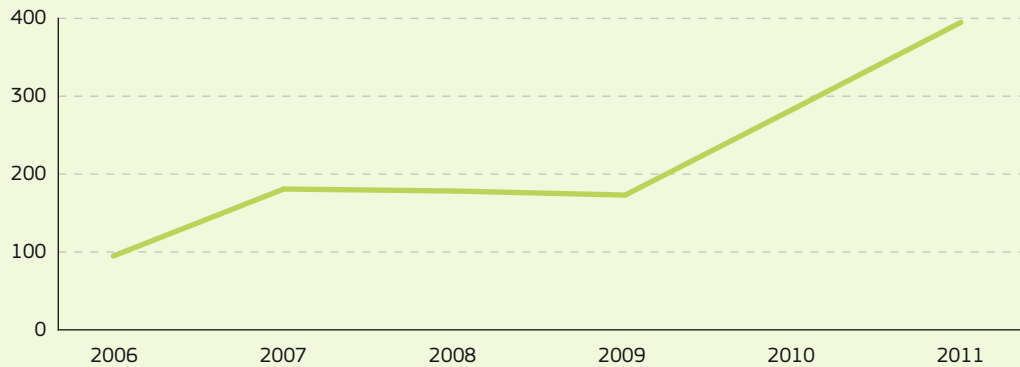


Table 1 – Reinforced controls for pesticide residues in 2011

Food	Origin	Pesticides	% consignments checked
mangoes (until 01/04/2011), yard long beans, bitter melon, lauki, peppers and aubergines	Dominican Republic	multi-residue	50%
vegetables, fresh, chilled or frozen: peppers, courgettes (until 01/07/2011) and tomatoes	Turkey	multi-residue	10%
pears	Turkey	amitraz	10% (until 01/07/2011)
vegetables, fresh, chilled or frozen yard long beans aubergines brassica vegetables	Thailand	multi-residue	50%
fresh herbs – coriander and basil	Thailand	multi-residue	20%
fresh chilli peppers	Thailand	multi-residue	10% (from 01/07/2011)
fresh oranges, peaches, pomegranates, strawberries, green beans and peppers (from 01/10/2011)	Egypt	multi-residue	10%
curry leaves	India	multi-residue	10%
okra	India	multi-residue	10% (from 01/04/2011)
fresh pomelos	China	multi-residue	20% (from 01/10/2011)
black and green tea	China	multi-residue	10% (from 01/10/2011)

Table 1 shows commodities that were subject to reinforced controls for pesticide residues in 2011. Sampling is done at the points of entry into the EU and results are awaited before the product is released for free circulation. A list of reinforced controls is drawn up according to 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 origin⁷ (as amended).

The pesticides mentioned below that were reported most frequently through RASFF have been coloured according to acute toxicity: **red** for highly toxic, **orange** for moderately toxic, **green** for low toxicity. This grading thus only takes into account the acute toxicity for human health, and not any chronic effects or environmental harmfulness.

No less than 31 notifications concerned okra from India, which had already been reported in the RASFF annual report 2009 and which were included on the list of reinforced controls in 2011. Various residues are found on this product, often several in one sample. Most occurring are **acephate** (15), **triazophos** (10) and **monocrotophos** (8). Another frequently notified commodity is curry leaves which were found to be highly contaminated and were added to the list of reinforced controls in 2010⁸. Seven notifications out of the 12 reported contained triazophos, some of which at extremely high levels.

Carbendazim was found in various products among which twice in taro (a tropical Asian plant with an edible root) and seven times in yams from various origins.

Chlorpyrifos was reported 14 times, of which 12 border rejections. For three border rejections it was found in pangasius fillets from Vietnam together with **trifluralin**, in very small quantities.

Dimethoate and **omethoate** are measured individually but reported as the sum of both, expressed as dimethoate. They were reported in 31 notifications for fruits and vegetables of various origins.

Formetanate was reported 18 times and mostly in peppers from Turkey but twice in cucumbers from Spain.

The finding of high levels of **glyphosate** in so-called organic lentils from Turkey triggered more notifications on products from the same origin (16)

but also 5 notifications on lentils with a different origin, in one of which were found levels as high as 35 ppm. Although no health risk is identified even at elevated residue levels, it is not permissible that products certified as organic should be found to contain such high levels of residue. The MRL for lentils has been revised at the request of producers and brought in line with the specific MRL set for peas (10 ppm), a similar commodity. The exceptional residue level in an organic lentils triggered 18 RASFF (in total) notifications in total whereas there is no scientific evidence of any health risk as only one notification would have exceeded the new MRL. Although not strictly within the scope of RASFF, clearly the system will have contributed to fighting this fraudulent trade of lentils certified as organic that were absolutely not. Pesticide MRLs are set as low as can be achieved based on the target crop and pest.

Procymidone was reported in total 29 times. Early in 2011 it appeared frequently in fresh vegetables from Jordan (10 times, of which 8 for tomatoes). Later on, mainly fresh peppers from Turkey (12 notifications) were the subject of notifications on procymidone. Also **tetradifon** was found very frequently on fresh peppers from Turkey, with 23 notifications.

2.2 Heavy metals

Heavy metals can contaminate food through different sources: they can accumulate in livestock or in fish through feed consumption or due to pollution of the seas or they can migrate from an object used in contact with food into the food.

Arsenic

For more details regarding arsenic in feed, please refer to the chapter on feed.

Cadmium

Levels above the legal limit for cadmium are found in various types of products. In 2011, this was most often the case for squid and cuttlefish from various origins. Also in particular species of fish such as sardines (Morocco), anchovies (Thailand), swordfish and shark repeated non-compliances were notified.

Notifications regarding cadmium migrating from food contact materials concern the migration from the rim of decorated or painted glasses or cups

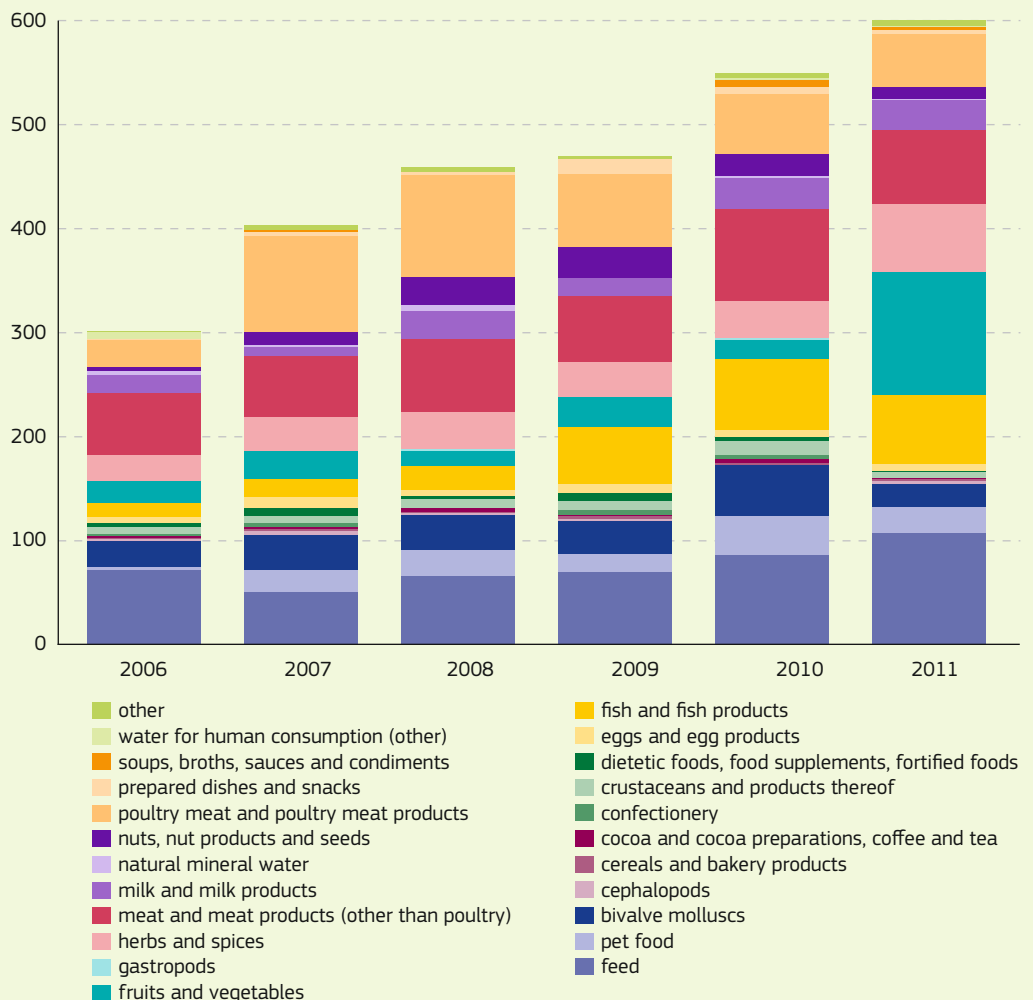
⁷ OJ L 194, 25.7.2009, p. 11–21

⁸ See RASFF annual report 2010.

Table 2 – Heavy metals

hazard	bivalve molluscs	cephalopods	crustaceans	dietetic foods	feed	fish and fish products	food contact materials	fruits and vegetables	meat	other	total
arsenic				2	16					3	21
cadmium	2	21	4	1	3	14	27	4	2	1	79
chromium							57				57
lead				7	1	1	36	3	3	2	53
manganese							20				20
mercury				1	3	76		1	3	1	85
nickel				4			22				26
tin				4				4			8
zinc				1			1				2
total	2	21	4	20	23	91	163	12	8	7	351

Figure 5 – Pathogenic micro-organisms in food and feed



where the paint or decoration threatens to release the cadmium into the mouth of a person using the glass for drinking.

Lead

Most notifications concerning lead are about migration of lead from food contact materials. The majority are painted glass objects similar to those listed above for cadmium but also ceramic objects for which a specific EU SML exists.

Lead was also repeatedly reported in food supplements containing clay or in silica capsules.

Chromium, nickel and manganese

These metals are almost all related to migration from metal kitchen utensils. Some Member States have adopted national legal limits for migration of these elements but there are no EU legal limits for these. Usually the migration concerns less than 1 ppm but this is still higher than the limits set by some countries. Chromium and nickel are also sporadically reported in food supplements from the United States. Nickel combined with vanadium and tin was reported 4 times in food supplements from the United States. These elements are not authorised in food supplements in the EU.

Mercury

Notifications regarding too high levels of mercury are frequently reported through RASFF every year. Although the legal limit for predatory fish species such as swordfish and tuna is higher than for other fish, there are still often results found that moderately exceed the legal limit, especially for swordfish.



2.3.1 *Salmonella* spp.

Looking closer at the data, it is quite clear that the rise in RASFF notifications for *Salmonella* spp. is not reported for products of animal origin such as fish, meat and milk, but most prominently for the product category fruits and vegetables, and to a lesser degree for herbs and spices and for animal feed.

The significant rise in notifications for fruits and vegetables is actually down to one product: paan leaves. Out of the 100 notifications for *Salmonella* spp. in this product category, 86 were made for paan leaves, all but one by the United Kingdom. The origin of the leaves was Bangladesh for 72 of the notifications, India for 12 of them and for the remaining 2 it was Thailand. Paan leaves are traditionally chewed in many countries in Asia.

Although the reported herbs and spices with *Salmonella* spp. are various, it is quite striking that 28 of the 57 notifications concerned a product originating from Vietnam when in 2010 there was merely one notification. Almost all of notifications reporting herbs and spices were notified by the Netherlands for products sampled on the market and concern fresh indigenous herbs or spices.

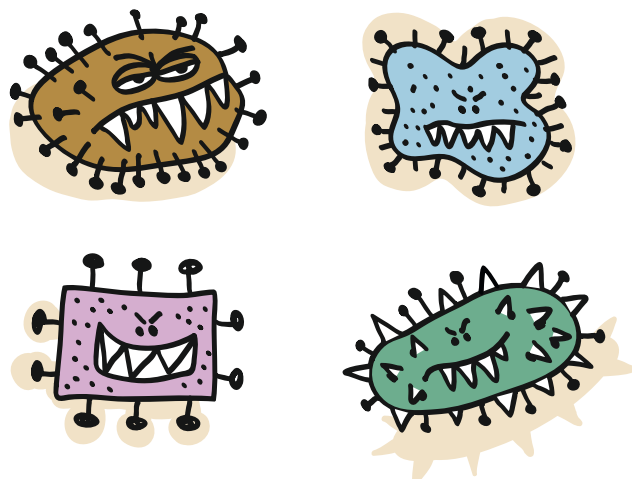
2.3.2 Pathogens other than *Salmonella* spp.

Listeria monocytogenes

With 107 notifications, the level for notifying *Listeria monocytogenes* is about status quo after it had been on the rise in previous years, though still far behind the frequency of reporting findings of *Salmonella* spp. *Listeria monocytogenes* is most notified for fish (61 times), which is quite often smoked salmon (42 notifications) from Poland (20) or from Denmark (13).

2.3 Pathogenic micro-organisms

Only one conclusion can be made from the chart above, and it is that RASFF notifications regarding pathogenic micro-organisms keep rising in numbers through recent years. There is mainly one 'bug' responsible for this increase, named *Salmonella* spp.. Remarkable, even more so because data from EFSA pointed out that in 2010 cases of foodborne illness caused by *Salmonella* spp. fell by almost 9%, a continuing trend for the sixth consecutive year⁹. But that may be less contradictory than it seems.



⁹ EFSA zoonoses report 2010, <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/2597.htm>

Listeria monocytogenes was notified 23 times in cheese of various types and origins but most often in cheeses from France and from Italy. Various meat products were also notified to be contaminated with *Listeria* spp., such as pate from Belgium and ham and salami from Italy.

Escherichia coli

Escherichia coli is frequently notified in live bivalve molluscs, for which a food safety criterion exists in Regulation (EC) No. 2073/2005¹⁰. *Escherichia coli* counts are often performed to have an idea of the food product's hygienic processing conditions but only enteropathogenic *E. coli* have the potential of being pathogenic to humans in the gut. They may produce enterotoxins. Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* are considered the most dangerous as they can give cause to bloody diarrhoea and possibly Haemorrhagic Uremic Syndrome (HUS). *E. coli* serotypes that are known to be pathogenic but for which evidence is not (yet) given concerning their potential for causing disease (virulence genes like *stx1*, *stx2* or *eae* are not (yet) analysed) are classified as 'potentially pathogenic'. If the *eae* gene (the bacterium can attach itself to the gut) is detected but not the *stx* gene, it is considered enteropathogenic.



Table 3 – Types of *E. coli* notifications reported in 2011

Notifications 2011	
Shiga toxin-producing <i>Escherichia coli</i>	15
enteropathogenic <i>Escherichia coli</i>	1
potentially pathogenic <i>Escherichia coli</i>	2
high count of <i>Escherichia coli</i>	5
too high count of <i>Escherichia coli</i>	16

The major food contamination in 2011 was due to Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli*. What follows is a recount of the *E. coli* O104:H4 outbreaks in Europe contributed by the EFSA contact point to the RASFF. In the trace-back investigation EFSA has provided invaluable assistance to the Commission in analysing the data collected and identifying the product which was at the root of the outbreak.

E. coli O104:H4 outbreaks in Europe

Background

On 21 May 2011, Germany reported an ongoing outbreak of Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* (STEC), serotype O104:H4. On 24 June 2011, French authorities reported an *E. coli* outbreak in the region of Bordeaux. The phenotypic and genotypic characterisation of the *E. coli* O104:H4 indicated that the isolates from the French and German outbreaks were common to both incidents. From initial epidemiological investigations, the German outbreak was associated with the consumption of fresh salad vegetables. Subsequent investigations showed that the risk of infection was specifically associated with the consumption of fresh sprouted seeds. Approximately 3000 cases with bloody diarrhoea, more than 850 cases of HUS and more than 50 deaths linked to this outbreak have been reported to the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO), making it one of the largest food-borne outbreaks reported in Europe in decades. In the initial stages of the outbreak, EFSA provided background information on the internalisation of enteric pathogens in plant material¹¹. In addition, and at EFSA's initiative, a report summarising available data on STEC and particularly STEC O104 serotype in humans, food, animals, previously reported in

¹⁰ OJ L 338, 22.12.2005, p. 1

¹¹ EFSA; Urgent advice on the public health risk of Shiga-toxin producing *Escherichia coli* in fresh vegetables. EFSA Journal 2011; 9(6):2274.

Europe was compiled jointly with the ECDC¹². In addition ECDC and EFSA published a joint rapid risk assessment¹³, with a further update provided later by ECDC¹⁴.

Tracing activities at national and EU level

On 27 June, EFSA was mandated by the European Commission to set up a task force to coordinate investigations to find the common food source for both the French and the German outbreaks. The task force sought to understand how the production and distribution chain of seeds, bean sprouts and other sprouted seeds are organised throughout the EU. RASFF played a critical role in collecting and exchanging data concerning the trace back and trace forward, allowing the Member States and European institutions to receive up-to-date information.

The investigation showed that all of the clusters of infection in Germany, where there was sufficient information for attribution to be made, could be attributed to consumption of sprouted seeds from one producer in Germany. The seeds used for the sprout production were the prime suspect vehicle of infection. However, it was not possible to identify the original seed source since different species were used to produce the sprouted seeds, which were sold as several different mixtures. The comparison of the back tracing information on the seeds from both the French and German outbreaks led to the conclusion that a specific consignment (lot) of fenugreek seeds imported from Egypt was the most likely link between the outbreaks in the two countries¹⁵.

Bacillus cereus

Bacillus cereus was reported 12 times in products in which it is typically known to thrive: the somewhat dryer foods such as pasta and rice. But it was also notified in several dried herbs or spices. If *Bacillus cereus* is allowed to grow to big enough numbers (poor temperature control), it will produce an enterotoxin that, although not lethal, is resistant to cooking temperatures and will cause an acute food poisoning.

Norovirus

The finding of norovirus (10 notifications) is usually related to a foodborne outbreak after consumption of bivalve molluscs such as oysters or mussels. But even wider outbreaks have occurred when raspberries are contaminated. In 2011, 5 notifications concerning norovirus in raspberries, originating from Serbia and in one case from China, were related to food poisoning, all of which were reported by Denmark.

Clostridium botulinum

The reporting of *Clostridium botulinum* poisoning is fortunately very rare because botulinum toxin is among the deadliest poisons on this planet. This is because *Clostridium* only grows well in conditions with low availability of oxygen, such as in canned or preserved foods. These foods need to be properly heat treated to ensure that all spores of *Clostridium botulinum* are destroyed. There were no less than three cases of botulism (the illness caused through the poisoning with botulinum toxin) notified to RASFF. Two cases in France were linked to the same small producer of preserves. An alert was raised because the products, although not sold in any other countries, were for sale in a touristic area. Several Member States reported having published a warning to consumers about these products.

Campylobacter

Campylobacter was almost exclusively notified by Denmark (9 times), 4 of them being with respect to fresh poultry meat. Denmark issued 5 notifications with reports of *Campylobacter* in various fresh vegetables all of which were controls on the market, some for products originating from third countries but also two notifications about baby spinach and rucola from Italy.

¹² Joint EFSA/ECDC technical report: Shiga toxin/verotoxin-producing *Escherichia coli* in humans, food and animals in the EU/EEA, with special reference to the German outbreak strain STEC O104

¹³ http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications/Publications/2011June29_RA_JOINT_EFSA_STEC_France.pdf

¹⁴ http://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications/Publications/110712_TER_Risk_Assessment_Ecoli.pdf

¹⁵ EFSA; Tracing seeds, in particular fenugreek (*Trigonella foenum-graecum*) seeds, in relation to the Shiga-toxin producing *E. coli* (STEC) O104:H4 outbreaks in Germany and France.

2.4 Mycotoxins

In general

In 2011, the number of mycotoxin notifications decreased moderately, which was due to a decrease in reported aflatoxins notifications (see table below).

seeds for the third year in a row. This is related to the change of legislation in 2010 whereby the maximum levels for aflatoxins in almonds, hazelnuts, pistachios and Brazil nuts have been aligned with Codex Alimentarius maximum levels¹⁶ and the significantly improved situation as regards non-compliance of certain commodities from

Table 4 – Mycotoxins notifications

hazard	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
aflatoxins	288	762	839	946	801	705	902	638	649	585
deoxynivalenol (DON)						10	4	3	2	11
fumonisin		15	14	2	15	9	2	1	3	4
ochratoxin A	14	26	27	42	54	30	20	27	34	35
patulin				6	7		3			
zearalenone					1	6	2			
total mycotoxins	302	803	880	996	878	760	933	669	688	635

There were much less notifications about aflatoxins in spices given that the situation as regards the presence of aflatoxins in spices originating in India was much improved in 2011 (41 notifications) compared to 2010 (97 notifications). This significant improvement has resulted in reduction of the required control frequency at import. There was a further decrease in aflatoxins notifications for the product category nuts, nut products and

certain countries (e.g. peanuts from Argentina). This was however counterweighted by a rise in notifications for aflatoxins in feed materials. This was mostly due to the recurrent findings of high to very high levels of aflatoxins in groundnuts for bird feed from India (106 notifications), of which 83 were reported by the United Kingdom as border rejections.

Table 5 – Aflatoxins

product category	aflatoxins	DON	fumonisin	ochratoxin A
cereals and bakery products	13	11	4	5
feed	119			1
fruits and vegetables	78			10
herbs and spices	51			17
nuts, nut products and seeds	320			
other	4			2
total	585	11	4	35

¹⁶ Commission Regulation (EU) No 165/2010 of 10 February 2010 amending Commission Regulation (EC) No 1881/2006 of 19 December 2006 setting maximum levels for certain contaminants in foodstuffs as regards aflatoxins (OJ L 50, 27.2.2010, p. 8)

Increased frequency of controls related to aflatoxins

Most notifications on aflatoxins are related to product/country of origin combinations for which imposed increased frequencies of controls at import are in force. As such, the number of notifications is enhanced by the increased frequency of control which resulted from the problem identified.

1. 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/EC¹⁷

- 20% on peanuts from China (59 notifications)
- 50% on pistachios from Iran (38 notifications)
- 50% on pistachios from Turkey (41 notifications)
- 20% on dried figs from Turkey (75 notifications)
- 10% on hazelnuts from Turkey (17 notifications)
- 20% on peanuts from Egypt (16 notifications)
- random control on almonds from the US (5 notifications)

2. 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/EC¹⁸ applies from 25 January 2010 and imposes an increased frequency of controls at import on products from certain countries because of the presence of aflatoxins. In 2011, such controls, resulting in a significant number of notifications via the RASFF were in place for:

- 10% on peanuts from Argentina (40 notifications)
- 10% on peanuts from Brazil (7 notifications)
- 20% on peanuts from India (133 notifications)
- 10% on peanuts from South Africa (12 notifications)
- 50% on spices from India (41 notifications)

Ochratoxin A

35 RASFF notifications related to the unacceptable presence of ochratoxin A and in four of these also unacceptable aflatoxins levels were detected.

There were 17 notifications for ochratoxin A in spices, most often for ground chilli or paprika. Despite reinforced checks set up in Regulation 669/2009 already in 2010, only 4 notifications were submitted regarding ochratoxin A in paprika from Peru and only 3 for raisins from Uzbekistan.

2.5 Composition of food

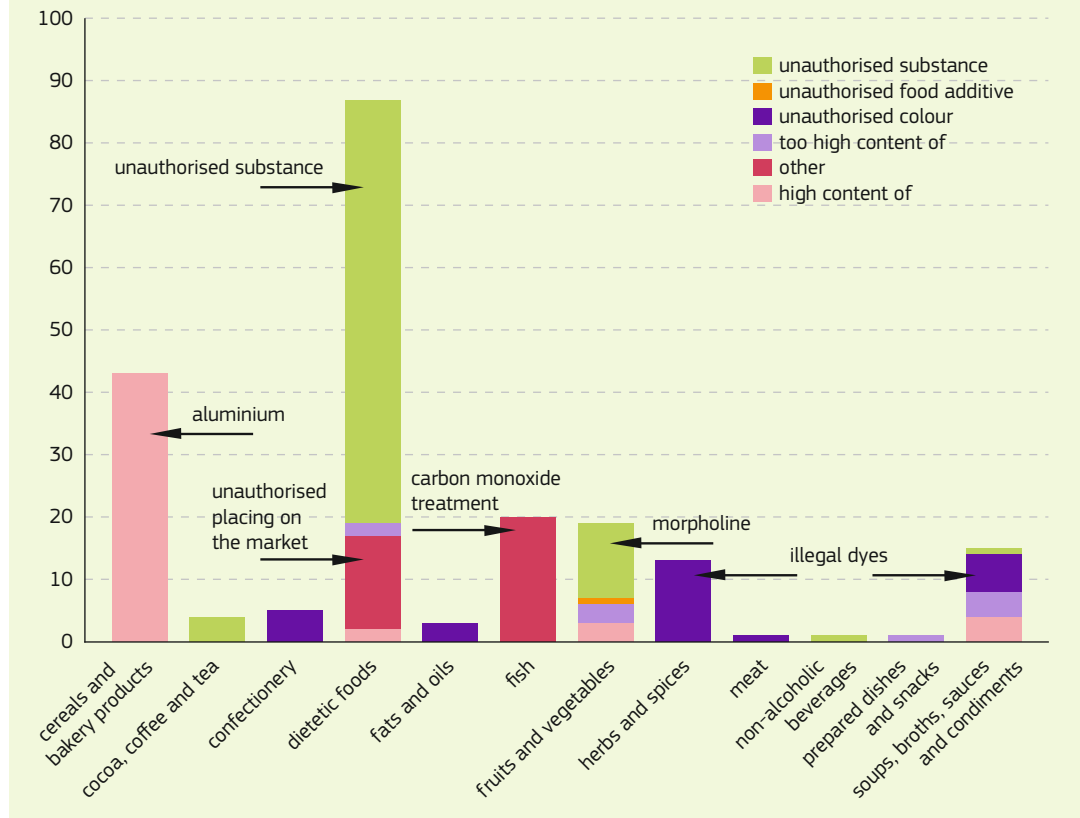
Most of the RASFF notifications concern biological or chemical contaminants in food or feed substances and organisms that are not desirable in food or feed and that should be avoided. More tricky and less straight forward are hazards to health caused by the composition of the foods or feeds themselves. The chart below demonstrates that the vast majority of notifications made in this category concern food supplements or other foods claimed to have specific dietetic or health effects, often sold through less traditional distribution channels such as the internet and therefore very difficult to control and withdraw from the market when a risk is identified.



¹⁷ JO L 313, 28.11.2009, p. 40

¹⁸ OJ L 194, 25.7.2009, p. 11

Figure 6 – Composition of food



Consumers nowadays are keen to take food supplements as they might consider them part of a healthy lifestyle. They assume that those products contribute directly to their health, appearance or mental condition or believe that food supplements prevent sickness or help them get better when they are ill.

However these supplements may not have the promised effect but what is worse, they sometimes contain substances

– quite often not labelled – that can cause serious damage. The

high number of notifications for dietetic foods containing unauthorised substances in

the Figure 6 shows the authorities' efforts to remove potentially dangerous products from the market. But the direct availability to the consumer through the internet makes it very hard to prevent that these products are sold in the EU often by companies registered outside the EU. Therefore it is equally important to make the consumer aware that such products obtained from an unverified source are not safe to consume.



High content

When the hazard definition 'high content' is used instead of 'too high content', it refers to the content of a substance for which a legal limit is not established in the food in question. The most reported issue concerns the level of aluminium found in instant noodles¹⁹. Although still predominantly reported for China, also noodles from other countries such as Vietnam and Thailand were reported to contain high levels of aluminium. In 2010, reinforced checks were established for aluminium in dried noodles from China through listing in Regulation 669/2009.

Too high content

The hazard definition 'too high content' is used to compare the level of a substance measured to a legal limit established. It is most often used in combination with food additives, which are not included in this chart. In the category 'soups, broths, sauces and condiments', four notifications were reported for too high levels of erucic acid in various pickles. In the category 'fruits and vegetables' there were three notifications for a too high content of nitrate in leafy vegetables.

¹⁹ See chapter 'Composition of food' in the RASFF annual report 2009.



Other

Under 'other' are grouped those cases for which there is no specific hazard definition. Two main groups can be distinguished.

Unauthorised placing on the market

This group concerns mainly food supplements containing usually several herbal extracts that were not authorised for placing on the market. Although there are no specific rules about these at the EU level, many Member States have national legislation requiring authorisation of such products. Note that novel food products or products with novel ingredients are not included in this category because these are regulated at EU level. There were 23 notifications about novel foods and novel food ingredients in 2011.

Carbon monoxide treatment

The practice of treating fish with carbon monoxide has been mentioned in previous annual reports. It is assumed to be used to fix or even enhance the red colour of fresh fish such as tuna but in 2011 it was also reported in tilapia four times and three times as a suspicion. At low levels of carbon monoxide it

is not certain whether the levels found correspond to a treatment or to the natural presence of carbon monoxide in the fish. Therefore levels between 50 and 200ppb of carbon monoxide are notified as 'suspicion of carbon monoxide'.

Unauthorised substance

Most problems notified in relation to unauthorised substances concern food supplements in all forms and colours that are offered to the consumer claiming to have a certain health or other benefit, such as slimming, aphrodisiac etc.

Another type of problem encountered was the presence of morpholine on certain waxed fruits such as citrus fruits and apples from third countries. The use of morpholine as a wax carrier substance is not authorised in the EU under the food additive legislation. Following the initial findings, the presence of morpholine was temporarily tolerated while the exporters committed to alter the treatment of fruits destined for the European market.

Unauthorised colour

Illegal dyes are still regularly being found since they first turned up in 2003 but at a much lesser frequency than some years ago. For this reason, Decision 2005/402/EC requiring an analytical report on Sudan dyes for each imported consignment of chilli, curcuma or red palm oil was repealed and replaced with a 20% sampling at import by addition in the list established by Regulation (EC) No 669/2009. Nevertheless there were also 11 notifications regarding other colours than Sudan dyes such as Rhodamine B and the newcomers Basic Red 46 and red sandalwood extract.



CHAPTER 3

FOCUS on ...

3.1 Feed

Out of the 3730 original notifications transmitted in RASFF in 2011, 361 concerned feed, about 10% of the total. The year before the counter stopped at 186, indicating that feed notifications have almost doubled in 2011.

Notifications concerning feed have been increasing for only a few specific categories; in decreasing order of importance these are: mycotoxins, non-pathogenic micro-organisms, industrial contaminants, heavy metals and fraud.

Mycotoxins

The biggest factor in the huge increase in feed notifications in 2011 are the repeated findings of aflatoxins in groundnuts for bird feed from India. A total of 106 notifications were counted in 2011 when the year before there had only been 3! Most notifications (83) had been issued by the United Kingdom.

The often very high levels reported indicate a serious problem with this product imported from India. The issue is closely followed up by the Commission.



Upon request from the Commission, the Indian authorities have presented an action plan to address the issue. In 2012, the effective implementation of the action plan will be monitored and in case no significant improvement can be observed in 2012 as regards the presence of aflatoxins in groundnuts from India, a further strengthening of the control measures shall be considered.

Non-pathogenic micro-organisms

A higher number of notifications was reported for feed of animal origin (animal by-products) with a too high count of *Enterobacteriaceae*. In many cases also *Salmonella* spp. was detected in the products notified for a too high count of *Enterobacteriaceae*.

Dioxins

There was an important increase in non-compliances found for dioxins for a whole range of feeds including feed materials, feed additives, premixtures and compound feeds from various origins.

There were four notifications for dioxins in copper sulphate, which was initially put on the market for technical purposes but it was used for feed production instead. There were two notifications for feed pigment premixes, in which contaminated paprika powder was used as pigment, and also two notifications for dried parsley and basil from Egypt. Most notifications concerned only small to moderate excess of the legal limit without any significant health effects.

An example of a finding of significantly elevated levels of dioxins and dioxin-like PCBs in a feed additive is notification 2011.1143 regarding dioxins (11 pg WHO TEQ/g) and dioxin-like polychlorobiphenyls (34 pg WHO TEQ/g) in sodium bicarbonate with anticaking agent from Germany. After investigation it turned out that the sodium carbonate in question was not sold for feed use and a lawsuit was initiated against the feed operator. Nonetheless analysis demonstrated that the feed premixes using the raw material were compliant with the legal limit and therefore



released on the market. Another non-compliance for dioxins in complementary feed for calves was related to the use of contaminated green clay, which was also not destined for food or feed, in the production of the complementary feed.

A batch of hydrogenated palm fatty acid distillate for use in feed for ruminants was found to contain a too high level of dioxins. The process resulting in the increased levels was investigated as hydrogenation usually does not increase the level of dioxin contamination and analysis of control samples has provided evidence that the palm fatty acid distillates before hydrogenation were compliant with EU legislation. These investigations have confirmed that the hydrogenation of palm fatty acid distillates under certain conditions could result in a de-chlorination of the higher chlorinated dioxins and furans whereby the dioxin congener mixture becomes more toxic.

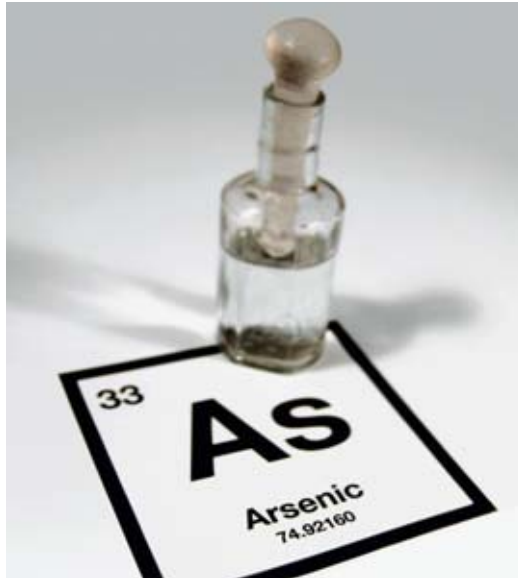
Denmark reported a batch of hydrogenated palm fatty acid distillate for use in feed for ruminants that contained a too high level of dioxins. The process resulting in the increased levels was investigated as hydrogenation usually does not increase the level of dioxin contamination. Analysis of control samples has provided evidence that the palm fatty acid distillates before hydrogenation were compliant with EU legislation. These investigations have confirmed that the hydrogenation of palm fatty acid distillates under certain conditions could result in a de-chlorination of the higher chlorinated dioxins and furans whereby the dioxin congener mixture becomes more toxic.

Furthermore two findings of non-compliant dioxin levels in beet pulp produced in Germany were reported through the RASFF. The non-compliance was observed through auto-control and notified by the operator to the competent authorities.

Investigations to identify the source have shown that the source of contamination in the two cases was different:

- In one case, the purification of the carbon dioxide used in the production process of sugar was deficient whereby dioxins present in the carbon dioxide were concentrated in the process water, which was re-used multiple times and contaminated the sugar beet slices, resulting in increased levels of dioxins in sugar beet pulp.
- In the other case, a thunderstorm with hail in September destroyed the plastic roof of the warehouse where the cokes were stored. Pieces of the plastic roof fell between the cokes and were burnt together with the cokes resulting in high levels of dioxins in the produced carbon dioxide which could not be sufficiently purified and resulted also in increased levels in the produced sugar beet pulp.

In both cases corrective actions were undertaken and the produced sugar was not affected by the contamination. The possibly contaminated beet pulp was traced and blocked. The farms which have received the beet pulp and/or feed with the contaminated beet pulp mainly for feeding dairy cattle were placed under surveillance and the milk produced controlled for



the presence of dioxins. All analytical results showed level of dioxins in milk below the EU maximum level.

Heavy metals

Five notifications were issued for pet food from Thailand containing too high levels of arsenic. The feed for pet animals contained a significant proportion of fish as feed material. This feed material is known to sometimes contain a high level of total arsenic, however the presence of arsenic in these feed materials is mainly organic arsenic, which is the less toxic form. Therefore a draft Regulation proposing to modify the current maximum level of arsenic in complementary and complete feed for pet animals, containing fish, other aquatic animals and products derived thereof and/or seaweed meal has been submitted for consideration, early in 2012. Two alerts were given regarding arsenic in dried apple pomace from Poland. Two further notifications

concerned arsenic in a yeast product for feed use from Brazil. There had been four notifications involving worryingly high levels of arsenic in palm kernel expeller from Malaysia. After request from the Commission, the Malaysian authorities have informed the Commission that their investigations showed that the contaminated palm kernel expeller was contaminated with unidentified foreign materials (dirt) due to mishandling of the palm kernel expeller in the warehouse. It is believed that this dirt is soil (sediment) or metal debris but this is still under investigation. Guarantees were received from the Malaysian authorities as regards future controls on the presence of arsenic in palm kernel expeller for export to the EU and from the traders in the EU as regards auto-controls on the presence of arsenic in palm kernel expeller from Malaysia. Since then, no further exports were detected with the problem.

Fraud

There have been 13 notifications involving (a suspicion of) fraud in 2011 whereas none were identified for 2010. Notifications about fraudulent, improper or absent health certificates are recurrent but there have been a few remarkable cases in 2011.

- illegal import of straw from Turkey, via Belgium
- adulteration (absence of L-lysine) of feed additives from Brazil, via China
- adulteration (absence of choline chloride) of feed additive with normally 60% of choline chloride from China
- adulteration (ammonium sulphate: 27.5%) of protein feed from Italy, via Slovakia. Ammonium sulphate is listed in the catalogue of feed materials and can therefore be used in feed as a non-protein nitrogen source, which can be used as a protein source only by ruminants. The labelled crude protein content consisted largely of ammonium sulphate.



3.2 Food contact materials

In 2011, 312 RASFF notifications were counted for food contact materials. This demonstrates clearly that this type of notification claims more than ever a significant piece of the alert system. In 2010 there had been in total only 231 notifications for food contact materials.

Article 50 of Regulation (EC) No 178/2002, which sets the scope of the RASFF, allows to include notifications on food contact materials, if the use of

Figure 7 – Migration of organic compounds from food contact materials

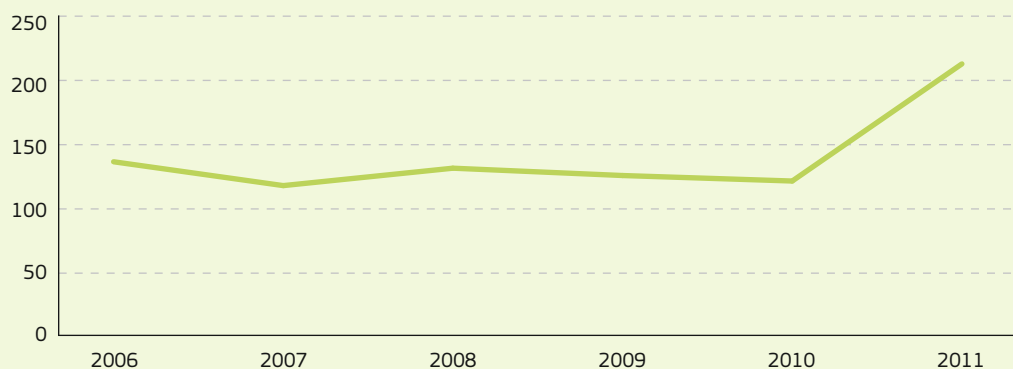


Table 6 – Migration of substances (except heavy metals) from food contact material

	substance	notifications
migration of	1-hydroxy-cyclohexyl phenyl ketone	3
migration of	2,4-diethyl thioxanthone (DETX)	3
migration of	2-methyl-4'-(methylthio)-2-morpholinopropiophenone	3
migration of	4-methylbenzophenone	1
migration of	mineral oil	1
migration of	bisphenol A	8
migration of	epoxidised soybean oil (ESBO)	9
migration of	ethyl-4-dimethylaminobenzoate	3
migration of	formaldehyde	75
migration of	melamine	18
migration of	methyl-2-benzoylbenzoate	2
migration of	colour	6
too high level of	total migration	42
high content of	DBP - dibutyl phthalate	3
high content of	DEHP - di(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate	10
high content of	DINP - di-isononyl phthalate	5
migration of	DINP - di-isononyl phthalate	2
migration of	primary aromatic amines	33
migration of	volatile organic constituents	1
	inner coating peeling off	12
	deterioration of organoleptic characteristics of food in contact	17
	not suitable to contain food	2



such materials could lead to a risk in the food it contains or will contain e.g. for reason of migration of chemical substances or because of other defects in the material.

The basis for the food safety requirements of food contact materials is however laid down in Regulation (EC) No 1935/2004 on materials and articles intended to come into contact with food²⁰, and more particular in Article 3(1) thereof.

Specific migration limits (SMLs) are set for a wide range of substances that might migrate from food contact materials with the exception of (heavy) metals from metallic objects. Because of this and the type of hazard, notifications concerning migration of (heavy) metals are not further discussed here but under the separate heading for heavy metals.

Figure 7 gives the overall number of notifications for migration of organic compounds from food contact materials. The figure for 2011 shows a significant increase, which can be due to the reinforced checks imposed on kitchen utensils from China by Commission Regulation (EU) No 284/2011²¹. Of the 212 notifications, at least 135 were identified as concerning materials manufactured in China.

As concerns the migration of primary aromatic amines (PAA) from nylon utensils, notifications remained at the same level (29 notifications) as the year before. PAA are known to be carcinogenic and are present in lesser quality black dye that should only be used for manufacturing non-food use nylon objects. The nylon utensils reported are almost exclusively of Chinese origin. According to the EU legislation, PAA should not be released from food contact materials (detection limit of 0.01mg/kg food). For migration of plasticizers from gaskets (phthalates, ESBO, DINCH), there were only few notifications regarding products from China. The issue of compliance of migration levels of plasticizers in food is being much more notified in RASFF due to a control campaign set up in 2011. Since phthalates have been replaced as plasticizers in lid gaskets, they

are mainly found in lids of products originating from third countries whereas phthalate replacers such as ESBO are found in products from Member States. The problem with a plasticizer such as ESBO is that much higher levels are found compared to the SML because they are used in contact with fatty foods. Often the specifications by the lids manufacturer for the correct use of the lids are not respected.

The number of cases reported for migration of formaldehyde from melamine kitchenware increased from 34 in 2010 to 75 in 2011. Also high migration levels of melamine are reported for these utensils. Formaldehyde and melamine are monomers authorised to be used in plastic food contact materials but their migration into food should not exceed 15mg/kg of food for formaldehyde and 30mg/kg of food for melamine. Towards the end of the year, a RASFF alert by Germany concerning migration of formaldehyde and total migration from melamine spoons and ladles of a well-known brand manufactured in China sparked recalls in 82 countries worldwide, an absolute record for RASFF.

Commission Regulation (EU) No 284/2011 on import conditions for plastic kitchenware made of melamine and polyamide and imported from China and Hong Kong

In recent years, a high number of RASFF notifications concerning food contact materials originating from China have been received. In particular, PAA and high levels of formaldehyde were detected to be migrating from plastic kitchenware from China. The Commission inspection service of the Health and Consumer Directorate General, DG SANCO (FVO – Food and Veterinary Office, located in Grange-Ireland) conducted inspections in 2009 in China and in Hong Kong have shown serious deficiencies in the official control system regarding plastic food contact materials intended for import into the EU despite the initiatives the European Commission has taken in the past such as organising training sessions for Chinese control authorities and industry.

This led to the adoption of the Commission Regulation (EU) No 284/2011 setting import conditions for kitchen utensils from China to which adherence is enforced by Member States from 1 July 2011.

Commission Regulation (EU) No 321/2011 amending Regulation (EU) No 10/2011 as regards the restriction of use of Bisphenol A in plastic infant feeding bottles²²

²⁰ OJ L 338, 13.11.2004, p. 4

²¹ OJ L 77, 23.3.2011, p. 25

²² OJ L 87, 2.4.2011, p. 1



After some concerns were raised about the safety of the substance bisphenol A and some studies showed potential health effects from very small levels of intake of this substance, a precautionary measure was taken banning the use of bisphenol A in plastic infant feeding bottles, with effect from 22/04/2011. In the second half of 2011, 8 RASFF notifications were made for feeding bottles not complying with the new requirement. These bottles were withdrawn from the market.

3.3 Food poisoning

In 2011, there were almost 50 food poisonings laying at the basis of RASFF notifications, there was a drop

by 10 cases compared to 2010. Details are given in Table 7.

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 linked to the same source. 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 2011 but only those which lead to a RASFF notification. 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.

Of the cases highlighted in the table details are given below.

Table 7 – Food poisoning

no case	date	reference	classification	notified by	subject	persons affected*	distribution
1	17-Jan-11	2011.0055	information for attention	Denmark	norovirus in oysters (<i>Crassostrea gigas</i>) from France	11	Denmark
2	19-Jan-11	2011.0068	alert	Denmark	norovirus (genogroup I) in frozen raspberries from Serbia, via Sweden	105	Denmark and Sweden
3	4-Feb-11	2011.0136	alert	Denmark	norovirus in frozen raspberries from Serbia, via Sweden	7	Denmark
4	4-Feb-11	2011.0138	alert	Germany	undeclared egg (1 185; 1 160mg/kg – ppm) in salad mayonnaise without egg from Switzerland	1	Austria, China, Cyprus, Denmark, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Norway, Romania, Slovenia, Sweden and Switzerland
5	4-Feb-11	2011.0145	alert	Denmark	norovirus in frozen raspberries from China	8	Denmark and Iceland
6	18-Feb-11	2011.0220	alert	Germany	hydrogen peroxide (2.5–5g/100g) in semolina pudding and cream pudding from Germany	11	Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Italy and Poland
7	10-Mar-11	2011.0314	alert	France	norovirus in mussels from the Netherlands with raw material from the United Kingdom, Ireland and the Netherlands	16	France, Germany and Switzerland
8	10-Mar-11	2011.0317	alert	Denmark	foodborne outbreak caused by and insufficient labelling (containing wax esters which may cause gastrointestinal symptoms) of frozen butterfish chunks (<i>Lepidocybium flavobrunneum</i>) from Ecuador, via the Netherlands	1 family	Denmark
9	14-Mar-11	2011.0325	alert	Norway	norovirus (Genogroup I and II) in oysters from the Netherlands	16	Belgium, Germany and Norway

no case	date	reference	classification	notified by	subject	persons affected*	distribution
10	15-Apr-11	2011.0505	alert	Norway	foodborne outbreak suspected (<i>Yersinia enterocolitica</i>) to be caused by radicchio from Italy, via the United Kingdom	20**	Norway
11	21-Apr-11	2011.0530	alert	Germany	<i>Listeria monocytogenes</i> (9900 CFU/g) in gorgonzola cheese from Italy	1	Germany
12	2-May-11	2011.0568	alert	Finland	undeclared hazelnut (>200 mg/kg – ppm) in chocolate egg from Italy	1	Finland
13	11-May-11	2011.0618	alert	Germany	high content of selenium (164 µg/item) in food supplement from the United Kingdom	1	Austria, Germany, Netherlands and Switzerland
14	18-May-11	2011.0655	information for attention	Denmark	suspicion of <i>Salmonella typhimurium</i> DT 120 in chilled smoked pork tenderloin from Poland	22**	Denmark
15	18-May-11	2011.0658	alert	United Kingdom	undeclared milk ingredient (125 mg/kg – ppm) in organic plain chocolate drops from Germany	1	United Kingdom
16	24-May-11	2011.0684	information for attention	Italy	histamine (480 mg/kg – ppm) in chilled yellow fin tuna loins from the Maldives	2	Italy
17	26-May-11	2011.0696	alert	France	unauthorised substance synephrine in food supplement from Canada	1	France
18	31-May-11	2011.0712	alert	Hungary	unauthorised substances sibutramine and phenolphthalein in food supplement from China	1	Hungary and Romania
19	7-Jun-11	2011.0752	alert	Germany	suspicion of shigatoxin-producing <i>Escherichia coli</i> in organic sprouts mixture from Germany	large outbreak	Germany
20	8-Jun-11	2011.0757	information for follow-up	Italy	risk of internal injuries as a result of the consumption of milk ice cream with chocolate popsicle from Spain	1	Italy
21	10-Jun-11	2011.0763	alert	Sweden	<i>Salmonella</i> in frozen seafood mix from Vietnam, via Denmark	58	Faeroe Islands, Finland, Greenland, Iceland and Sweden
22	15-Jun-11	2011.0777	alert	Sweden	traces of sesame (5.3 mg/kg – ppm) and of peanut (1.3 mg/kg – ppm) in diet meal from Sweden	1	Finland, Norway, Sweden and Taiwan
23	21-Jun-11	2011.0805	information for follow-up	France	shigatoxin-producing <i>Escherichia coli</i> in frozen minced beef from France, with raw material from Germany	8	Belgium, Cyprus, France, Gabon, Hungary, Italy and Netherlands
24	24-Jun-11	2011.0831	information for follow-up	France	foodborne outbreak suspected (<i>Salmonella enteritidis</i>) to be caused by eggs from Spain	3**	France

no case	date	reference	classification	notified by	subject	persons affected*	distribution
25	25-Jun-11	2011.0842	alert	France	foodborne outbreak suspected (verotoxin producing E coli O104:H4) to be caused by fenugreek seeds for sprouting from Egypt, packaged in the United Kingdom, via the Netherlands and via Germany	large outbreak	Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom
26	7-Jul-11	2011.0907	alert	Italy	high count of <i>Enterobacteriaceae</i> (1.2x10E4 CFU/g) in vanilla ice cream from Italy	2	Hungary, Italy and Sweden
27	11-Jul-11	2011.0924	alert	Denmark	foodborne outbreak suspected (<i>E. coli</i> ETEC O27:H7 STp (estAp)) to be caused by sugar peas from Kenya, via the Netherlands	87**	Denmark
28	21-Jul-11	2011.0983	alert	Denmark	suspicion of botulinum toxin in organic tofu from Belgium, via the Netherlands	1**	Denmark
29	26-Jul-11	2011.1009	information for follow-up	France	foodborne outbreak suspected to be caused by eggs from Spain	36**	France
30	27-Jul-11	2011.1020	alert	Denmark	foodborne outbreak suspected (Norovirus) to be caused by frozen raspberries from Serbia, via the United Kingdom	6**	Denmark and Sweden
31	6-Sep-11	2011.1203	information for attention	France	<i>Clostridium botulinum</i> type A in olive-almond spread from France	8	France
32	8-Sep-11	2011.1221	alert	France	<i>Clostridium botulinum</i> type A in sundried tomato spread from France		France
33	16-Sep-11	2011.1267	alert	Italy	histamine in tuna fillet (<i>Thunnus albacares</i>) from Spain	3	Italy
34	23-Sep-11	2011.1308	information for attention	Italy	<i>Bacillus cereus enterotoxigenic</i> (positive) in risotto rice with squid from India	25-30	Italy
35	28-Sep-11	2011.1320	alert	Netherlands	undeclared wheat in natural breakfast bar from the Netherlands	1	Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg and Netherlands
36	3-Oct-11	2011.1347	alert	Denmark	norovirus (G I.b/I.6) in frozen forest fruit mix from Serbia, via Austria and via Belgium	1	Austria, Denmark and Switzerland
37	5-Oct-11	2011.1361	alert	Italy	histamine (3 100; 1 900 mg/kg – ppm) in chilled yellowfin tuna fillets (<i>Thunnus albacares</i>) from Spain	1	Italy

no case	date	reference	classification	notified by	subject	persons affected*	distribution
38	7-Oct-11	2011.1375	information for attention	Denmark	norovirus (genotype I.b/I.6) in frozen whole raspberries from Serbia	3	Denmark
39	21-Oct-11	2011.1479	alert	Finland	botulinum toxin (presence) in organic olives with almonds in glass jars from Italy	2	Armenia, Barbados, Brazil, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Ireland, Japan, Netherlands, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Switzerland, Taiwan and United Kingdom
40	21-Oct-11	2011.1486	alert	Iceland	<i>Salmonella enteritidis</i> in frozen duck breasts from the Netherlands	8	Germany and Iceland
41	26-Oct-11	2011.1505	information for attention	Romania	unauthorised substance sibutramine in food supplement from China	1	Romania
42	11-Nov-11	2011.1627	information for attention	Norway	<i>Shigella sonnei</i> in fresh basil (<i>Ocimum basilicum</i>) from Israel, via the Netherlands	46	Norway
43	11-Nov-11	2011.1630	alert	Denmark	foodborne outbreak suspected (<i>Salmonella Strathcona</i>) to be caused by datterino tomatoes from Italy	40**	Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Netherlands, Switzerland and United Kingdom
44	22-Nov-11	2011.1686	information for attention	France	<i>Campylobacter</i> spp. (present/25 g) in frozen roasted skinless boneless chicken breasts from Thailand	1	France
45	23-Nov-11	2011.1688	information for follow-up	Sweden	didecyldimethylammonium chloride (10%) in grapefruit seed extract from Italy	1	Finland and Sweden
46	25-Nov-11	2011.1715	alert	Sweden	traces of milk (casein: 8.6 mg/kg and lactose: 0.05 g/100 g) in sausage (chistorra) from Spain	1	Sweden
47	29-Nov-11	2011.1735	alert	Finland	<i>Bacillus cereus</i> (16 000 CFU/g), <i>Clostridium perfringens</i> (180 CFU/g) and <i>Salmonella Caracas</i> (presence/25 g) in ground cumin from the United Kingdom	3	Finland, Poland, Portugal, Singapore and Spain
48	20-Dec-11	2011.1880	alert	France	foodborne outbreak (<i>Salmonella monophasic serovar</i> 4, 5, 12) caused by dried sausages 'Red Label' from France	not given	Andorra, France, French Polynesia, Mauritius, Poland, Portugal, Saint Pierre and Miquelon and Slovenia

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

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

Table 8 – Details of food poisoning cases

Hydrogen peroxide in pudding from Germany	<p>case 6</p> <p>After receiving several consumer complaints of a burning feeling in mouth and irritation, a consumer recall was launched. The cause of the symptoms had been identified to be a contamination with hydrogen peroxide caused by a defect in a packaging-filling machine.</p>
Norovirus in mussels from the Netherlands	<p>case 7</p> <p>Several foodborne outbreaks in France were linked to these mussels. At first, also DSP was considered a possible carrier of the disease but at a later stage norovirus was identified in several samples. The case sparked a debate whether or not cooking the mussels for 4–5 minutes could inactivate the virus. France considered that one could not depend with certainty on the cooking to be an effective measure to eliminate the risk. The topic would be further discussed at the food hygiene working group between Member States and the Commission.</p>
Suspicion of <i>Yersinia enterocolitica</i> in radicchio lettuce from Italy	<p>case 10</p> <p>20 persons had been diagnosed with yersiniosis. <i>Yersinia enterocolitica</i> O:9 had been detected in fecal samples from the patients. The Norwegian Institute of Public Health has compared the patient isolates by MLVA. All patient isolates have identical or almost identical DNA profile. Epidemiological investigations of patient information indicated readymade salad mix as the most likely source of infection. A range of different suspected food stuffs have been analysed by the Norwegian Veterinary Institute. A PCR-screening has indicated the presence of pathogenic strains of <i>Yersinia enterocolitica</i> in the radicchio rosso lettuce. However, no isolates could be made of <i>Yersinia enterocolitica</i> in the lettuce supplied via the United Kingdom to Norway. Possible pathways of contamination were investigated such as the water supply but all turned out negative. There were also no cases reported outside Norway.</p>
High content of selenium (164 µg/item) in food supplement from the United Kingdom	<p>case 13</p> <p>A consumer had taken a selenium food supplement for a couple of months but looked for doctor advice when feeling unwell. The doctor diagnosed selenium poisoning. A risk assessment made clear that the daily recommended dose on the label was much too high. The distributor of the product contacted their customers to have the products recalled and destroyed. Nutrition claims and product labelling had been amended.</p>
Suspicion of shiga toxin-producing <i>Escherichia coli</i> in organic sprouts mixture from Germany	<p>case 19</p> <p>This case is related to the outbreak of <i>Escherichia coli</i> O104:H4 in Germany. When the German authorities had collected extensive epidemiological evidence that the source of the outbreak pointed towards an organic sprouts mixture produced in Germany, they launched an alert. Afterwards, from combining information with the outbreak in France, reported in notification 2011.0842, the exact cause of the outbreak could be identified (see case 25 and the header on '<i>E. coli</i> O104:H4 outbreaks in Europe' on page 16).</p>
Shiga toxin-producing <i>Escherichia coli</i> in frozen minced beef from France, with raw material from Germany	<p>case 23</p> <p>Not long after one of the biggest STEC-related outbreaks broke out in Germany, a STEC outbreak related to raw minced beef was reported by France concerning 8 patients that had developed the serious condition of HUS. Precautionary recalls were immediately launched for products with the same or similar traceability. Thorough investigations were carried out in the countries concerned but it proved once again hard to detect the exact source of contamination through analysis.</p>

<p>Foodborne outbreak suspected (<i>Salmonella enteritidis</i>) to be caused by eggs from Spain</p>	<p>case 24</p> <p>A foodborne outbreak occurring in a family could be related to the consumption of an omelette containing eggs from Spain. Another RASFF notification issued by the United Kingdom reported finding of <i>Salmonella enteritidis</i> in eggs from the same Spanish farm. The contamination of eggs with <i>Salmonella</i> is impossible to control through sampling and analysis of the eggs. Only on-farm measures to keep the stable <i>Salmonella</i>-free are effective in providing safe eggs. An investigation in the farm of origin confirmed that one of the chicken sheds was indeed contaminated with <i>Salmonella enteritidis</i>. The Spanish authorities proceeded with the culling of this shed.</p>
<p>Foodborne outbreak suspected (shiga-toxin producing <i>E. coli</i> O104:H4) to be caused by fenugreek seeds for sprouting from Egypt, packaged in the United Kingdom, via the Netherlands and via Germany</p>	<p>case 25</p> <p>An outbreak in France that was quickly identified as the same strain <i>E. coli</i> O104:H4 as the ongoing outbreak in Germany allowed authorities to compare and investigate the common element in both outbreaks as being the likely cause (see also case 19). In this way, with the assistance of EFSA, fenugreek seeds from Egypt were identified as the likely source of contamination with <i>E. coli</i> O104:H4. As soon as the exact batch of seeds imported from Egypt was identified, all products containing the seeds: packaged fenugreek seeds, sprouted seeds and mixes of seeds or sprouts were traced and withdrawn from the market. This involved 101 follow-up notifications in total from 25 RASFF member countries concerned and from Egypt.</p>
<p><i>Clostridium botulinum</i> in tapenade from France</p>	<p>cases 31, 32</p> <p>See topic '<i>Clostridium botulinum</i>' on page 17.</p>
<p>Botulinum toxin (presence) in organic olives with almonds in glass jars from Italy</p>	<p>case 39</p> <p>After two adults in the same family had been hospitalised with botulism poisoning symptoms, the toxin could be detected in olives stuffed with almonds from Italy. After investigation in Italy all batches and sizes of the olives with almonds have been withdrawn from the market out of precaution. In view of the distribution to several third countries, the INFOSAN network was informed and an INFOSAN alert was launched.</p>
<p><i>Shigella sonnei</i> in fresh basil (<i>Ocimum basilicum</i>) from Israel, via the Netherlands</p>	<p>case 42</p> <p>The Norwegian Food Safety Authority reported a <i>Shigella sonnei</i> outbreak of 46 cases that occurred in Norway during October 2011. All cases had <i>Shigella sonnei</i> with identical MLVA profile. Epidemiological evidence and trace back investigations have linked the outbreak to the consumption of imported fresh basil. Pesto from a local caterer has been suspected as the source of the infection of the patients in that area. The same supplier that provided fresh basil to the catering company had also delivered fresh basil to a restaurant implicated in a second cluster of patients. Trace back investigations of the ingredients in the pesto have shown that basil from the exact same consignment was sent to both the caterer and to the restaurant. The product was withdrawn from the market and no further cases were reported.</p> <p>Eurosurveillance article about the outbreak: http://www.eurosurveillance.org/ViewArticle.aspx?ArticleId=20007</p>

3.4 RASFF News: Accident at the Daiichi nuclear power plant in Fukushima, Japan

On 11 March 2011, after a very severe earthquake and consequent tsunami hit the east coast of Japan, the Daiichi nuclear power plant in Fukushima, Japan was heavily damaged, resulting in release of radioactivity into the environment.

Soon thereafter, it became obvious that the feed and food chain was affected by this release of radioactivity. Therefore, on 15 March 2011, DG Health and Consumers recommended in a RASFF news addressed to its contact points in all Member States to carry out analysis on the levels of radioactivity in feed and food imported from Japan.

After discussion with Member States, the Commission adopted, as a precautionary measure, on 25 March 2011 the implementing Regulation (EU) No 297/2011²³ imposing special conditions on the import of feed and food originating in Japan, based on article 53 of Regulation (EC) 178/2002. This Regulation provided for the requirement of a pre-export check carried out by Japanese authorities on all exported feed and food from the affected zone around the nuclear power plant as regards the presence of iodine-131, caesium-134 and caesium-137, combined with random controls at the point of entry in the EU to confirm compliance. The maximum levels applied at EU level were initially the levels pre-established by Council Regulation (EURATOM) No 3954/87²⁴, applicable in case of a new nuclear incident. For reasons of providing consistency between pre-export controls performed by the Japanese authorities and the controls on feed and food from Japan at import, the Commission decided in April 2011 to apply the same maximum levels for radioactivity in feed and food from Japan as the stricter levels applied in Japan. The legislation provided furthermore that Member States have to report the results of their controls through the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) and the European Community Urgent Radiological Information Exchange system (ECURIE).

The emergency measure was regularly amended to take account of the development of the situation, and was replaced in September by Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 961/2011²⁵. The amendments concerned the adoption of maximum levels of radioactivity to be applied for feed and



food originating from Japan, adding or removing prefectures to and from the zone for which specific restrictions apply. Because iodine-131 has only a very short half-life (8 days) and there had been no significant releases into the environment after September 2011, iodine-131 was no longer present in significant amounts in the environment and therefore at the end of 2011 an amendment was adopted no longer requiring controls for this radionuclide.

In addition to the legal measures, the Commission has recommended to the Member States via the RASFF to monitor fishery products and other marine products caught in the Pacific region on a random basis for the presence of Iodine-131, Caesium-134 and Caesium-137. This recommendation was later amended taking into account new scientific information, to include the monitoring at random for the presence of caesium-134 and caesium-137 in migratory pelagic fish from FAO Major Fishing Area 61 (part of the Pacific Ocean where Japan is located) and derived/processed products thereof. Migratory pelagic fish species of relevance are tuna (albacore, bluefin, bigeye and skipjack) and billfishes (swordfish and marlin).

Import controls show a very favourable picture of the levels of radioactive contamination found in feed and food from Japan. Only 2 batches of green tea have been found with non-compliant levels caesium and were notified via the RASFF. This has immediately resulted in an amendment adding the prefecture of Shizuoka to the zone with restrictions. With the exception of a further few batches of green tea in which significant levels of caesium

²³ OJ L 80, 26.3.2011, p. 5

²⁴ OJ L 371, 30.12.1987, p. 11

²⁵ OJ L 252, 28.9.2011, p. 10

were found, but compliant with the maximum level, all other results showed no detectable level (most frequent) or very low levels (less than 10 Becquerel/kg). Fish and fishery products from the Pacific region have in 2011 not been found to be contaminated with radioactivity.

The measures have provided a very high level of public health protection and the RASFF has proven to be indispensable to ensure an effective and rapid communication with the Member States on the development of the situation, the measures to be taken and to share the control results obtained. The measures continue to be applicable in 2012 and are regularly reviewed.

3.5 iRASFF: the new IT platform for RASFF notification has arrived!

Finally after a long period of development and careful preparations, in June 2011 the first six countries were ready and trained to implement the new online RASFF application baptised 'iRASFF'.

iRASFF is quite a revolutionary change for the RASFF system. Up to this time, the system was primarily email based. Member countries send

documents and a RASFF notification form, based on a template, by email to the European Commission contact point (ECCP). The ECCP verifies the information and encodes a selection of that data in its RASFF database, compiles all the files, adds a cover page and uploads the resulting document to a repository where it is available to all members of the system. The same procedure is followed for original and follow-up notifications.

This way of working is changed drastically with the arrival of iRASFF. Member countries enter the notification directly online in iRASFF. There are different levels of validation in iRASFF: a notification, once completed, is submitted to the national contact point (NCP). The NCP can add to the notification and validate it but can also reject it or suspend it, requiring additional information. The NCP can also either submit the notification to the ECCP or not. Only notifications that were submitted to the ECCP and subsequently validated by it are valid RASFF notifications available to all members of the network. At this point, all members of the system can provide follow-up to the notification.

More specifically regarding follow-up, the system provides very new possibilities because when a member issues a follow-up, it opens the entire



notification for editing. This allows another member to add its information to the different structured elements of the notification i.e. additional information regarding sampling and analysis or traceability of the product concerned. If the information given in the follow-up contradicts the original information, the member can change the original information. A history of the changes is kept in the application, so that members can verify how the information in a notification was changed over time. As for original notifications, follow-ups must also be validated before they are available to all members.

Since the introduction of iRASFF, both the current and the iRASFF systems are running in parallel. Countries which have migrated to iRASFF introduce their notifications in iRASFF and the ECCP enters these notifications in the current system which in this way remains complete and functional for the duration of the migration to iRASFF. iRASFF notifications are printed to PDF documents and as such

uploaded to RASFF Window. Attached documents uploaded to the iRASFF notification are available as attached files in the PDF document.

While countries are preparing to migrate to iRASFF, the application is further developed and refined. The target for migration of all members of iRASFF is end of 2012 but for some countries there will be higher demands on iRASFF and bigger challenges. Italy and Germany, the biggest contributors in RASFF, have indicated their wish to implement iRASFF taking into account the federal (Germany) or regional (Italy) structure of their country, which requires modifications to iRASFF. A business-to-business solution is being studied for the integration of Spain into iRASFF.

By the end of 2011, already 677 original notifications had been entered into iRASFF and the six 'pilot' countries expressed their satisfaction with the system.

iRASFF notification screen

The screenshot displays the iRASFF notification interface. At the top, it shows 'EUROPA V 0.8.1' and 'Language' with flags for Germany and France. The main header is 'iRASFF' with navigation buttons: 'History', 'Suspension data', 'Follow-up', 'Notify', 'Close', 'Print', and 'Refresh'.

General information

Notification number	5058
Reference	2012.0057
Current Status	EC Validated
Notification type *	food
Notification basis *	official control on the market
Notification classification	alert notification
Notifying country	Germany
Date of notification *	05/06/2012
INFOSAN informed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Reason	INFOSAN

Risk

Serious risk	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Impact on	human health
Motivate serious risk	Salmonellen, Bacillus cereus
Number of people affected	
Illness / patient's symptoms	
Other hazards	

Follow-up

#5269 - Draft - Edit Validate Delete Tue, 05 Jun 2012 12:52:03

#5254 - MS submitted - Show Edit Validate Suspend Reject Tue, 05 Jun 2012 12:39:15

#5189 - EC validated - Show Notify Tue, 05 Jun 2012 12:31:17

Countries notified for the notification and associated follow-up

For follow-up: RO AT DE

Products

CHAPTER 4

Relevant charts and tables

4.1 Evolution of the number of notifications

Table 9 – Evolution of the number of notifications

year	original			follow-up		
	alert	information	border rejection	alert	information	border rejection
2006	910	687	1 274	2 157	640	923
2007	952	761	1 211	2 440	796	978
2008	528	1 138	1 377	1 789	1 329	743
2009	557	1 191	1 456	1 775	1 861	871
2010	576	1 168	1 554	1 977	2 027	1 014
2011	617	1 285	1 828	2 185	1 920	1 017
%	+7.1	+10.0	+17.8	+10.5	-5.3	+0.3

Figure 8 – by notification classification

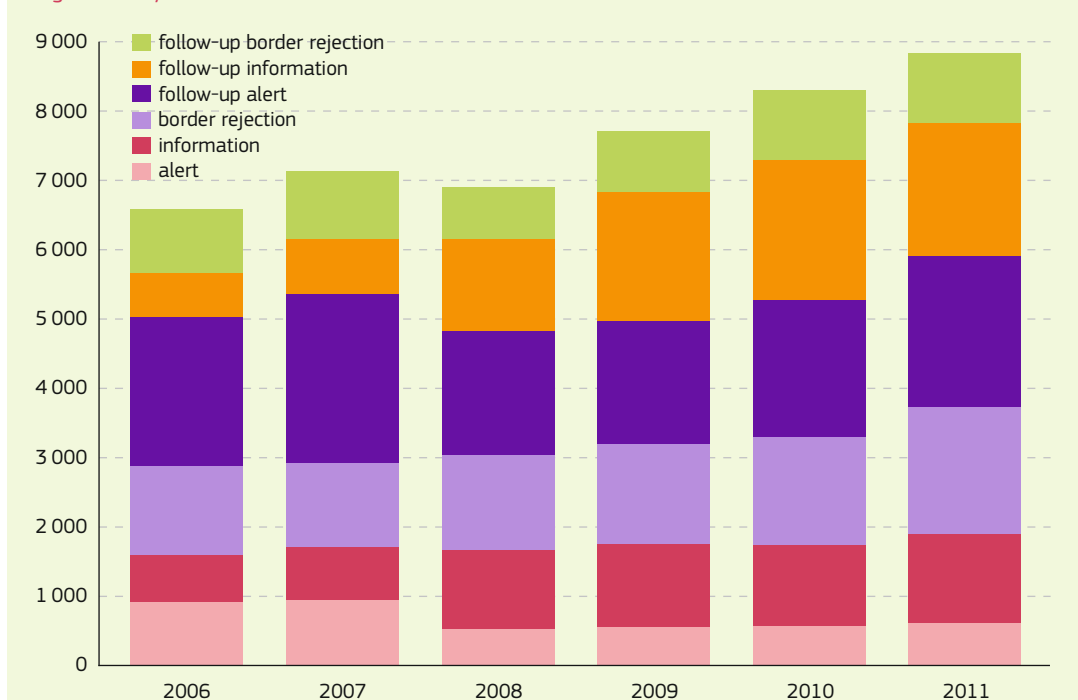




Table 10 – by notifying country

country	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Austria	71	62	87	110	89	65
Belgium	80	98	107	117	95	129
Bulgaria	-	10	22	26	34	116
Commission Services	3	8	6	23	12	4
Cyprus	41	52	65	53	52	77
Czech Republic	76	73	55	68	90	99
Denmark	113	130	127	123	131	151
Estonia	25	17	11	13	18	9
Finland	79	82	93	141	130	111
France	94	124	137	157	171	200
Germany	422	376	438	413	398	419
Greece	110	170	106	161	159	130
Hungary	33	29	17	10	20	13
Iceland	3	4	1	1	2	6
Ireland	14	24	27	30	35	50
Italy	555	501	470	467	551	562
Latvia	19	13	32	14	21	17
Lithuania	27	40	50	33	48	40
Luxembourg	7	10	11	16	23	25
Malta	16	38	30	18	12	27
Netherlands	163	156	247	212	215	204
Norway	54	68	50	30	24	51
Poland	103	123	156	141	140	227
Portugal	20	25	14	8	18	22
Romania	-	7	13	18	25	21
Slovakia	49	61	56	52	56	35
Slovenia	61	47	76	73	56	45
Spain	225	169	142	255	285	302
Sweden	61	55	50	60	74	72
Switzerland	-	-	-	4	7	6
United Kingdom	351	361	348	335	321	512
total	2875	2933	3044	3182	3313	3747

Table 11 – 2011 notifications by hazard category, by classification and by basis

hazard category	classification				notification basis						
	alert	border rejection	information for attention	information for follow-up	border control – consignment detained	border control – consignment released	official control on the market	company's own check	consumer complaint	food poisoning	official control in non-member country
adulteration/fraud	4	67	9	16	67	4	21	3	1		
allergens	68	1	18	6	1	1	56	22	12	1	
biocontaminants	10	15	10		15	7	8	1	1	3	
biotoxins (other)	13		4	35			16	2	32	2	
chemical contamination (other)	4		1	2			1	2	4		
composition	33	86	49	47	86	10	105	4	9	1	
feed additives		1		3	1		3				
food additives and flavourings	14	56	35	47	57	12	76	4	3		
foreign bodies	38	119	22	47	119		27	22	58		
GMO/novel food	11	17	11	16	18	2	33		2		
heavy metals	71	107	88	24	107	31	137	14	1		
industrial contaminants	39	8	21	25	8	3	68	13		1	
labelling absent/incomplete/incorrect	2	16	2	6	16		6	2	1	1	
migration	50	63	40	35	63	3	121	1			
mycotoxins	64	514	46	7	512	14	84	20			1
non-pathogenic micro-organisms	3	76	8	28	74	6	15	10	9	1	
not determined/other	2	34	1	4	34		3	1	2	1	
organoleptic aspects	2	87	18	27	87	1	22	5	19		
packaging defective/incorrect	2	16	2	7	16		5	2	4		
parasitic infestation	29	59	14	17	59	5	43	7	5		
pathogenic micro-organisms	150	114	201	134	113	91	244	116	3	31	1
pesticide residues	17	219	99	28	220	22	88	32	1		
poor or insufficient controls	5	177	2	6	177		8	2	3		
radiation	1	12	14	7	12	9	13				
residues of veterinary medicinal products	11	46	27	5	46	16	25	2			
TSEs				2			2				

Table 12 – 2011 notifications by product category and by classification

product category	classification				total 2011	2010	2009	2008
	alert	border rejection	informa- tion for attention	informa- tion for follow-up				
alcoholic beverages	7	2	3	2	14	7	3	2
bivalve molluscs and products thereof	23	28	15	2	68	78	52	45
cephalopods and products thereof	5	66	8	2	81	44	39	18
cereals and bakery products	57	64	35	25	181	172	165	159
cocoa and cocoa preparations, coffee and tea	13	16	10	7	46	33	74	48
compound feeds	2		3	9	14	7	12	
confectionery	16	32	7	12	67	50	60	95
crustaceans and products thereof	7	42	24	5	78	78	176	127
dietetic foods, food supplements, fortified foods	40	26	21	49	136	141	119	77
eggs and egg products	4	2	1	6	13	16	15	9
fats and oils	5	11	5		21	25	21	23
feed additives		3	5	5	13	7	8	7
feed for food-producing animals		2			2			122
feed materials	13	133	52	63	261	110	122	
feed premixtures	1		3	2	6	4	4	
fish and fish products	95	217	103	76	491	452	445	255
food additives and flavourings	3	4			7	1	5	8
food contact materials	61	125	78	47	311	231	192	197
fruits and vegetables	61	360	192	57	670	495	404	439
herbs and spices	26	116	46	10	198	222	129	101
honey and royal jelly	1	2	2	5	10	16	14	38
ices and desserts	4			3	7	6	5	6
meat and meat products (other than poultry)	61	50	29	32	172	203	137	126
milk and milk products	22	4	5	20	51	76	38	62
natural mineral water		3	1	4	8	6	2	9
non-alcoholic beverages	2	15	6	8	31	36	28	38
nuts, nut products and seeds	30	424	21	51	526	539	675	774
other food product/mixed	1	6	12	2	21	14	5	20
pet food	3	40	7	13	63	56	49	52
poultry meat and poultry meat products	20	14	17	21	72	75	94	118
prepared dishes and snacks	14	6	8	5	33	24	36	26
soups, broths, sauces and condiments	19	15	7	11	52	54	39	27
water for human consumption (other)	1		2	1	4	5	3	6
wine			1	1	2	1	1	2

4.2 2011 – top 10 number of notifications

Number of notifications counted for each combination of hazard/product category/country.

Table 13 – by origin

	hazard	product category	origin	notifications
1	aflatoxins	feed materials	India	80
2	aflatoxins	fruits and vegetables	Turkey	75
3	aflatoxins	nuts, nut products and seeds	China	60
4	<i>Salmonella</i> spp.	fruits and vegetables	Bangladesh	54
5	aflatoxins	nuts, nut products and seeds	Turkey	53
6	migration of chromium	food contact materials	China	48
7	migration of formaldehyde	food contact materials	China	45
8	living and dead mites	nuts, nut products and seeds	Ukraine	43
9	aflatoxins	herbs and spices	India	40
10	aflatoxins	nuts, nut products and seeds	Iran	39

Table 14 – by notifying country

	hazard	product category	notifier	notifications
1	aflatoxins	nuts, nut products and seeds	Germany	77
2	aflatoxins	nuts, nut products and seeds	The Netherlands	72
3	aflatoxins	feed materials	United Kingdom	62
4	living and dead mites	nuts, nut products and seeds	Poland	61
5	<i>Salmonella</i> spp.	fruits and vegetables	United Kingdom	61
6	migration of chromium	food contact materials	Italy	51
7	poor temperature control – rupture of the cold chain	fish and fish products	Spain	50
8	mercury	fish and fish products	Italy	44
9	aflatoxins	nuts, nut products and seeds	United Kingdom	43
10	parasitic infestation with <i>Anisakis</i> spp.	fish and fish products	Italy	40

4.3 Notifications – country of origin

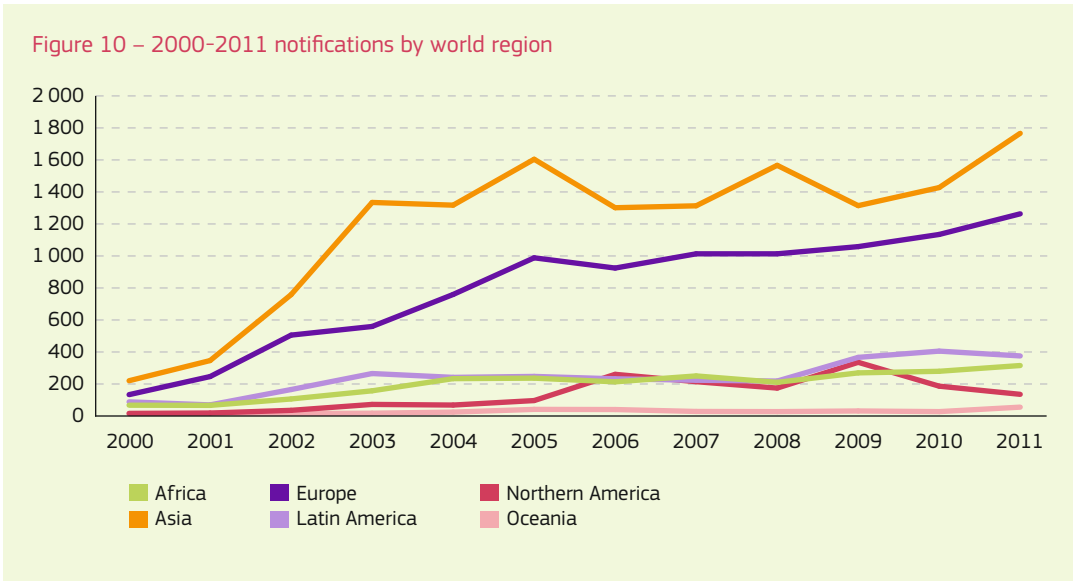
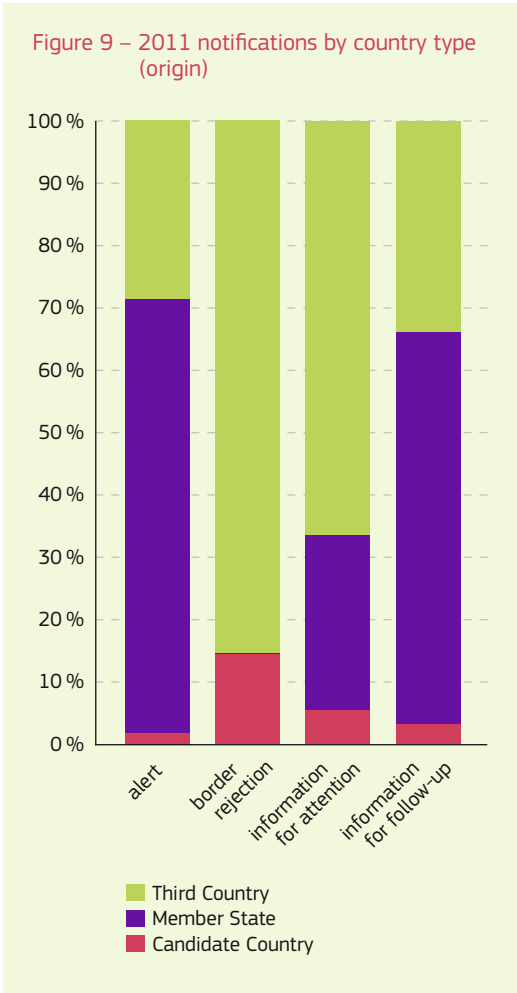


Table 15 – 2009–2011 notifications by country of origin

country	2009	2010	2011
China	345	449	558
India	154	251	337
Turkey	278	255	318
Germany	163	156	152
Spain	101	138	131
France	114	116	125
Italy	100	121	117
United States	238	160	112
Vietnam	100	71	109
Poland	74	75	101
Ukraine	37	50	96
Brazil	84	110	95
Thailand	110	131	95
Argentina	124	158	93
Bangladesh	54	13	77
Netherlands	71	52	74
Morocco	52	56	71
United Kingdom	60	71	69
Belgium	47	40	61
Chile	31	23	57
Egypt	36	39	55
Iran	69	66	46
Denmark	32	25	38
New Zealand	13	7	37
Japan	13	4	31
Senegal	28	20	31
Hong Kong	27	6	26
Peru	35	25	26
South Africa	17	25	26
Moldova	2	4	25
Pakistan	17	29	25
Tunisia	14	13	25
Czech Republic	9	20	23
Ghana	23	18	22
Greece	19	17	22

country	2009	2010	2011
Austria	31	22	21
Dominican Republic		14	21
Indonesia	16	25	20
Sweden	17	12	17
Hungary	16	17	15
Russia	18	14	15
Israel	9	14	14
Jordan	1	3	14
Latvia	4	9	14
Mexico	6	9	14
Colombia	11	1	13
Mauritania	8	22	13
Nigeria	31	25	13
Norway	7	3	13
Uruguay	8	9	13
Canada	85	16	12
Croatia	29	19	12
Mozambique	3	3	12
Philippines	7	8	12
Portugal	14	16	12
Romania	6	6	12
Ireland	11	25	11
Serbia	4	12	11
Bulgaria	7	9	10
Ecuador	18	23	10
Georgia	6	6	10
Malaysia	8	9	9
Sri Lanka	28	20	9
unknown origin	19	6	9
Estonia	1	4	8
Maldives	1	2	8
Malta	6	3	8
Slovakia	3	13	8
Kenya	1	4	7
Lithuania	5	15	7

country	2009	2010	2011
Madagascar	4	4	7
Syria	8	8	7
Guatemala	3	1	6
Slovenia	8	10	6
Albania	5	2	5
Australia	7	8	4
Kazakhstan	1		4
Lebanon	10	2	4
Papua New Guinea		2	4
Taiwan	10	12	4
Uganda	2	3	4
Yemen	1		4
Algeria	4	3	3
Côte d'Ivoire	4	4	3
Guinea		1	3
Iceland	1	1	3
Mauritius	3	3	3
Panama	8	1	3
South Korea	17	8	3
Suriname	1	1	3
Switzerland	10	12	3
Uzbekistan	1	9	3
Azerbaijan	1	2	2
Belarus	3	1	2
Bolivia	7	7	2
Costa Rica	3	5	2
Cuba	2	2	2
Ethiopia		1	2
Liechtenstein			2
Nicaragua	2	5	2
Paraguay	7		2
Afghanistan		2	1
Bahrain		1	1
Bosnia and Herzegovina		4	1
Cameroon		2	1

country	2009	2010	2011
Congo (Brazzaville)			1
Faeroe Islands			1
Falkland Islands	3		1
Finland	4	1	1
former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	5	7	1
Gambia	11	8	1
Greenland	2		1
Kyrgyzstan	1	2	1
Namibia	12	6	1
Nepal		1	1
Oman	1	1	1
Singapore	3		1
Togo		1	1
United Arab Emirates	1	4	1
Benin		2	
Cape Verde		2	
Cyprus		1	
El Salvador	1		
French Polynesia	1		
Honduras	1	1	
Iraq		1	
Jersey	1	1	
Kosovo	2	1	
Luxembourg	1		
Myanmar	1		
Qatar	1		
Saudi Arabia	3	1	
Seychelles	1	1	
Sierra Leone		2	
Sudan	1		
Tajikistan	1		
Tanzania	4		
Venezuela	1		
Zimbabwe		1	

Table 16 – 2011 follow-up notifications by follow-up type and by notifying country

Follow-up	AT	BE	BG	CH	CS	CY	CZ	DE	DK	EE	ES	FI	FR	GB
accompanying documents	2	10	2		1	3	8	15	6		14	3	4	10
additional information	13	16	8	9	68	7	13	142	12	1	41	4	31	38
additional lot(s)		1				1		7						
corrigendum	2	3	3		144	3	4	26	8	1	9		5	6
information on sampling/analysis	2	1						9	1		2	1	1	
lifting of the reinforced control measures											594		159	
measures taken	46	16	6	3		8	23	34	10	4	49	3	14	10
notification downgrade					4			1						1
notification reclassification					2									
notification upgrade					10		1	2					1	
outcome of investigations	32	77	12	16	2	15	80	157	75	11	203	2	111	64
outcome of investigations and measures taken	14	26	20	5		9	63	89	31	2	142	4	25	18
reaction from third country				29							1			
re-dispatch information	5	5	4				3	14	1		1		4	2
request	1	2	1		3		3	14	12	5	16		5	1
translation					87						1		1	
withdrawal of follow-up notification	1	1			16		1				1			1
withdrawal of original notification					9	1		9	4		3	2		1

GR	HU	IE	IS	IT	LT	LU	LV	MT	NL	NO	PL	PT	RO	SE	SI	SK
16	5	4		87	1		1		8	6	7	2	3	7	1	6
18	11	10		106	3	2	3	4	27	11	13	1	3	6	2	2
				9					1		1			1		
1	2		2	34	3				4	1	12		1	3	1	1
2				3	1											
				34												
16	9	9	1	29	3	3	11	10	5	2	26	4	10	13	8	6
															1	
				3					1		1					
35	39	28	1	203	32	5	17	1	72	11	87	4	18	31	20	31
25	35	6		62	11	5	6	5	15	14	35	11	24	16	13	20
										1						
	2			34				3			8		3	5	1	1
1		1	1	14	1	1		1	1	1	3	3				
		1		1					1							
4		1		35			2			2	9		1	2		2



The European Commission's RASFF team in 2011:

Magda Havlíková, Nathalie de Broyer, Dawid Łacinski, Anna Młynarczyk, Adrie ten Velden, Stefanie Roth and Jan Baele

European Commission

The Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) Annual Report 2011



Rapid Alert System for *Food and Feed*

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(RASFF)

2011 Annual Report



Publications Office

ISBN 978-92-79-23020-2



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