



European
Commission

RASFF

**The Rapid Alert
System for
Food and Feed**

2012 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 2012.

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RASFF

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Foreword



It is my pleasure to present the 11th annual report of the EU's Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) which covers the reporting period 2012. RASFF is an IT tool that facilitates the cross-border flow of information between national authorities responsible for food safety. Since its creation in 1979, RASFF has clearly demonstrated over the years, that it plays a key role in ensuring a high level of food safety for Europe's citizens. Through the RASFF network, food safety authorities in Europe are rapidly informed of serious risks found in food and feed so that they can collectively and swiftly react to emerging health threats in a coordinated and efficient way.

In 2012, 3516 notifications were sent through RASFF which gave rise to 5281 follow-up notifications. The RASFF network has helped us to respond to, and mitigate, food safety crises since vital communication is exchanged through RASFF on a daily basis in order to protect European consumers. An example of this was in early September 2012, when the Czech food safety authority informed RASFF of persons suffering from methanol poisoning after having consumed "on tap" spirits. In this instance, the adulteration of beverages had devastating consequences. In all, there were 36 fatalities. The Czech authority used the RASFF channel to swiftly inform and update its EU partners on its investigations and on the measures it had taken.

Whilst the horsemeat scandal that has been making headline news does not fall within this reporting

period, it is important to highlight that thanks to the existence of RASFF, the Irish food safety authority, which originally discovered that some processed foods labelled as 100% beef contained horsemeat, was able to swiftly notify its European partners. As a result of a monitoring programme, launched by the Commission, over 80 notifications were sent which led to over 300 follow-up notifications to trace the products and withdraw them from the market.

Since RASFF is primarily a platform to exchange information on food safety issues, the horsemeat scandal has raised a legitimate need to exchange information on cases of food fraud which is an emerging phenomenon. To address this, the Commission's 5 point action plan which aims to close the gaps identified in the wake of the horsemeat scandal includes setting up a procedure for the rapid exchange of information and alerts in cases which may constitute food fraud.

Clear and timely communication channels are of utmost importance in the case of a lifethreatening crisis and valuable lessons must be drawn from past experience. Vital communication is taking place on a daily basis through RASFF, in order to protect our consumers. It is a perfect example of a Europe in which the sum is so much bigger – and better – than the parts. I therefore extend my gratitude to each and every food safety professional out there making it happen, each and every day.

Tonio Borg

European Commissioner for
Health and Consumer Policy

Acronyms used in this report

BAC	benzalkonium chloride
BIP	Border Inspection Post
CFU	Colony Forming Units
DDAC	didecyl dimethyl ammonium chloride
DMAA	1,3-dimethylamylamine
EC	European Commission
ECCP	European Commission Contact Point (for RASFF)
ECDC	European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control
EEA	European Economic Area
EFSA	European Food Safety Authority
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EHEC	Enterohaemorrhagic Escherichia coli
EU	European Union
EWRS	Early Warning and Response System
FDA	(US) Food and Drug Administration
GMO	Genetically Modified Organism
GOS	galacto oligo saccharide
HACCP	Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points
INFOSAN	International Food Safety Authorities Network
MRL	Maximum Residue Limit
NCP	National Contact Point (for RASFF)
OJ	Official Journal
PDF	Portable Document Format
ppb	parts per billion
ppm	part per million
RASFF	Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed
REC	reinforced checks
RNA	ribonucleic acid
SOP	standard operating procedure
STEC	shigatoxin-producing Escherichia coli
TRACES	Trade Control and Expert System
TSEs	Transmissible spongiform encephalopathies
US(A)	United States (of America)
WHO	World Health Organisation

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CHAPTER 1

RASFF and food safety in 2012

2012 was the year where a lot of work was done in the aftermath of the EHEC crisis in 2011. Important lessons were drawn from the crisis and the impact it had in human suffering but also in economic losses. A Commission staff working document was adopted on “Lessons learned from the 2011 outbreak of Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* (STEC) O104:H4 in sprouted seeds” in which areas for improvement and concrete actions were put forward. To sum up some of the work done and in progress:

EFSA and ECDC are formalising a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for joint risk assessment in the event of outbreaks. While the Commission staff working document on “lessons learned” was being prepared, several outbreaks were already demanding for such

a coordinated approach. In June, Belgium reported an outbreak of non-travel related *Salmonella* Stanley. Throughout Europe 684 cases (people taken ill) were reported to ECDC up to the end of 2012. In a joint ECDC/EFSA rapid risk assessment¹ in September 2012, the turkey production chain was identified as the probable main source of the outbreak. At the end of August the Netherlands reported a serious outbreak of *Salmonella* Thompson. Smoked salmon was identified as the vehicle of the infection and all concerned smoked salmon products from one producer were recalled at the end of September. The products had been distributed in 11 countries including several third countries (RASFF notification 2012.1381). Overall, 1149 cases were reported in the Netherlands up to 31 December 2012.²



¹ http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications/Publications/20120921_RRA_Stanley_Salmonella.pdf

² Source: ECDC Food and Waterborne Diseases Programme – Urgent Inquiry Monthly Summary – January 2013

Four legal proposals by the Commission were adopted in relation to sprouts production and trade: Regulations (EU) No 208/2013, 209/2013, 210/2013 and 211/2013. Measures included the approval of establishments producing sprouted seeds, the mandatory washing of seeds before sprouting, as well as the introduction of microbiological criteria, including process hygiene criteria, for sprout production and microbiological criteria for seeds for sprouting or for human consumption.

Initiatives under preparation:

- inter-sectorial preparedness exercises on outbreak coordination;
- database for molecular testing, trainings under the better training for safer food programme;

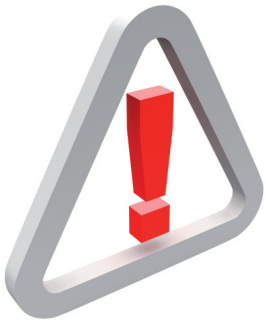
- developing coordinated mechanisms to carry out tracing back and tracing forward exercises at EU level with the technical support of the scientific agencies when required;
- coordination between EWRS and RASFF including a proposal for a Decision on serious cross border health threats providing specifically for better linkages between existing EU alert and notification systems.

Synergies between RASFF and EWRS will be enhanced in order to reach a consistent EU response. However, these synergies need to be continuously trained and, with this objective in mind, a table top crisis exercise is planned, with the participation of both EWRS and RASFF contacts.

CHAPTER 2

RASFF

in 2012



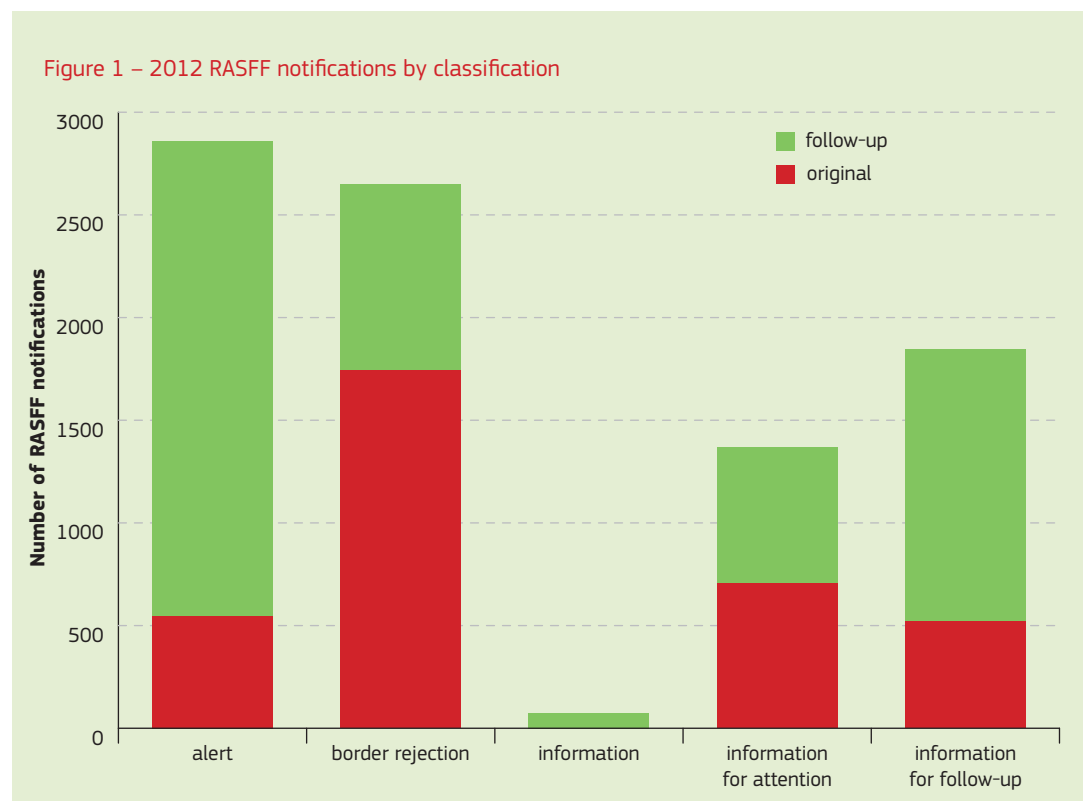
The year 2012 for RASFF was not just a year of reflection. There were several major food incidents spread throughout the year such as the outbreaks mentioned earlier. During each and every of these incidents, RASFF was working to the highest standards and was permanently reachable 24 hours a day / 7 days a week. A very serious incident was the methanol poisoning of spirits in the Czech Republic which caused severe human loss and suffering. The information on this incident was distributed through RASFF by the Czech Republic on 8 September 2012. Investigations into the traceability of the adulterated spirits showed that fortunately they were not widespread outside Czech Republic. Only in Poland and Slovakia cases were reported though sometimes after having travelled to Czech Republic. By early December 2012 the

total number of deaths related to this incident had risen to 36.

Overall, the notification numbers dropped, especially for alert notifications, for the first time after they had been on the rise for four consecutive years. This can only be good news for food safety, because, apart from the economic situation, there aren't really any other factors identifiable for this decline in notifications.

2.1 Notification numbers

In 2012, a total of 3516 **original notifications** were transmitted through the RASFF, of which 547 were classified as **alert**, 521 as **information** for follow-



up, 705 as information for attention and 1743 as border rejection notification. These original notifications gave rise to 5281 **follow-up** notifications, representing on average about 1.5 follow-ups per original notification.

These figures represent a 7.8% decrease in original notifications and less importantly, a 1.2% decrease in follow-up notifications; resulting in an overall decrease of 3.9%.

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 19 RASFF news sent together with 83 follow-ups.

After receipt of follow-up information, 21 alert, 35 information and 28 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 67 notifications onto the system since, after evaluation, they were found not to satisfy the criteria for a RASFF notification (**rejected notifications**).

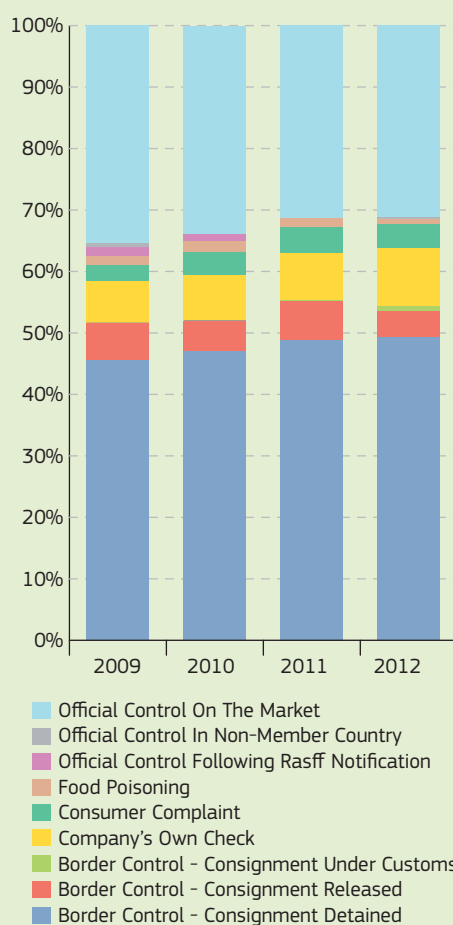
RASFF notifications are triggered by a variety of things. Most notifications concern controls at the outer EEA borders³ in points of entry or border inspection posts when the consignment was not accepted for import ("border control – consignment detained"). In some cases, a sample was taken for analysis 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 market⁴. 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 2012 there were five such notifications:

- 2012.0586 – *Listeria monocytogenes* (210 CFU/g) in raw milk sheep cheese coated with herbs from France – information provided by Canada

- 2012.0626 – unauthorised substance ractopamine (0.6 µg/kg – ppb) in chilled beef livers from Canada – information provided by Canada
- 2012.1078 – unauthorised substances clenbuterol (2.3 µg/kg – ppb) and phenylbutazone (1.3; 1.5; 1.0 µg/kg – ppb) in deboned horse meat from Canada – information provided by Canada
- 2012.1395 – *Listeria monocytogenes* (presence /25g) in ricotta cheese from Italy – information provided through INFOSAN
- 2012.1604 – foodborne outbreak (*Salmonella* Bredeney) caused by peanut butter and peanut-based products from the United States – information provided through INFOSAN

Figure 2 – 2012 RASFF notifications by notification basis



³ Since 2009, including Switzerland

⁴ Products placed on the market in one of the member countries including the EEA countries Norway, Liechtenstein and Iceland

CHAPTER 3

Focus on...

RASFF

3.1 Introduction

In 2012 RASFF had its 33rd anniversary and it is an ambitious thirty-something. These more-than-three-decades have brought about tremendous change, going from EEC to EU and from 9 to 31 member countries of the RASFF network. In those days, back in the beginning, information technology was just two words that had yet to be put together.

On the occasion of the celebration of the 30th anniversary of RASFF, a booklet of its history was published, giving a variety of details on the different milestones in the history of the EU and the challenges for food safety that shaped the RASFF into what it is today. This article aims to give an insight into the remaining challenges and what RASFF is doing to prepare itself in a rapidly evolving world.

3.2 Early days

Even if at the outset RASFF was created to report on “immediate and serious dangers” in relation to food, it was apparent from the start that it was used rather more broadly. As an example: a hazard described as “total volatile basic nitrogen” was quite common in its first year of existence, being reported in 5 out of 12 notifications, but then it only appeared twice in the rest of RASFF history, indeed in 2006 and in 2012. Volatile basic nitrogen is a measure of the freshness of the product – if too high it would indicate spoilage – and is at best thus to be considered an indirect health risk. It illustrates a practice that was later set into the framework of EU food legislation: RASFF can be used for direct or indirect health risks: therefore it has a very broad application.

In these early days, hazards weren’t always very well defined and there was no differentiation in seriousness or priority between the notifications. For example, a notification on botulism in tuna was transmitted next to a notification on “microbiological contamina-

tion of mushrooms”. It wasn’t always as clear whether it concerned a product that was on the market in one of the Member States or not. But of course, in the very early years, the number of notifications remained a very manageable average of around 10 and, not much later, 20 per year.

In 1992, with the publication of the Directive on General Product Safety (Council Directive 92/59/EEC) and the establishment of the internal market in Europe, the Rapid Alert System For Food (RASFF where the first “F” meant “for”) had a proper legal basis for the first time along with the rapid alert system for non-food products which was called RAPEX, making notification mandatory for a “serious and immediate risk” going beyond country borders. Ten years later RASFF went its own way again, with the adoption of the General Food Law, Regulation (EC) No 178/2002, after the European Community had gone through some of its most significant food safety crises such as BSE (mad cow disease) and dioxins in the food chain. This was the first time that RASFF was specifically mentioned as such in the legislation and is therefore often (mis) taken as the instigation date for RASFF. From then on the first “F” in RASFF stood for “Food” and the second stood for “Feed”. The General Food Law Regulation introduced important concepts such as placing the responsibility for ensuring food safety in the first place with the business operators. It also introduced requirements for traceability and the withdrawal or recall of unsafe products. It obliged business operators to inform authorities and authorities to inform consumers and of course also the RASFF. One of the main chapters of this Regulation is the establishment of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). It is important to note that EFSA was added as a member of RASFF from its inception, although so far it has not yet taken up a significant role in the system.

Towards the end of the nineties, the alert system really took off and grew exponentially for several years. Table 1 below shows the evolution of alert and information notifications (at first called non-alerts) in the

important timespan of ten years, between RASFF being taken up into the General Product Safety Directive and the setting up of the internal market in 1992 and in 2002, when the General Food Law entered into force.

Table 1 – RASFF notifications between 1992-2002

year	alerts	non-alerts
1992	10	1
1993	21	1
1994	19	3
1995	10	2
1996	16	3
1997	67	14
1998	74	156
1999	97	263
2000	133	341
2001	302	402
2002	429	1085

It should be kept in mind that the definitions of alert versus information notification were different than they are at present. There was no distinction between risk and serious risk as has been the case since 2008. Until then the differentiation between alert and information notification was based only on the distribution of the product concerned. The notification became alert if the product had been distributed to other Member States than the notifying country. If not, it was a “non-alert”, a notification about a risk found, but not intended to put other Member States “on alert”.

As a result of the Feed Hygiene Regulation, which entered into force in 2006, the scope of RASFF was extended from feed for food producing animals to all types of feed with the reported risks including animal health and environmental risks resulting from feed. Meanwhile the growth of the system had somewhat stabilised with a final boost having been given when 10 new Member States joined the EU in 2004 and integrated very well and quickly into the RASFF network.

3.3 Border rejections

Although the RASFF was never set up or intended to exchange information on rejections of consignments at the border, it was frequently used for this purpose

already early on but the notifications were not properly identified as resulting from border controls, only as “non-alert” and later “information” notifications. The failure of setting up an information system for border controls for products of animal origin (called “SWIFT”) around the turn of the century pushed RASFF further into taking this on board. For this reason, with the entry into force of RASFF’s own legal basis in the General Food Law in 2002, notifications of border rejections on account of a health risk became mandatory. Gradually these notifications took a larger part of the system and RASFF included specific information useful for border posts in carrying out (reinforced) controls but it was not until 2008 that border rejection notifications became a class of their own. Around the same time the tipping point was reached and more than 50% of the RASFF notifications were triggered by controls at the border. Because of the efficiency in improving targeted checks at the border, RASFF is even referred to as an “import alert system” by some. However, this would not be accurate since most of the work still goes into those notifications where serious risks are found on the EU market and the information from RASFF is vital for authorities to take immediate action, something that is not seen when merely counting the notifications.

3.4 RASFF News

From 2003, RASFF News items became numbered and listed in tables and reports. These RASFF News items existed already well before and were at the outset mainly used for administrative purposes: to announce changes in the system or in procedures. Gradually this evolved to include also food safety related information which is preliminary or insufficiently detailed to be a regular RASFF notification. Sources of information for RASFF News can be much wider than only members of the network and include media, consumer and international organisations, official authorities in third countries etc.

3.5 True alerts

In 2008, together with the new classification for border rejections, an important refinement was made to the alert notification classification. Up to then it was sufficient for a product in which a risk was identified to be distributed in other member countries than the notifying country for a notification to be classified as alert. In 2008 a condition was added for a serious risk to be present. The condition for the alert being that other member countries would need to take rapid action on account of a serious risk found in a pro-

duct that was on their market. Such rapid action will ensure that the consumer is protected and depends on the nature and seriousness of the risk. It can go from withdrawal from the shelves, to consumer recall and informing consumers through the media.

3.6 TRACES and reinforced checks

From 2009 onwards a link was made between TRACES, the TRAdE Control and Expert System introduced by Commission Decision 2004/292/EC, and RASFF. TRACES is a European network for veterinary health which notifies, certifies and monitors imports, exports and trade in animals and animal products. When border inspectors at a Border Inspection Post (BIP) reject a consignment from import, they need to enter details in TRACES including the reason for refusing entry to the EU. If the reason falls under the scope of RASFF, the inspector can add more information in a RASFF section and submit a RASFF notification to the National Contact Point (NCP) of RASFF from within TRACES.

In 2012, the system was extended with a module for reinforced checks (REC). Article 24 of Council Directive 97/78/EC lays down certain requirements for reinforced checking of consignments of products of animal origin presented for import at the EU border. If a consignment is refused entry into the EU because of a serious infringement or if repeated infringements are found, a REC regime⁵ can be triggered by the NCP submitting the RASFF notification to the European Commission RASFF contact point (ECCP). The REC can thus be validated by the ECCP together with the RASFF notification if one of the conditions in Article 24 of Council Directive 97/78/EC is fulfilled. This is the case if a serious risk is identified in the RASFF notification or if the ECCP identifies a recurrent hazard or operator in a particular exporting country. A triggered REC obliges BIPs to hold and sample the next ten consignments presented of the product concerned from the same origin (usually the same producing establishment). The consignments are only released for import when favourable analytical results are obtained. If all ten consignments produce favourable results, the REC is lifted. However, if one or more consignments produce unfavourable results, another series of ten consignments is started.

⁵ The detailed REC procedures are published at: http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/biosafety/animalbyproducts/guidance_article_24_1125_5_2012_en.pdf

3.7 Technologies

Technology is an enabler and it has enabled RASFF to expand and become a more powerful tool: starting off with telephone and telex, moving to fax in the nineties and to email in the 21st century. Notifications are still – partly – exchanged through an electronic template with attached scanned documents sent to the Commission via email. The Commission maintains a database and archive of the notifications. An online archive of the notifications on the CIRCA website allows members of the network to consult previous RASFF notifications.

This is how RASFF has been operating for more than a decade. Nevertheless, in the course of that decade a lot of effort was put into finding technologies that would make RASFF even more efficient. An online platform in which notifications could be posted in real-time and shared seemed the most straight-forward solution. It proved difficult because of the high demands put on such a system for speed and reliability. A RASFF notification is a complex collection of data to which a large number of parties need to contribute. There are several parties that need to validate the information before it is sent onwards. That is probably why the first new online tools for RASFF were tools where information can only be consulted: RASFF Window in 2008 for authorities and RASFF Portal in 2009 for the public.

3.7.1 RASFF Portal

RASFF Portal⁶, inaugurated on the occasion of the RASFF's 30th birthday celebration, opened up a lot of possibilities to anyone with an interest in RASFF and food safety in Europe in general. It provides an insight in what RASFF notifications were transmitted throughout the history of RASFF up to just the day before! A wealth of search criteria is available:

Using the *Subject* parameter is probably the fastest and easiest way to find what you are looking for in RASFF Portal. A product name, hazard found or a country of origin will all be picked up through a subject search. You can be more specific by limiting your results to one notifying country (*notified by field*) or selecting a specific time period (*Date* section). Other selection criteria groups include notification type, product and hazard related parameters. If you want to know more, try the help option on the top right menu in the application.

⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/rapidalert/rasff_portal_database_en.htm

Beware that you cannot look for commercial brands or operator names. These are not disclosed in RASFF Portal. RASFF Portal is not intended as a consumer alert tool. Other, more appropriate resources exist at the level of each country. In order to obtain a full traceability picture, many operators involved in different ways in a RASFF notification are stored in the RASFF database. Many of these bear no responsibility for the hazards or non-compliances found. Similarly, while the country of origin given is based on the traceability of the product, it does not suggest in any way that the hazards found originated there.

3.7.2 RASFF Window

The menu of RASFF Portal has a Log in command. Users with a username and password can log into RASFF Window. RASFF Window has a similar look and feel as RASFF Portal but is only available to officials in food and feed authorities and RASFF contact points. It serves as a library where fully detailed RASFF notifications can be downloaded from, both original and follow-up notifications. RASFF notifications shown in the RASFF portal are so-called “original notifications”, representing a new case reported on a health risk detected in one or more consignments of a food or feed. For these cases, control authorities transmit follow-up notifications on measures taken and outcome of investigations. These follow-up notifications do not appear in the RASFF portal database but are available in RASFF Window. Apart from this,

RASFF Window has an even more comprehensive set of search criteria.

3.7.3 Numbering notifications

Once the notification is verified and validated, the ECCP gives it a unique reference number. For Border Rejection notification the reference number is made up of the current year, followed by a dot and a sequence of three letters (2012.AAA, 2012.AAB etc.). Alert and information notifications are given a different type of reference number that has four numbers instead of three letters (e.g. 2012.0001). This way it is easy to distinguish between border rejections and so-called “market notifications”.

RASFF News items are given yet another reference number in order to distinguish them from notifications using the last two letters of the current year followed by a hyphen and three numbers (e.g. 12-600). Also, whereas the numbering sequence is reset every year for RASFF notifications, it is not for News items.

Follow-up notifications are entered under the same number as the original notification they are adding information to but appended with a hyphen, the letters “add” or “inf” and two digits. This applies to all types of notifications and News (e.g. 2012.AAA-add01, 2012.0001-add01, 12-600-add01, etc.). An “inf” type of follow-up does not represent a file (Acrobat PDF) but only text.

3.7.4 Content of notifications

Most notifications consist of documents, in the following order:

- Notification cover page, generated by the ECCP
- Notification form, based on a template (offline) or on information in iRASFF (online). In case of the offline version, a translation into English precedes the original form if necessary. In iRASFF or in bilingual notification forms, that translation is integrated in the original text.
- Accompanying documents, such as analytical reports, public warnings, commercial documents, health certificates etc. In the iRASFF-generated PDF file, these documents are attached as files to the PDF file (much like it is done in emails), and not as pages.

3.7.5 Finding RASFF notifications

All compiled PDF versions of the RASFF notifications are kept in a repository in DG SANCO from which they are published to the various stakeholders that consult them. The online tool CIRCA that has been used for about 12 years was decommissioned at the end of 2012 as the RASFF notifications' library. Its successor, RASFF Window, had already proven its value for informing third countries about RASFF notifications concerning them and will now be used as the main library for RASFF notifications for all official authorities. Business operators and citizens can continue to consult the RASFF Portal database.

iRASFF

With full implementation of iRASFF (see 3.8.2) by all member countries (Germany, Italy and Spain to follow in 2013), the RASFF Window and RASFF Portal platforms will be updated directly with information from iRASFF. Nevertheless, for a better understanding and overview of individual notifications with many or complex follow-up notifications, official authorities should consult the notifications in their native application iRASFF. Further performance enhancements of iRASFF and support and training of iRASFF users will be necessary.

3.7.6 Informing third countries through RASFF Window

The European Commission, through the RASFF team in DG SANCO informs a third country (a country that is not member of RASFF) of any RASFF notification in which the country in question is mentioned as being the origin of the product reported in the RASFF noti-



ication or when the product was exported to the third country in question.

Up to 2009, most third countries were informed of RASFF notifications through the European Commission's delegations in these countries, but this administrative procedure is not always sufficiently robust and fast.

Article 10 of Regulation (EC) 16/2011, states that "the Commission contact point shall establish contact with a designated single contact point in the third country, if any, with a view to reinforce communication, including through the use of information technology". With the arrival of RASFF Window, the Commission's RASFF team established a network of contact points in the authorities and embassies of most of these third countries. These contact points were given access to RASFF Window where they could find and download notifications concerning their country. Their specific login only allows them to download versions of the notifications for which their country is concerned. The ECCP edits the notification to remove recipient lists and commercial documents between operators in the EU when necessary and saves this version which is made accessible to the third country.

Currently, RASFF Window is used to inform 83 third countries directly through a contact point in the country and 25 third countries through the European Commission delegation in that country.

Third countries provide follow-up as well. They send follow-up information to the ECCP which converts the information into follow-up notifications and transmits them through the RASFF. More information can be found under heading 6.5 for figures on third country follow-ups transmitted.

3.8 Life-cycle of a RASFF notification

3.8.1 A new RASFF notification is born

After an inspection is conducted within a country and unfavourable results of the analysis are obtained, the

risk the findings present needs to be evaluated as well as the probability that the product may be present on the market of other member countries. Based on this evaluation, information for a RASFF notification needs to be collected and transmitted to the National Contact Point for RASFF (NCP). How the information is gathered, how the information flow goes, who evaluates and who makes the decision whether to notify to the ECCP or not may vary in every country and depends on the systems in place in each country. Nevertheless there are a lot of common elements to be considered by all members of RASFF in terms of the quality, speed and reliability of the RASFF notifications. Therefore the ECCP is preparing guidance for all RASFF contact points in the form of RASFF Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). These SOPs are expected to be published in 2013.

The basis for a RASFF notification may vary as well. Most frequently RASFF notifications arise from official checks on the market, not only for retail but also manufacturers, warehouses, wholesalers etc. Often checks performed at the border lead to a RASFF notification of a particular kind: a border rejection. In such case the consignment is not allowed into the EU and is either destroyed, re-dispatched to another destination (origin or non-EU destination) or transformed in such a way that the risk is eliminated. Nevertheless it is still important to inform RASFF because this ensures that all border posts are informed and forewarned in case other similar consignments are presented for import or if a re-dispatched consignment might try to enter via another border post. Border posts perform reinforced checks on subsequent consignments based on the RASFF notifications (see also heading 3.6).

Before submitting a notification to the ECCP, the NCP should verify the accuracy and completeness of the notification, should indicate whether it concerns a serious risk and propose a classification for the notification (alert, information for attention, information for follow-up or border rejection). Potential health risks have to be clearly identified and supported with arguments to show that notification falls within the scope of RASFF according to Article 50 of Regulation (EC) No 178/2002. The NCP indicates which countries should be flagged for attention or for follow-up. These are the countries that are in some way concerned by the notification as identified in the back- or forward traceability information available to the NCP. Countries that are flagged for follow-up are expected to provide follow-up to complete certain aspects of the notification.

When a NCP has information that complies with the criteria for submitting a notification through the RASFF, the notification must be drafted and sent as quickly as possible in accordance with Article 7 of the Regulation. The notification is submitted through the online iRASFF

platform to the ECCP (EC submitted status) where it is first verified by the ECCP and once validated, the notification becomes available immediately to all members of the network who can provide follow-up if necessary.

3.8.2 RASFF notification in iRASFF

The following information is stored in a structured way in iRASFF. The collection of information makes up the original RASFF notification. The following elements form part of this RASFF notification:

General information block

This block contains key information concerning the notification

General information	
Notification number	13945
Reference	
Current Status	EC Submitted
Notification type *	food
Notification basis *	official control on the market
Notification classification	alert notification
Notifying country	Bulgaria
Date of notification *	27/03/2013
INFOSAN (to be) informed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reason INFOSAN	

Risk block

Risk	
Serious risk	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Impact on	human health
Motivate serious risk	The mineral additives for athletes contains unauthorized medical product
Number of persons affected	
Type of illness/symptoms	
Hazards observed	

The risk block indicates the decision regarding the risk (serious or not serious), its impact and if necessary a motivation for the risk decision reached. If hazards were observed (rather than found through sampling and analysis) they can be described here as well.

Product block

Products	
Product: SUPER POWER	
Product category: dietetic foods, food supplements and fortified foods	
Product description	
+ name: SUPER POWER brand: HERKULES weight: 0.5 kg temperature: ambient	
Border control	
Sampling	
+ Sampling - date: 17/03/2013 place: wholesaler/storage	
+ Analysis - lab: Kreis Mettmann Chemische und Lebensmitteluntersuchungsabteilung no. of samples: 2 method: ICO 1002	
+ Hazard - hazard: anabolic steroid_testosterone result: 100.0/0.01g legislation: 178/2002 legal limit: -	
Product traceability	
+ Traceability - distribution status: information on distribution not (yet) available	
+ Consignment - consignment no.: L12030005 origin: United States certificate no.: 987455 date: 14/03/2013 CVEED: 987455 best before: 02/03/2014 total net weight: 1500 kg	
+ Operator - producer: Maive inc New York United States distribution to:	
+ Operator - wholesaler: energy shop Warszawa Poland distribution to:	
+ Operator - wholesaler: Euro Foods Group Ltd Sofia Bulgaria distribution to: Bosnia and Herzegovina	
Measures	

The lines preceded by a “+” are in fact expandable groups of information:

+ Sampling - date: 17/03/2013 place: wholesaler/storage
 - Analysis - lab: Kreis Mettmann Chemische und Lebensmitteluntersuchungsabteilung no. of samples: 2 method: ICO 1002

Laboratory	
Name *	Kreis Mettmann Chemische und Lebensmitteluntersuchungsabteilung
Street + nr	Düsseldorfer Str. 26
Location	Mettmann
Postal code	40822
Country *	Germany

Sample treatment / matrix:	
Analytical method(s)	ICO 1002
Number of samples	2
Counter analysis	none

+ Hazard - hazard: anabolic steroid_testosterone result: 100 / 0.01g legislation: 178/2002 legal limit: -

There are expandable groups of information on product description, analysis, hazard, consignment, operator and measure taken. In case the notification was triggered by a border control, an expandable border control section needs to be filled out:

Border control

- Border - BP: DPE Kapitan Andrevo type of check: targeted reason for inspection: Regulation 659/2009 Operator: Alican Bazaar Frankfurt Germany

Border post: DPE Kapitan Andrevo	
Type of check	targeted
Reason for inspection	Regulation 659/2009
Country of dispatch	Turkey
Country of destination	Germany

Consignee	
Name *	Alican Bazaar
Street + nr	Düsseldorferstr. 22
Location	Frankfurt
Postal code	60329
Country *	Germany
Approval/registration number	

Means of transport	
Transport type	Truck
Name	
Agency	

+ Container - number: 33567YT seal: CA3578

There are five main sections in the product block: product description, border control, sampling, product traceability and measures.

Additional information and attached documents blocks

At the bottom of the notification there are two information blocks that are important to ensure that all details can be found for official services to take appropriate action.

Additional information	
CP reference	
Organisation / ministry	Bulgarian Food Safety Agency
Contact person	bbb
Additional information	

The contact details ensure that anyone requiring more information can contact the person responsible for submitting the notification. The additional information field is a free text field in which all the required details giving context to the notification can be recounted. This can be vital in order to interpret the data given in the structured elements correctly.

Attached documents	
Type	File name
phytosanitary certificate	1364291269882.pdf
analytical report	1364284881951.pdf
CVED/CED	protokolofdestruction.docx

The attached documents section provide rich detail in the form of scanned or electronic documents obtained in the investigation or related to measures taken by the operator(s) or authorities.

3.9 Role of the European Commission

Regulation 178/2002 has appointed the European Commission as manager of the RASFF network. The Commission receives a RASFF notification through the National Contact Point (NCP) and makes certain that it is immediately relayed to all members of the network. The Commission also informs any third countries involved in the RASFF notification. For this purpose it develops and maintains technological solutions.

However, the Commission's role is not limited to this, it takes up its role of manager more broadly: it provides guidance to members of the network and verifies different aspects of the notifications such as data dictionaries used as well as whether the subject of the notification is within the scope of the RASFF, whether the notifications are sufficiently detailed and whether references to EU legislation are correct. For this purpose there is a daily and weekly review resulting in daily and weekly notification tables (reports) distributed to all members of the network.

In order to carry out all these tasks, the European Commission has a dedicated RASFF team in DG SANCO (European Commission Contact Point or ECCP). This team is furthermore responsible for the further development of the system and briefing their colleagues on important RASFF notifications and follow-ups coming in.

The ECCP can provide feedback to the NCP to improve on certain aspects of the notification, it can confirm or identify countries flagged for follow-up or for attention, it will check the NCP's decision about whether a serious risk is involved or not and it will verify the notification classification into alert, information or border rejection. If there is a doubt about the notification classification or decision regarding the risk, it will contact the NCP to come to an agreement about a final classification or risk decision. If the ECCP considers that the notification does not fall within the scope of RASFF or that it is insufficiently detailed to transmit, it will send a proposal for rejection to the NCP inviting it to present arguments as to why the notification would fall within the scope of RASFF or to supplement the notification with the required information. In case of unclear or lack of information, the ECCP might suspend the notification (with a request for additional information) to clarify unclear matters or to provide missing documents such as an analytical report. Both suspended and rejected notifications might be reactivated / rehabilitated if the NCP provides the correct or missing information.

The ECCP furthermore needs to ensure, prior to validating the notification, that it is in an understandable

language for all NCPs, or at least the essential information in it. This means that if a notification is sent in a different language than English, the ECCP ensures that it is (at least partially) translated in English. Short texts can often be translated by the ECCP or otherwise a formal request is made to the Commission's translation services. After validation, the Commission flags the countries involved in the notification for follow-up or for attention.



Follow-up notifications are provided in iRASFF by countries involved in the original notification. Within the follow-up notification, new countries may be added based on back- and forward traceability entered in the notification. Any of the previously mentioned information blocks can be updated or added to by way of a follow-up notification. The information sections that were edited in a follow-up are tagged with the flag of the country that provided the follow-up, the follow-up number and the follow-up notification status.



When all countries flagged for follow-up have added on the information they were requested or expected to provide, all flags are closed and notification is closed as well.

3.10 Conference of the National Contact Points of the RASFF – Strengthening collaboration between EU and non-EU countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea

The globalisation of food production and trade has increased the occurrence of cross-border incidents involving unsafe food. In view of the close commercial relation between the Mediterranean countries, Cyprus took the initiative to organize a meeting to strengthen cooperation regarding food safety between the countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea, the EU and the World Health Organization (WHO INFOSAN). A farther reaching goal was to examine the usefulness of a regional system that facilitates the timely exchange of information on unsafe food and feed distributed among the Mediterranean countries and the possibility and willingness of the participating countries to adopt it.

Towards achieving the above goals, a two-day conference was organised on 5 and 6 December 2012 in Paphos, Cyprus. In total 34 participants took part representing 12 countries, the European Commission and the World Health Organization (WHO INFOSAN). The countries that participated were: Cyprus, Greece, Malta, Italy, France, Spain, Albania, Croatia, Egypt, Algeria, Israel and Lebanon.

The functioning of RASFF was demonstrated both by the European Commission and EU Member States Cyprus, France and Greece. Mr Peter Embarek, programme manager for INFOSAN at WHO explained the functioning of INFOSAN. Presentations were also delivered by the representatives of Egypt and Israel regarding the management of information obtained from the RASFF. The participants discussed the benefits of a system such as RASFF and how to further improve the cooperation among all Mediterranean countries.

The conference concluded that a rapid information exchange in relation to unsafe food and feed among the Mediterranean countries is indeed a necessity. This need should be fulfilled in the frame of the existing multi-level cooperation between the Mediterranean countries. A key role is to be attributed to the INFOSAN network with its global reach to over 180 member countries.

Concretely, a working group will be composed of experts from all the Mediterranean countries so as to support non-EU countries who wish to enhance their own national level information exchange systems. This group will also endeavor to bring on board Mediterranean countries that have not participated in the conference.

The European Commission aims to provide assistance through the "Better Training for Safer Food" programme. In addition WHO offered technical support for the implementation of this initiative through INFOSAN.



CHAPTER 4

What was notified to RASFF in 2012: our selection

4.1 Food poisoning

Since 2008, the RASFF identifies those cases where food poisoning is reported in a RASFF notification. In 2012, 41 such cases were recorded, a decrease of 9 compared to 2011. Details are given in Table 2.

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 Table 2, also undesirable chemicals, the wrong composition of a food supplement or insufficient labelling not mentioning an allergenic substance can be the cause of food poisoning. In

Table 2, a food poisoning incident is called an outbreak when more than one person is involved. It is called a large outbreak if the symptoms reported in different geographical locations can be linked back to the same food. The table does not cover all outbreaks of food poisoning incidents that occurred in the EU in 2011. It does try to cover those incidents that led to a RASFF notification. It is possible that there were food poisoning incidents that were the basis of a RASFF notification that were not identified as such. It is also possible that an incident was not reported to RASFF because the product and outbreak had a local character and had no consequences for other RASFF members.

Table 2 – RASFF notifications on food poisoning in 2012

case no	date	reference	classification	notified by	subject	persons affected*	distribution
1	17-Jan-12	2012.0094	alert	Belgium	foodborne outbreak (Salmonella Oranienburg) caused by dried milk formula from Belgium	16	Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Congo (Brazzaville), Haiti, Mozambique and Russia
2	23-Jan-12	2012.0115	alert	Netherlands	too high content of vitamin D (926000 IU /g) in vitamine D drops from Belgium	1	Netherlands
3	2-Feb-12	2012.0169	information for attention	France	too high content of total volatile basic nitrogen (3111 mg/kg – ppm) in frozen rays (Raja Spp) from the United States	3	France
4	6-Feb-12	2012.0178	information for attention	Ireland	foodborne outbreak suspected to be caused by water melon from Brazil	2	Ireland and United Kingdom
5	10-Feb-12	2012.0221	alert	Norway	norovirus (genogroup I and II) in oysters from Ireland, via France	18	Austria, Denmark, Germany, Hong Kong, Italy, Russia and Switzerland
6	16-Feb-12	2012.0257	alert	Denmark	norovirus (5 samples positive for Norovirus genogroup I and II) in oysters from Ireland, via France	20	Belgium, Denmark, French Polynesia, Germany, Hong Kong, Italy, Netherlands, Russia and Sweden
7	23-Feb-12	12-671	news	Italy	suspicion of adverse reaction caused by mineral supplement drink from Austria	1**	Italy
8	24-Feb-12	2012.0297	alert	Norway	histamine (> 3500; 3380 mg/kg – ppm) in frozen skinless tuna steaks from Vietnam, via the Netherlands	1	Austria, Malta, Netherlands, Norway and Sweden

case no	date	reference	classification	notified by	subject	persons affected*	distribution
9	28-Feb-12	2012.0306	information for attention	Denmark	norovirus (presence) in oysters from Ireland, via the Netherlands	4	Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany and Norway
10	28-Feb-12	2012.0311	alert	Sweden	histamine (280 mg/kg – ppm) in frozen yellow fin tuna (<i>Thunnus albacares</i>) from Vietnam, via Belgium	12	Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Morocco, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland
11	1-Mar-12	2012.0322	alert	Spain	undeclared milk ingredient (lactoprotein > 25 mg/kg – ppm) in dark chocolate spread from Belgium	1	Andorra, France and Spain
12	14-Mar-12	2012.0391	alert	United Kingdom	histamine (1227 mg/kg – ppm) in cheddar cheese from the Netherlands	38	Italy, Sweden and United Kingdom
13	26-Mar-12	2012.0454	alert	Italy	sodium nitrite marketed as sorbitol from the United Kingdom	3 (†1)	Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Switzerland and United Kingdom
14	5-Apr-12	2012.0503	alert	Italy	undeclared milk ingredient (milk protein: 201.8 mg/kg – ppm) in dark chocolate from Italy	1	Italy and United Kingdom
15	6-Apr-12	2012.0507	alert	Italy	food poisoning suspected to be caused by semi-skimmed milk from Germany	1**	Italy
16	20-Apr-12	2012.0569	alert	Sweden	undeclared egg (possible presence) in frozen pancakes from Germany	1	Finland and Sweden
17	4-May-12	2012.0611	alert	Netherlands	high level of alkalinity (pH:14; 3% active chlorite solution) in sparkling mineral water from France, via Belgium	1	Netherlands
18	16-May-12	2012.0668	alert	Belgium	histamine (5300 mg/kg – ppm) in frozen tuna steaks from Indonesia, via the Netherlands	4	Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Latvia and Sweden
19	25-May-12	2012.0711	alert	Italy	<i>Salmonella</i> spp. (presence /25 g) in chilled stuffed meat product from Romania	3	Italy
20	12-Jun-12	2012.0802	alert	Denmark	undeclared mustard in curry sauce powder from Germany	1	Denmark, Faeroe Islands, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden
21	21-Jun-12	2012.0858	information for follow-up	Poland	suspicion of food poisoning (anaphylactic attack) caused by dietetic food product from the United Kingdom	1**	Poland
22	27-Jun-12	2012.0881	information for attention	Italy	histamine (27.4-253.2 mg/kg – ppm) in chilled tuna loins from Sri Lanka	2	Italy, Romania and Sri Lanka
23	28-Jun-12	2012.0894	alert	Belgium	suspicion of shigatoxin-producing <i>Escherichia coli</i> (O157:H7) in spicy minced meat from Belgium	1**	Belgium, Germany and Netherlands
24	3-Jul-12	2012.0913	alert	France	foodborne outbreak (histamine poisoning) caused by chilled tuna (<i>Thunnus albacares</i>) from Spain	large outbreak	France
25	10-Jul-12	2012.0960	alert	Belgium	histamine (1100; 5100; 5100; 4400; 3900; 80 mg/kg – ppm) in raw frozen tuna loins (<i>Thunnus albacares</i>) from Vietnam	20	Bahamas, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Faeroe Islands, Finland, France, Gibraltar, Hungary, Liberia, Malta, Marshall Islands, Netherlands, Norway, Singapore and Sweden
26	10-Jul-12	2012.0961	information for attention	Finland	unsuitable organoleptic characteristics of chilled yogurt from Estonia	2	Finland
27	19-Jul-12	2012.1027	information for attention	Denmark	histamine (> 1000; 2500; 3200; 2700; 2600; 4800; 4200; 2000; 3300; 4900 mg/kg – ppm) in chilled tuna loins from Spain	2	Denmark

case no	date	reference	classification	notified by	subject	persons affected*	distribution
28	25-Jul-12	2012.1059	alert	United Kingdom	Clostridium botulinum in olives from Italy	1	United Kingdom
29	10-Sep-12	12-684	news	Czech Republic	methanol in "on tap" liquor from unknown origin	†36	Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia
30	11-Sep-12	2012.1302	alert	France	foodborne outbreak suspected (Salmonella Dublin) to be caused by raw milk cheese from France	large outbreak	Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Nigeria, Norway, Spain and Sweden
31	12-Sep-12	2012.1304	alert	Austria	Salmonella group D (presence) in liquid egg white from France, via the United Kingdom	1	Austria, France, Germany, Italy and United Kingdom
32	24-Sep-12	2012.1358	information for attention	Italy	histamine (1904; 1490;1366; 1608; 1553 mg/kg – ppm) in chilled tuna fillet (Thunnus albacares) from Ecuador, via France	6	France, Italy and Switzerland
33	28-Sep-12	2012.1375	alert	Latvia	foodborne outbreak (histamine) caused by butterfish (Lepidocybium flavobrunneum) from Spain	42	Latvia
34	8-Oct-12	2012.1409	information for attention	Germany	foodborne outbreak caused by norovirus in frozen strawberries from China	11200	Canada, Denmark, Germany, Iceland, Netherlands, Poland, Russia and United Kingdom
35	27-Oct-12	2012.1503	alert	Netherlands	Diarrhoeic Shellfish Poisoning (DSP) toxins (Sum OA + PTX: 203.90; 175.30 µg/kg – ppb) in mussels (Mytilus edulis) from Ireland, packaged in the Netherlands	132	Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Switzerland and United Kingdom
36	16-Nov-12	2012.1602	alert	Germany	suspicion of ciguatera poisoning caused by fresh red snapper fillets (Lutjanus spp.) from India	6**	Czech Republic, Germany, Spain and United Kingdom
37	19-Nov-13	2012.160	alert	Commission services	foodborne outbreak (Salmonella Bredeney) caused by peanut butter and peanut-based products from the United States	41	France, Italy, Norway and United Kingdom
38	6-Dec-12	2012.1681	alert	Spain	undeclared peanut (label not declaring traces of nuts) in chocolate from Germany	1	Spain
39	19-Dec-12	2012.1748	alert	Netherlands	norovirus (3 out of 4 samples) in hollow oysters (Crassostrea gigas) from Ireland, dispatched from the Netherlands	59	Denmark
40	24-Dec-12	2012.1771	alert	Denmark	norovirus (genogroup I and II detected in 2 out of 3 samples) in oysters (Crassostrea Gigas) from France	15	Belgium, Hong Kong, Italy, Norway, Spain and Thailand

* 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

† number of persons that died

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

<p><i>foodborne outbreak (Salmonella Oranienburg) caused by dried milk formula from Belgium</i></p>	<p>case 1</p> <p>Food control services of the Irkutsk region in Russia reported 16 cases of salmonellosis due to consumption of dry infant formula manufactured in Belgium of which 13 cases were infants. An investigation in Belgium could not immediately identify the cause of the contamination. Until notification 2012.0929 in which the Netherlands reported <i>S. Oranienburg</i> in galacto oligo saccharide (GOS) from South Korea. It was soon established that the company producing the dried milk formula had indeed used this GOS as an ingredient. GOS was used as an ingredient in several “sensitive” products, intended for infants and medical patients, that are not heat treated before being sold to the consumer. It has been used in baby food and infant formula sold in the following countries: Belgium, China, France, Hong Kong, Netherlands, Norway, Peru, Taiwan, United Kingdom and the United States. The INFOSAN secretariat sent out an INFOSAN alert and assisted in coordinating with the third countries involved.</p>
<p><i>foodborne outbreak suspected to be caused by water melon from Brazil</i></p>	<p>case 4</p> <p>The same strain of <i>Salmonella Newport</i> was found in an Irish family as that identified in UK and German outbreaks in December 2011. The water melon consumed by the Irish family was from the same Brazilian supplier as identified in RASFF notification 2011.1837. In September 2012, a <i>Salmonella Newport</i> outbreak was also reported in the United States related to water melons grown there.</p>
<p><i>sodium nitrite marketed as sorbitol from the United Kingdom</i></p>	<p>case 13</p> <p>At a private doctor’s office, while administering sorbitol for the purpose of conducting food intolerance tests, patients reacted adversely to the treatment. One patient died while two others needed urgent treatment. The product administered turned out to be sodium nitrite instead of sorbitol. Immediately inquiries were made to determine if other incorrectly packaged products were placed on the market. None were found. The doctor had bought the product on the internet. The mistake may have occurred at the dispatching centre where products were packaged to order.</p>
<p><i>foodborne outbreak (histamine poisoning) caused by chilled tuna from Spain</i></p>	<p>case 24</p> <p>Various food poisoning incidents in households in different departments in France could eventually be linked to consumption of tuna with high histamine levels. Because the product is handled by distributors and respect of the cold chain is crucial, at first the manufacturer was not in the picture of the investigation. But when the cases could be traced back to the same batch of tuna produced, this changed. After investigation the Spanish competent authorities urged the producer to immediately establish HACCP plans in the production line and to comply with histamine sampling laid down in Regulation (EC) 2073/2005.</p>
<p><i>Clostridium botulinum in olives from Italy</i></p>	<p>case 28</p> <p>One person in the United Kingdom showing symptoms of botulism needed hospitalisation after consumption of olives from Italy. <i>Clostridium botulinum</i> type B toxin was detected in the product. After investigation, it was found that the controlling factors within the product i.e. pH, salt concentration and water activity were insufficient to prevent growth and toxin production of <i>Clostridium botulinum</i>. If <i>C. botulinum</i> spores are present within the product, this presents a serious risk to health if consumed.</p>
<p><i>methanol in “on tap” liquor from unknown origin</i></p>	<p>case 29</p> <p>On 8 September 2012 the Czech RASFF contact point submitted a RASFF News regarding methanol poisoning after consumption of “on tap” liquor sold in small shops and stands in the region around Ostrava. The product was unlabelled and supplied “in bulk” in plastic barrels. The origin of the product could not be identified. The case was under investigation by the police and by the customs administration. The public was immediately warned by the media and by local municipal offices. Three persons had died and another five became seriously ill. In the days that followed unfortunately more intoxications were reported and the death toll rose quickly. The levels of methanol were so high that the contamination could not have been caused by bad distillation but rather by deliberate adulteration. The public was urged not to consume any spirits as a precaution and to dispose of any liquor that could be contaminated. As more cases were reported, Czech authorities decided to take more drastic measures. Consumption of liquor with more than 20% alcohol was forbidden. Existing stocks of liquor were destroyed and replaced by new production bearing a new tax seal. Because people having stocks at home were still using them, some cases were reported even after the measures were implemented.</p>



*foodborne outbreak caused
by norovirus in frozen
strawberries from China*

case 34

On 30 September 2012, the German RASFF contact point reported an outbreak among children and teenagers of acute gastroenteritis occurred in 5 Eastern German Federal States. The outbreak was linked to the consumption of food in child care facilities and schools but the exact source of the disease was not yet known. For the purpose of the identification of the streams of goods and deliveries with relation to the outbreak of acute gastroenteritis in Eastern Germany, the State and Federal State ministries in Germany established a Task Force, as had been done during the EHEC outbreak in 2011, which investigated and coordinated the issue. The Federal, Federal State and local competent health and food surveillance authorities worked together to curb of the outbreak of acute gastroenteritis and identify the source of the diseases. At the federal level, these authorities were the Robert Koch Institute (RKI), the Federal Institute for risk assessment (BfR) and the Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety (BVL).

On 5 October, in a common press release by the BVL and the RKI, a batch of frozen strawberries from China was identified as the likely cause of the outbreak, based on epidemiological data analysed. From data on the patients' examinations, norovirus was put forward as the most likely vector of the disease. Although the findings were met with some scepticism at first by the Chinese authorities, INFOSAN was able to coordinate a fast and efficient information exchange with them allowing them to trace all batches of frozen strawberries from the same producer exported to the EU in 2012. The Chinese authorities questioned whether the contamination could have occurred in China because they could not find any norovirus in the products in China nor had any other incidents been reported about the frozen strawberries.

An official laboratory analysis performed in Saxony-Anhalt upon request by the Land Saxony finally produced evidence of a genogroup-II Norovirus in one 10 kg unopened package of the suspect frozen strawberries on 8 October 2012. As part of more detailed investigations, the RKI was able to evaluate a Norovirus sequence from the RNA of the suspect samples of frozen strawberries. The Norovirus RNA in this case was genotype I.3. This genotype was also detected in individual stool samples from Brandenburg, Saxony and Thuringia. This, together with the epidemiological studies contributed by the RKI, clarified the cause of the outbreak of acute vomiting and diarrhoea.

<p><i>suspicion of ciguatera poisoning caused by fresh red snapper fillets from India</i></p>	<p>case 36</p> <p>On 9 November 2012, several cases of illness (symptoms of nausea, diarrhoea, headache, painfully sensitive skin to hot or cold, reversed hot-cold sensations, itching, tickling or numb sensation in the mouth) were reported in Hamburg and Lower Saxony in Germany that are attributable to ciguatera poisoning following the consumption of red snapper. Ciguatera toxin and ciguatera (poisoning) are quite common in relation to fish caught in tropical waters. It is caused by eating certain reef fish whose flesh is contaminated with toxins originally produced by dinoflagellates that live in tropical and subtropical waters. These dinoflagellates adhere to coral, algae and seaweed, where they are eaten by herbivorous fish that in turn are eaten by larger carnivorous fish⁷.</p> <p>The importer in Germany indicated that the supplier in India could have exported the product also to the United Kingdom and to Spain but despite repeated requests, no information about these batches was obtained from the Indian authorities. Furthermore, the German contact point did not confirm finding ciguatera toxin in the fish.</p>
<p><i>foodborne outbreak (Salmonella Bredeney) caused by peanut butter and peanut-based products from the United States</i></p>	<p>case 37</p> <p>In the United States, a total of 41 persons infected with a strain of <i>Salmonella Bredeney</i> were reported in 20 states with onset of illness ranging from 14 June 2012 to 21 September 2012. Analysis conducted by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) linked this outbreak to one particular peanut processing facility. The company initiated a recall of peanut butter products and other nut butter products. More than 200 products were included in the recall and as they had potentially been distributed internationally, the US FDA notified government authorities in Australia, Canada, France, Hong Kong, Ireland, Italy, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway and the United Kingdom. The recalled products were also available for purchase on the internet. Because the implicated products in the USA outbreak are numerous with an extended shelf life (up to October 2013) and have been widely distributed, and given the inherent challenges associated with tracing internet sales, the INFOSAN Secretariat launched an INFOSAN alert sharing this information with INFOSAN members.⁸</p> <p>After receiving a request, FDA informed the ECCP that distribution details had been given to the individual countries. However the RASFF contact points did not receive any information and therefore could not follow-up on the issue. Also through INFOSAN no further follow-up had been received.</p>

4.2 Allergens in food

Allergens in food are covered by Directive 2003/89/EC as regards indication of the ingredients present in foodstuffs⁹. This Directive added a list of allergenic substances that are required to be mentioned on the labelling of food products if they are present in the ingredients. It laid down an EU-wide protection of consumers who suffered allergic reactions to substances that, for them, could be life-threatening.

In 2012 the total number of notifications on allergens submitted through the RASFF reached 104 which is a small decrease with regards to the year 2011 when 110 notifications were transmitted.

- 72 notifications were classified as alert notification, due to the fact that food products containing allergens not declared on the label, therefore posing a serious risk to consumers, were present on the market in the European Union.

- 26 notifications were classified as information for attention because, while the product posed a serious risk, it was not or no longer present on the EU market.
- 5 notifications were border rejections on products that were intercepted before they entered the EU market.
- 1 notification was transmitted as information for follow-up, for traces of gluten found in buckwheat flour, for which the levels found were considered not to pose a serious risk to consumer's health.

Figure 3 shows a marked increase in allergen notifications until 2007 after which the volume of notifications submitted to RASFF no longer increased significantly. The biggest contributor to RASFF notifications on allergens in 2012 was the United Kingdom and then Italy.

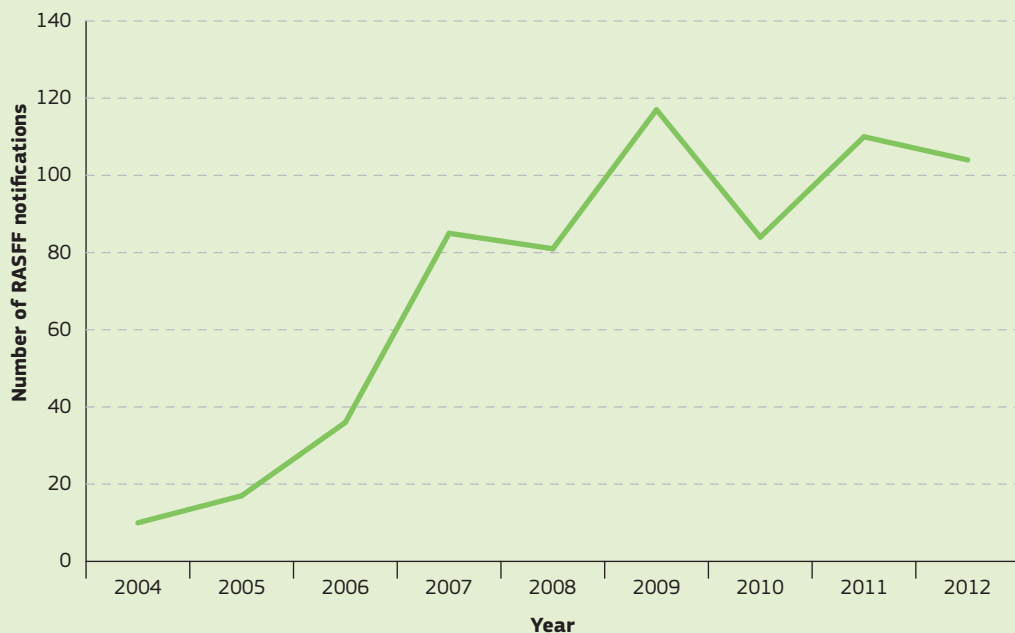
In 2012, undeclared milk ingredient was the most often notified allergen.

⁷ Source: Wikipedia

⁸ Source: information taken from the INFOSAN alert

⁹ OJ L 308, 25.11.2003, p. 15–18

Figure 3 – Evolution of RASFF notifications on allergens

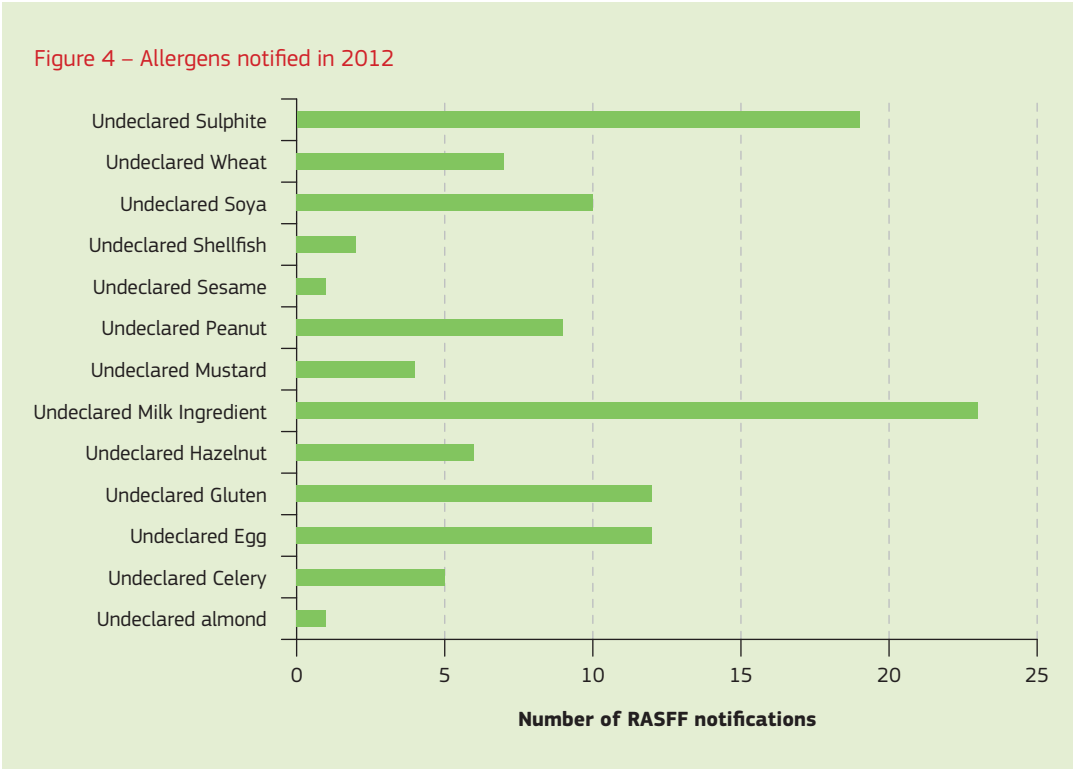


The second most often notified allergen was undeclared sulphite. The RASFF database makes a distinction between cases of undeclared sulphite, where the presence of sulphite is not mentioned on the label, and

cases of unauthorised or too high content of sulphite, where sulphite is added as a food additive. Of course, only “undeclared sulphite” is considered an allergen-type problem.



Figure 4 – Allergens notified in 2012



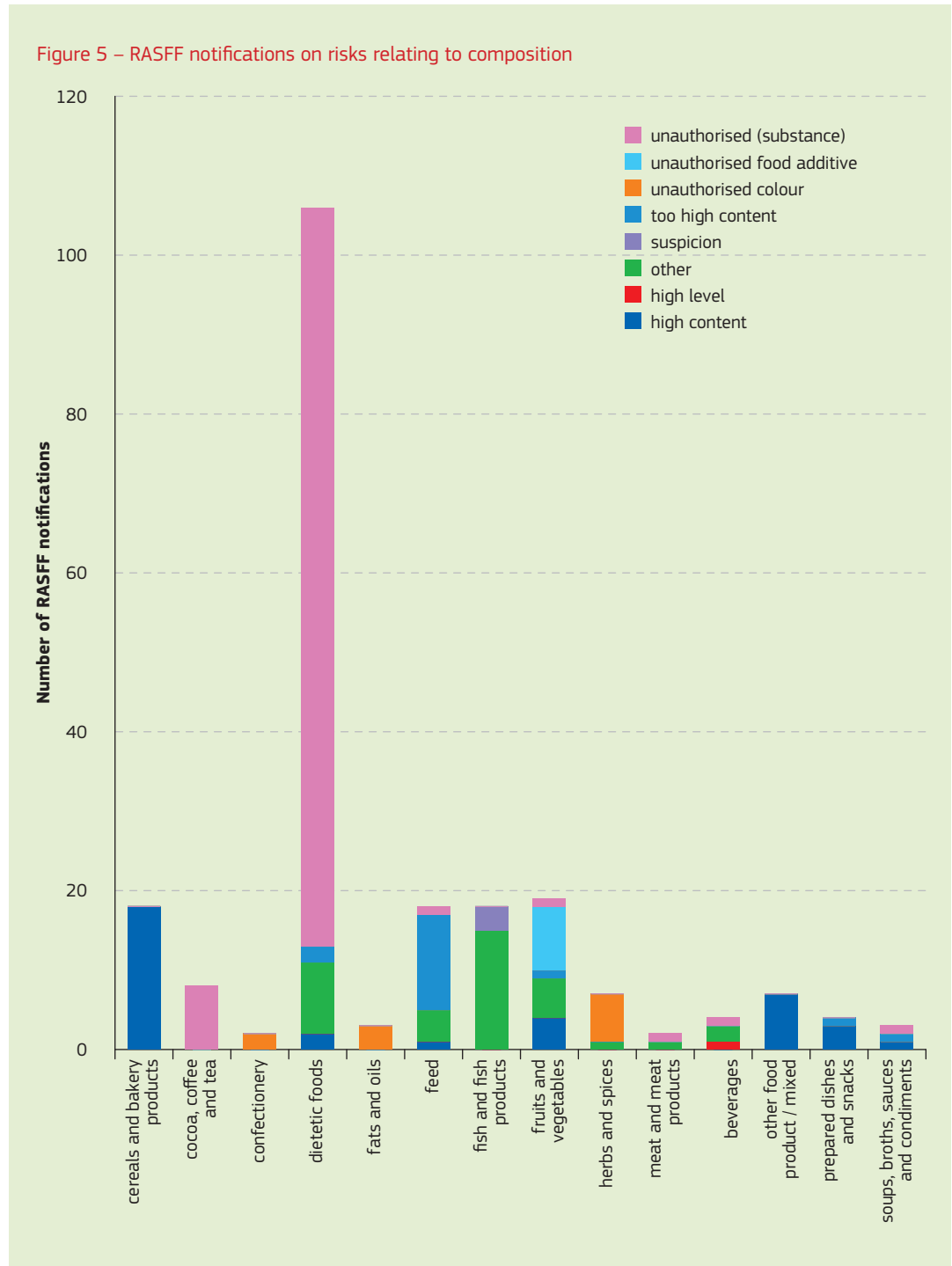
4.3 Composition of food

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. Figure 5

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.



Figure 5 – RASFF notifications on risks relating to composition



Consumers nowadays are keen to take food supplements as they might consider them to be part of a healthy lifestyle. They assume that these 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. Often these supplements do 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 chart below

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. The product reaches the consumers via the postal service, where goods are not subjected to the same comprehensive safety checks as at the border posts. 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 noodles ¹⁰ , still predominantly reported for China. In 2010, reinforced checks were established for aluminium in dried noodles from China through listing in Regulation (EC) No 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. This was used repeatedly for substances regulated in feed (see heading 4.9.6).
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 and carbon monoxide treatment. The unauthorised placing on the market concerns mainly dietetic foods containing plant extracts that were not authorised for placing on the market.
	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. When low levels of carbon monoxide are detected, it is not certain whether the levels correspond to a treatment or to the natural presence of carbon monoxide in the fish. Therefore levels between 50 and 200 ppb of carbon monoxide are notified as “suspicion of carbon monoxide”. It was reported 18 times in 2012.
unauthorised substance	This group concerns mainly food supplements containing substances that were not authorised for placing on the market. Although there are no specific rules about these at 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 31 notifications about novel foods and novel food ingredients in 2012.

The DMAA case

On 11 June 2012 the Swedish NCP submitted a notification on a food supplement containing the unauthorised active substance 1,3-dimethylamylamine (DMAA) to RASFF. DMAA is a central nervous system stimulant, related to amphetamine, for which a safe level for human consumption has not been established. The questioned product is mainly intended for people training at the gym as a pre-workout supplement or for those wanting to lose weight.

The Swedish NCP based its risk decision on the case of an athlete who suffered a cardiac arrest while working out at the gym. The patient had to have heart surgery at the hospital and later investigation revealed he had taken a supplement before the training that contained the afore-mentioned substance suspected of causing the incident. Food supplements containing DMAA often contain other stimulants like caffeine, which when not taken into account can cause side effects like rapid heartbeat, increased blood pressure, headache and nausea.

After circulating the RASFF notification through the system, Member countries started to notify their findings about the products. In total 36 notifications were created of which 29 were alerts. In 28 notifications the United States was the country of origin. Earlier that year, the US FDA had banned the use of DMAA in food supplements. It issued warning letters to ten manufacturers and distributors of food supplements containing DMAA, for marketing products for which evidence of the safety of the product had not been submitted to FDA.¹¹ Nevertheless, FDA did not react to a single RASFF notification even though the ECCP informed FDA of each of the 28 notifications of DMAA in food supplements manufactured in the United States.

In total, 40 commercial brands were identified to contain 1,3 dimethylamylamine as an ingredient and FBO were informed to withdraw the relevant products from the market. Difficulties in tracing the product were linked to the different wordings used on the label for the active ingredient (geranium extract, geranamine etc.) as well as the fact that it was sold over the internet. Once again it was apparent that consumers can effortlessly order food products over the internet which can be very harmful to their health. The challenge remains to authorities to control internet sales of food products in order to ensure that the products consumers buy are safe.

¹⁰ See chapter “Composition of food” in the RASFF annual report 2009 and 2011.

¹¹ FDA News Release of 27 April 2012, <http://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/PressAnnouncements/ucm302133.htm>

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, curry, curcuma or red palm oil was repealed in 2010 and replaced with a 20% sampling at import by addition in the list established by Regulation (EC) No 669/2009. There were still 5 notifications reporting Sudan dyes in spices (1 in palm oil) and three reporting Rhodamine. Considering the reduced number of non-compliances, Sudan dyes were removed from the listing in Regulation (EC) No 669/2009 from the second trimester of 2012.

4.4 Genetically modified food

Following the repeated RASFF notifications of genetically modified rice from China, unauthorised in the European market, the EU implemented a new Regulation concerning rice from China, replacing decision 2008/289/EC (Bt63 rice). Decision No. 2011/884/EU

which is in force since January 11th, 2012, requires systematic screening for genetic modifications of rice products from China that are intended for the European market. This explains the top ranking of GMO findings in the category cereals and bakery products from China in Table 3.



Table 3 – Categories and countries most notified for GMO in 2012

Product Category	Country Of Origin	# Of Notifications
Cereals And Bakery Products	China	39
Fruits And Vegetables	Thailand	10
Cereals And Bakery Products	Pakistan	5
Other Food Product / Mixed	China	2
Cereals And Bakery Products	Argentina	1
Cereals And Bakery Products	Czech Republic	1
Cereals And Bakery Products	Hungary	1
Cereals And Bakery Products	India	1

The ten notifications concerning Thailand were all for papaya and the 5 notifications on Pakistan concerned genetically modified basmati rice.

4.5 Mycotoxins

4.5.1 In general

In 2012, the number of mycotoxin notifications decreased significantly, which was due to a decrease in reported aflatoxin notifications (see Table 4).



Table 4 – Notifications on mycotoxins in food and feed

Hazard	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Aflatoxins	762	839	946	801	705	902	638	649	585	484
Deoxynivalenol (DON)					10	4	3	2	11	4
Fumonisin	15	14	2	15	9	2	1	3	4	4
Ochratoxin A	26	27	42	54	30	20	27	34	35	32
Patulin			6	7		3				
Zearalenone				1	6	2				4
Total mycotoxins	803	880	996	878	760	933	669	688	635	525

This decrease can mainly be explained by the significant decreases in notifications related to the presence of aflatoxins in certain products under reinforced check regime (see Table 5). On the other hand a significant increase of notifications on the presence of aflatoxins in dried figs from Turkey could be observed.

Table 5 – Aflatoxin notifications for certain products under reinforced checks regime

Product	Number of notifications in 2012	Number of notifications in 2011
Peanuts from India	88	133
Peanuts from Argentina	13	40
Pistachios from Iran	20	38
Pistachios from Turkey	13	41
Hazelnuts from Turkey	4	17
Spices from India	24	41
Dried figs from Turkey	135	75

The significant reduction of notifications on aflatoxins in peanuts, pistachios, spices and hazelnuts is reflected in the product category “Nuts, Nut Products and Seeds” (204 notifications in 2012 compared to 320 in 2011) and in the products category “Feed” (79 notifications

in 2012 compared to 119 in 2011) in Table 6. The significant increase of aflatoxin notifications in the product category “Fruits and vegetables” in 2012 (137 notifications) compared to 2011 (78 notifications) is due to the notifications on aflatoxins in dried figs from Turkey.

Table 6 – 2012 RASFF notifications on mycotoxins by product category

Product Category	Aflatoxins	Deoxynivalenol (DON)	Fumonisin	Ochratoxin A	Zearalenone
Cereals And Bakery Products	17	4	4	6	3
Confectionery	7			1	
Feed	79				
Fruits And Vegetables	137			19	1
Herbs And Spices	33			4	
Milk And Milk Products	5				
Nuts, Nut Products And Seeds	204				
Prepared Dishes And Snacks	2			2	
Total	484	4	4	32	4

Noteworthy are the 5 notifications on aflatoxin M1 in milk at levels above the maximum level of 0.05 µg/kg. Notifications previous to 2012 date back as far as 2007. The 5 notifications in 2012 are related to an increased prevalence of aflatoxins in maize from the European region, used for animal feed (see 4.9.2). The aflatoxin B1 present in feed is transferred to milk as aflatoxin M1. Particularly in 2012, the South-East of Europe has been affected by a very severe drought during the growing season of maize, resulting in an increased prevalence of aflatoxins in maize from that region.

4.5.2 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.

- a) 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/EC¹² This Regulation has been amended in 2012 whereby the frequency of controls on hazelnuts from Turkey has been decreased from 10% to 5%
 - 20% on peanuts from China (58 notifications)

- 50% on pistachios from Iran (20 notifications)
- 50% on pistachios from Turkey (13 notifications)
- 20% on dried figs from Turkey (135 notifications)
- 10% on hazelnuts from Turkey (4 notifications)
- 20% on peanuts from Egypt (8 notifications)
- random control on almonds from the US (5 notifications)

- b) 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/EC¹³ 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 2012, such controls, resulting in a significant number of notifications via the RASFF, were in place for:

- 10% on peanuts from Brazil (10 notifications)
- 20% on peanuts from India (88 notifications)
- 20% on spices from India (24 notifications)
- 50% on watermelon seeds from Nigeria (11 notifications)

¹² OJ L 313, 28.11.2009, p. 40

¹³ OJ L 194, 25.7.2009, p. 11

4.5.3 Ochratoxin A

32 notifications related to the unacceptable presence of ochratoxin A .

There were 19 notifications for ochratoxin A in the category “Fruits and vegetables”: mainly dried vine fruit from Afghanistan (5 notifications), Uzbekistan (6 notifications) and Turkey (2 notifications and 2 notifications on dried figs). Dried vine fruit from Uzbekistan was already subject to 50% control frequency at import by Regulation (EC) 669/2009 in 2012 while dried vine fruit from Afghanistan is subject to a 50% control frequency as from 1 January 2013.

Despite reinforced checks set up in Regulation 669/2009, only 1 notification was submitted regarding ochratoxin A in paprika from Peru and therefore reinforced checks on paprika in Peru were no longer required as from 1 January 2013.

Furthermore, in 2012 there were 2 notifications on the presence of high levels of ochratoxin A in liquorice, while notifications previous to 2012 date back as far as 2007.

4.6 Pathogenic micro-organisms

Compared to 2011, there were more notifications on bivalve molluscs and cephalopods, mainly due to an increase in *Salmonella* and norovirus notifications (see



Figure 6) in oysters and *Escherichia coli* counts above the food safety criterion for live mussels and clams.

The increase in *Salmonella* notifications in Figure 6 is entirely due to repeated findings of *Salmonella* in frozen squid from Indonesia (14 notifications), almost all reported by Italy regarding the same operator. After this series the operator fell under the new reinforced checks regime set up in TRACES, as explained in heading 3.6. After ten favourable checks on ten consignments presented for import, the reinforced checks regime was lifted.

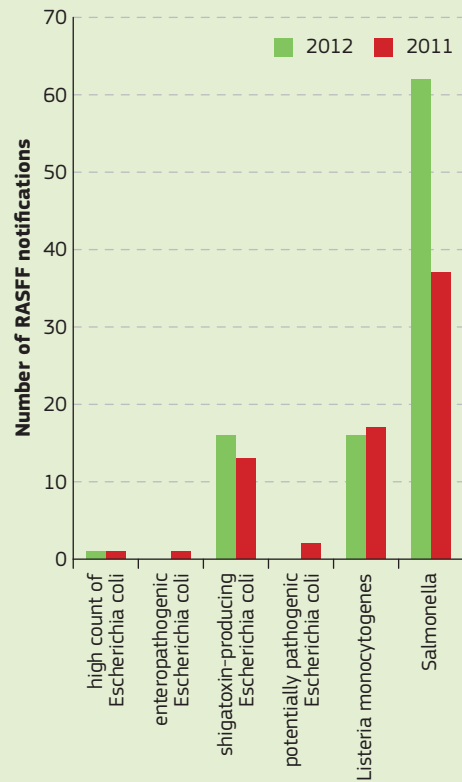
Also in meat, other than poultry meat, notifications regarding pathogens were on the rise in 2012, most distinctively in relation to *Salmonella* (see Figure 7). This is due to an increase in notifications from Sweden, almost entirely on fresh meat deriving from Member States, for which Sweden enjoys special guarantees under Commission Regulation (EC) No 1688/2005¹⁴.

As for poultry meat, the notification numbers increased from 42 in 2011 to 54 in 2012. Most likely the increase in notifications in 2012 was fuelled by the introduction of a *Salmonella* food safety criterion in fresh poultry on 1 December 2011. As concerns pathogens in fish, the notification number has fallen back dramatically for *Listeria monocytogenes*, from 60 in 2011 to 22 in 2012 and this pathogen is practically the only one reported for fish, mostly in salmon and trout. However, there were an additional 20 notifications, all border rejections, made for non-pathogenic microbial growth, mostly in canned tuna from Thailand. This is nonetheless worrying and was considered serious because such contamination could indicate a risk for botulism in this kind of product. The Thai authorities have reported back on measures taken at the producing establishments, after which notifications on this problem stopped.



¹⁴ OJ L 271, 15.10.2005, p. 17–28

Figure 7 – Pathogens in meat and meat products other than poultry



For products of non-animal origin, notification numbers decreased in 2012, with the exception for the category nuts, nut products and seeds, for which 20 notifications were received on *Salmonella*, almost

all border rejections, on various nuts, seeds and products derived thereof.

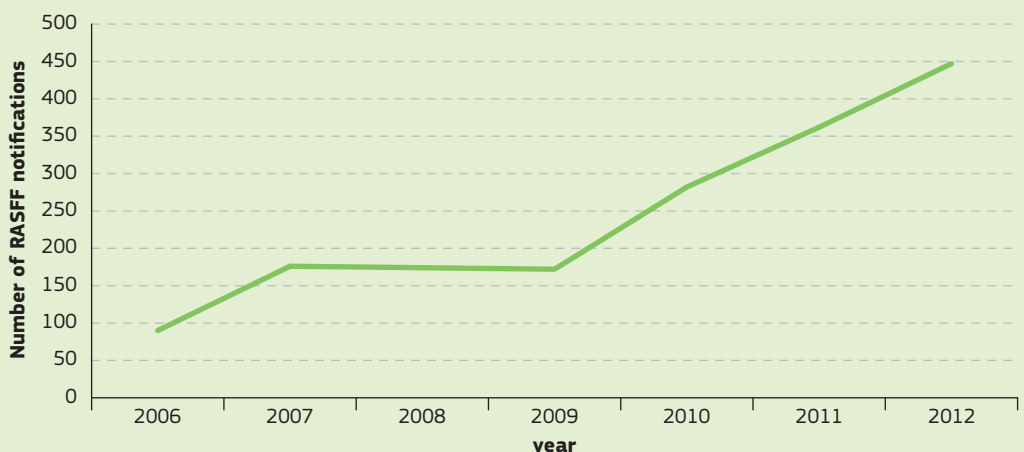
4.7 Pesticide residues

In 2012, for the third year in a row, there has been a sharp increase in RASFF notifications about pesticide residues (see Figure 8). 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 446 notifications for pesticide residues in 2012, only 34 were reported for food or feed originating from within the EU. Although the monitoring of the market remains intensive, there are more controls now on imported products 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.

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.

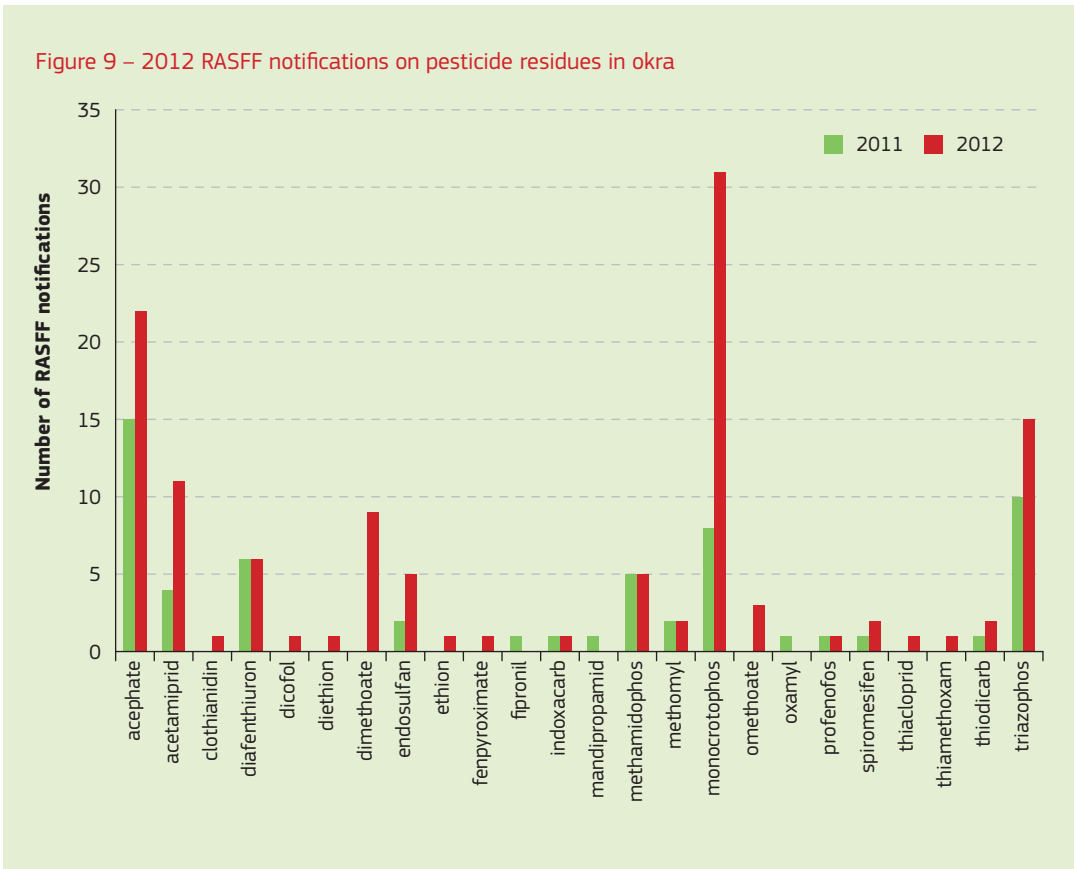
No less than 77 notifications concerned okra from India which was included on the list of reinforced controls in 2011¹⁵. Various residues are found on this product, often several in one sample. Most occurring are **monocrotophos** (31), **acephate** (22) and **triazophos** (15). Another frequently notified

Figure 8 – 2012 RASFF notifications on pesticide residues



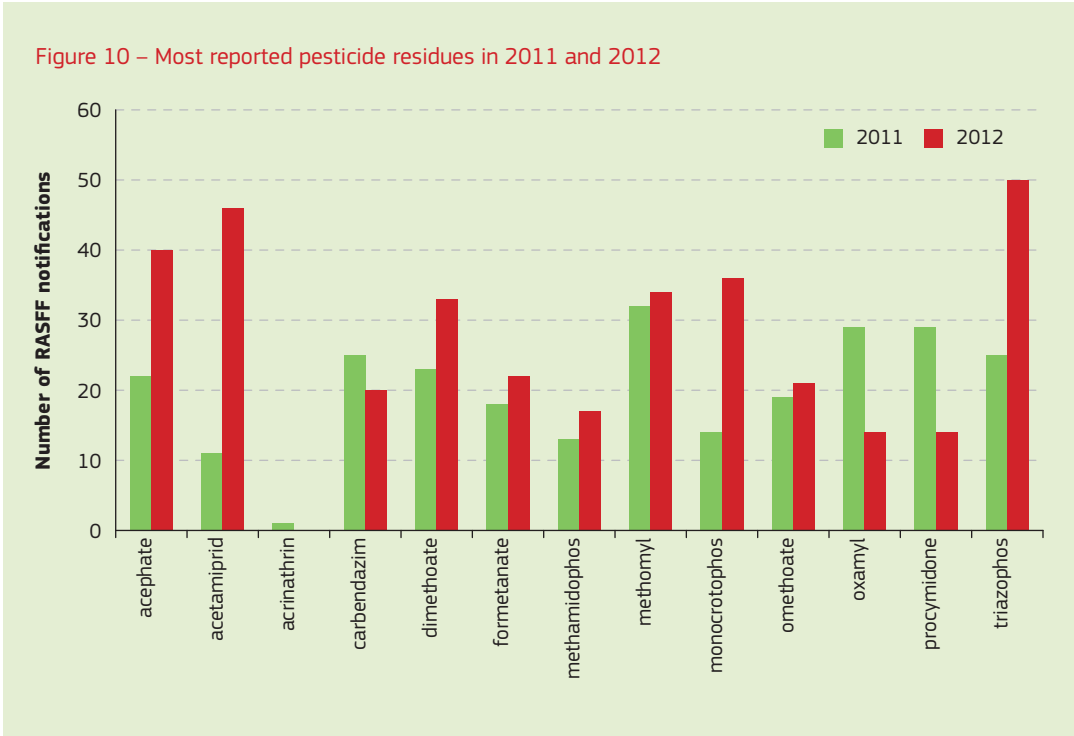
¹⁵ See RASFF annual report 2011

Figure 9 – 2012 RASFF notifications on pesticide residues in okra



commodity is curry leaves, also from India, which were added to the list of reinforced controls in 2010. Twenty-one notifications out of the 41 reported in 2012 contained triazophos, some of which with extremely high levels.

Figure 10 – Most reported pesticide residues in 2011 and 2012





Triazophos was the most reported substance in 2012 (double compared to 2011, see Figure 10 – Most reported pesticide residues in 2011 and 2012), which is of concern considering its very high acute toxicity. Next on the list is **acetamiprid**, also found on okra and curry leaves as well as **acephate** and **monocrotophos**. In fact all active substances shown in Figure 10 feature on the list of most reported because of their presence in okra or on curry leaves. This is because there are often a whole plethora of residues found on these two commodities: on average 2.5 substances per notification up to 11 substances in one single notification, which can be credited to the multi-residue method that uncovers a whole range of substances used on these products. It could be an indication for the country of origin to review and/or enforce its policy for pesticides use by farmers. What is certain is that such pesticide cocktails should be avoided whenever possible, considering that scientists are not yet fully able to estimate the risk these present to consumers' health.

Produce from Turkey was reported 60 times, mostly for fresh peppers of which 22 notifications reported too high levels of **formetanate**. China was identified 58 times as the origin of products with too high pesticide residue levels, especially for tea in 33 border

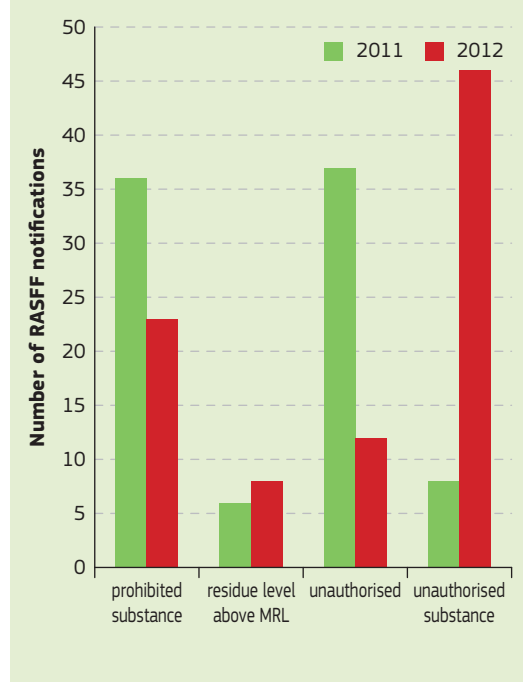
rejections in which often a whole cocktail of residues is found, including the very toxic **triazophos**. Pesticide residues found on various fresh produce such as green beans, (chilli) peppers, aubergines and oranges from the Dominican Republic led to 32 notifications but most reporting only single active substances. For produce from Egypt, there were 26 notifications, especially on oranges and strawberries. Various fruits and vegetables from Thailand found in non-compliance led to 24 RASFF notifications. There were repeated findings of the banned substance **dichlorvos** in beans and bean flour from Nigeria.

For more than a decade, RASFF members have been using a DG SANCO guidance document to assess the risk posed by residues due to excessive use of pesticides and to decide whether or not a RASFF notification is appropriate. Therefore the MRLs may be exceeded more than is reported in RASFF. A more complete overview of the situation regarding pesticide residues in the EU is given in the 2010 European Union Report on Pesticide Residues in Food¹⁶. Unfortunately such publications are coming out a few years after the facts they are reporting on and are therefore less useful as an input into reinforced border checks such as those set up by way of Regulation (EC) No. 669/2009.

¹⁶ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/3130.htm>

4.8 Residues of veterinary medicinal products

Figure 11 – Residues of veterinary medicinal products in food reported to RASFF in 2011-2012



RASFF notifications for residues of veterinary medicinal products can be divided into the following groups, depending on the “legal status” of the substance detected:

4.8.1 Prohibited substances

These are substances that have been explicitly forbidden for use as or in veterinary medicines. Therefore there should be no trace of them in foods. Nonetheless for several of these substances, so-called “Reference Points for Action (RPA)” have been established. Only above this limit is action required, therefore it is not necessary to submit a RASFF notification when finding such a substance at a level below the RPA, which is an extremely low level and should therefore not be confused with a legal limit.

There were only 13 notifications on nitrofurans metabolites in 2012 as compared to 21 in 2011. Notifications concerned mainly shrimps from India. Ten notifications reported on chloramphenicol with 7 of them concerning casings that were imported from China. However, it was found that the casings did not originate from China, but from Denmark and were sent there for processing after which they were returned to Denmark.

4.8.2 Unauthorised substances

Unauthorised substances differ from the substances referred to above in that they were not explicitly banned in legislation. Only, these substances cannot be used in veterinary medicines unless an authorisation has been applied for and granted. The substances in this case have not been authorised for use in veterinary medicines and therefore also no trace of these substances should be present in foods.

Unauthorised substances were reported 46 times in 2012 as compared to 8 times in 2011. Most reported was the anticoccidial substance clodolol in poultry meat from Brazil (34 notifications, all but one were border rejections). The new system of harmonised reinforced checks (REC, see heading 3.6) via TRACES ensured that batches from the Brazilian exporters concerned were undergoing systematic checks until the problems were resolved.

Five notifications were reported on phenylbutazone in horse carcasses sent from the same slaughterhouse in the United Kingdom to France. In one notification Belgium had found traces of clenbuterol and phenylbutazone in horse meat from Canada. Another notification was triggered by Canada informing the Belgian authorities that the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) detected traces of ractopamine in bovine livers exported to the EU. Ractopamine is allowed to be added to feed in Canada but not in the EU. Canada makes certain that EU legislation is respected for products exported to the EU but occasionally mistakes do occur. Other substances found were leucomalachite green and crystal violet in trout from different origins and leucocrystal violet in catfish from Indonesia. Indonesia reported that they would ensure that this anti-fungal substance would cease to be used in the ponds.



4.8.3 Residue level above MRL

For many substances legislation has set maximum residues limits (MRL) in tissues of certain animal species. Often these substances are added to feed and withdrawal periods need to be respected prior to slaughter, in which administration of the medicated feed is stopped, to ensure that the medicinal substances will be sufficiently metabolised in the animal and no residues are left in the food or at least not above the MRL. Not many notifications concern excesses of MRL and often the problem is reported in chicken meat. Some substances even have a dual use as pesticide and veterinary medicinal product. In such case the risk assessment body and legislator need to take this into account when setting the MRL.

4.8.4 Unauthorised

Substances in the group “unauthorised” are substances that are authorised for a particular use in certain animals but not in all. MRLs are established for tissues from these animals. If no MRLs are established for certain animals then the use of the substances on these animals is not authorised. In products derived from these animals, no residues are permitted.

In 2012, notifications on such substances decreased significantly due to much fewer notifications on ivermectin in beef from Brazil. In 2011 there had been 30 notifications on this problem¹⁷. Other notifications concerned mostly sulphonamides, 3 in honey from Poland and 1 in honey from Mexico. In the context of the bee health problems, application of veterinary medicines has become more frequent, however no MRLs have been established for residues in honey.

4.9 Feed

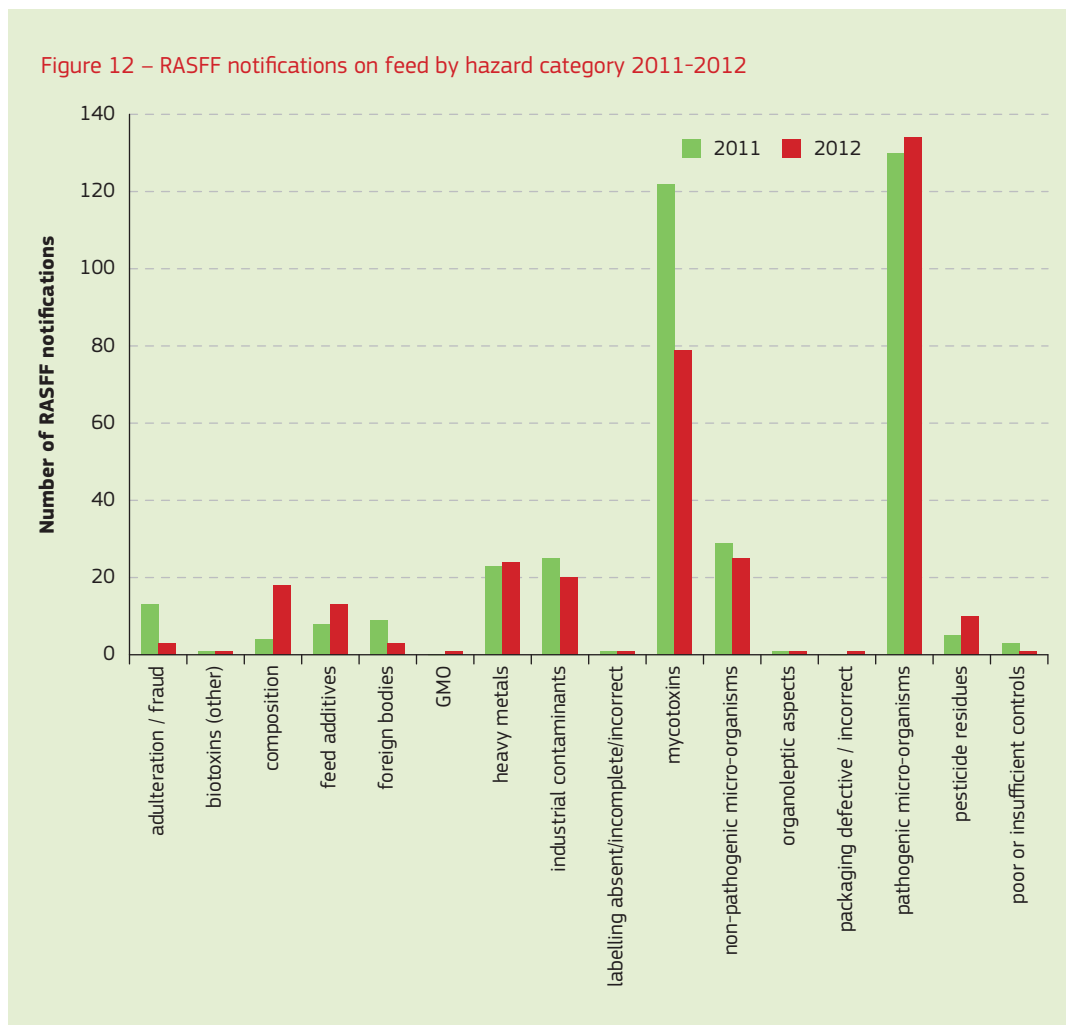
Out of the 3432 original notifications transmitted in RASFF in 2012, 326 concerned feed, about 9.5% of the total, slightly less than in 2011 but still a consolidation of the higher proportion of feed notifications observed since 2011.

Notifications concerning feed are predominantly notified for pathogenic micro-organisms and for mycotoxins; other areas of notification in decreasing order of importance are: non-pathogenic micro-organisms, heavy metals, industrial contaminants, composition and feed additives.



¹⁷ For more info on ivermectin: see the RASFF annual report 2010, page 21

Figure 12 – RASFF notifications on feed by hazard category 2011-2012



4.9.1 Pathogenic micro-organisms

The pathogens notified in feed are all *Salmonella* serovars. Since microbiological criteria are not set for *Salmonella* in the EU legislation, notifications are based on national criteria or case-by-case risk assessments. For animal by-products, a criterion is set in Regulation (EU) No 142/2011 of absence of *Salmonella* in 25 grams.

4.9.2 Mycotoxins

The repeated notifications of aflatoxins in groundnuts from India continued into the first months of 2012 but then plummeted even though reinforced border checks were in place imposing the sampling of 20% of consignments presented for import. At the end of 2012 the first notifications arrived on consignments of maize with high levels of aflatoxins from countries from South-East Europe. These notifications continued

on in the first months of 2013 and concern often very large quantities as whole shiploads are being intercepted. The high prevalence of aflatoxins in maize of the harvest 2012 from that region is the consequence of a severe drought during the growing season, making the maize plant very vulnerable for infection by *Aspergillus sp.*, the fungus which produces aflatoxins. Aflatoxins were also detected in sunflower seeds mainly from Egypt and in cotton seeds from Greece.

4.9.3 Non-pathogenic micro-organisms

Most of the 25 notifications concern too high counts of Enterobacteriaceae in animal by-products that are often processed to be used in pet food. Regulation (EU) No 142/2011 sets a criterion of 300 CFU/g. The other three notifications concerned feed materials infested with moulds.

4.9.4 Heavy metals

The notifications of arsenic in canned pet food from Thailand continued in 2012¹⁸ with 6 more notifications. Also levels of mercury were too high in 4 notifications on arsenic in pet food. The canned pet food contains a significant proportion of fish, other aquatic animals and products derived thereof and/or seaweed meal. These feed materials 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. It was therefore appropriate to modify the ML of arsenic applicable to complementary and complete feed for pet animals, containing fish, other aquatic animals and products derived thereof and/or seaweed meal by Commission Regulation (EU) No 744/2012 of 16 August 2012 amending Annexes I and II to Directive 2002/32/EC¹⁹. But arsenic levels above the legal limit set in the legislation were also reported in 10 other notifications concerning different products such as mineral feed but also sunflower meal and complementary feed for shrimps.

There were 4 notifications on cadmium, 2 showing relatively high levels in zinc sulphate from China but not to the extent that it would cause a serious risk to human or animal health. Lead was reported three times, twice in combination with arsenic in mineral feed and sunflower meal and once in a bolus for cattle at 343 mg/kg. The high level found was related to the very high level of lead in the coating of the bolus (2600 mg/kg) while the content of the bolus did not contain more than 12.4 mg/kg lead. The high level of lead in the coating was due to the use of a wrong pigment, containing lead chromate, in the production of the bolus resin coating. While this level of lead is unacceptable, a risk assessment confirmed that there is little risk to animals or consumers due to the slow release of lead over an extended period of time.

4.9.5 Industrial contaminants

Very diverse products such as vitamins, spirulina, vegetable fats (2), copper sulphate (2), fish meal (3), capsanthin, marigold powder, bile salts, alfalfa and picking stones for pigeons (3) exceeding the dioxins limit were reported 17 times in total. In all cases the levels detected were very low but the limit for dioxins in feed is set even lower. The finding of dioxins

above the maximum level in capsanthin, marigold powder and alfalfa was due to inappropriate drying processes. The case of the picking stone for pigeons received as many as 44 follow-ups because of the distribution of small quantities of the product in many retail establishments in 36 countries. One of the ingredients of the picking stones was clay, which was the source of the contamination with dioxins. Another ingredient, milled roof tiles, turned out to be contaminated with lead.

Three notifications were made on levels of melamine in dog food above the maximum level. The investigations confirmed that melamine can migrate in wet pet food from the can coating at a level above 2.5 mg/kg relative to a feed with a moisture content of 12% but below the Specific Migration Limit (SML) of 2.5 mg/kg in the wet pet food. It is appropriate to establish the maximum level of 2.5 mg/kg for melamine for canned wet pet food on an "as sold" basis by Commission Regulation (EU) No 107/2013 of 5 February 2013 amending Annex I to Directive 2002/32/EC²⁰ and this in line with what is foreseen for canned food.

4.9.6 Composition

Three notifications reported on excessive levels of free gossypol in cotton seeds from Brazil. Gossypol is a phenol naturally present in the cotton plant. Only the "free" form of gossypol is toxic to animals, not when it is bound to proteins. Ruminants such as cattle and sheep can tolerate higher levels of free gossypol than other animals because gossypol binds to proteins in the rumen.

Denmark reported 4 notifications on an excessive content of ragweed seeds in feed for wild birds. Ragweed (*Ambrosia spp*) is an invasive species originating from North America. Bird feed may be an important means of ragweed dispersal, as it often contains significant quantities of unprocessed seeds of ragweed. Therefore, maximum levels have been introduced for the presence of ragweed seeds to attenuate the further dispersal of ragweed in the European Union. Ragweed is of public health concern due to the allergenic properties of their pollen and the long flowering period. Denmark also reported the finding of an excessive content of thorn-apple (*Datura stramonium*) seeds in sunflower seeds intended for bird feed.

¹⁸ See RASFF annual report 2011

¹⁹ OJ L219, 17.8.2002, p. 5

²⁰ OJ L35, 6.2.2013, p. 1

4.9.7 Feed additives

Salinomycin was reported twice at excessive levels in feed for poultry and twice in feed for rabbits, in which it is unauthorised. Also levels of unauthorised additives narasin and lasalocid-sodium were reported in feed for turkeys. All these cases were probably due to cross-contamination at a higher level than what is achievable by applying good practices.

Furthermore antibiotics that are unauthorised as feed additives were reported: chlortetracycline (2), oxytetracycline and bacitracin. Amoxicillin, oxytetracycline, doxycycline, norfloxacin, florfenicol, thiamphenicol, flumequine and the prohibited substance chloramphenicol were reported all together in feed for ornamental shrimps from Singapore.

4.9.10 Didecyl dimethyl ammonium chloride (DDAC) in feed premixtures

There were three notifications in the first half of July 2012 in which very high levels of DDAC were reported in feed premixtures. DDAC is a quaternary ammonium

compound, which in the EU is both authorised as a plant protection product in ornamental crops and as biocide for disinfection. It is however not authorised to add DDAC to food or to feed. Given the very high level found it is evident that the source of contamination in feed is not related to cross-contamination but to the fraudulent addition by a company in Spain of relatively high concentrations of DDAC to a product to be used as a preservative in feed, including premixtures and water. The product is labelled to contain citric acid, lactic acid, ammonium propionate, ascorbic acid, sodium chloride, glycerol and water and is claimed to be bactericidal, fungicidal and virucidal. Withdrawal and recall actions have been performed by as many as 40 Member States and third countries involved.

For findings related to cross-contamination, guidelines as regards measures to be taken as regards the presence of DDAC in or on food and feed, agreed by the Standing Committee on 13 July 2012 were distributed through the RASFF system as RASFF News 12-681 of 19 July 2012. A similar guidance was distributed for the presence of benzalkonium chloride (BAC) in or on food and feed.

CHAPTER 5

A quick manual to the 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, EFSA²¹, EEA²² and at national level in member countries, exchanging information in a clear and structured way by means of templates.

5.1 The legal basis

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

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

Article 50.3 of the Regulation lays down additional criteria for when a RASFF notification is required.

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

- (a) any measure they adopt which is aimed at restricting the placing on the market or forcing the withdrawal from the market or the recall of food or feed in order to protect human health and requiring rapid action;
- (b) any recommendation or agreement with professional operators which is aimed, on a voluntary or obligatory basis, at preventing, limiting or imposing specific conditions on the placing on the market or the eventual use of food or feed on account of a serious risk to human health requiring rapid action;
- (c) any rejection, related to a direct or indirect risk to human health, of a batch, container or cargo of food or feed by a competent authority at a border post within the European Union.

Regulation (EC) N° 16/2011 lays down 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.

²¹ European Food Safety Authority, www.efsa.europa.eu

²² EFTA Surveillance Authority, <http://www.eftasurv.int>

5.2 The members

All members of the system have out-of-hours arrangements (7 days/7, 24 hour/24) to ensure that in case of an urgent notification being made outside of office hours, on-duty officers can be warned, acknowledge the urgent information and take appropriate action. All member organisations of the RASFF – 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.

5.3 The system

5.3.1 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.

- **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.

- **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.

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

- **border rejection notifications**

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

- **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.

- **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 meas-

ures taken are based, turns out to be unfounded or if the transmission of the notification was made erroneously.

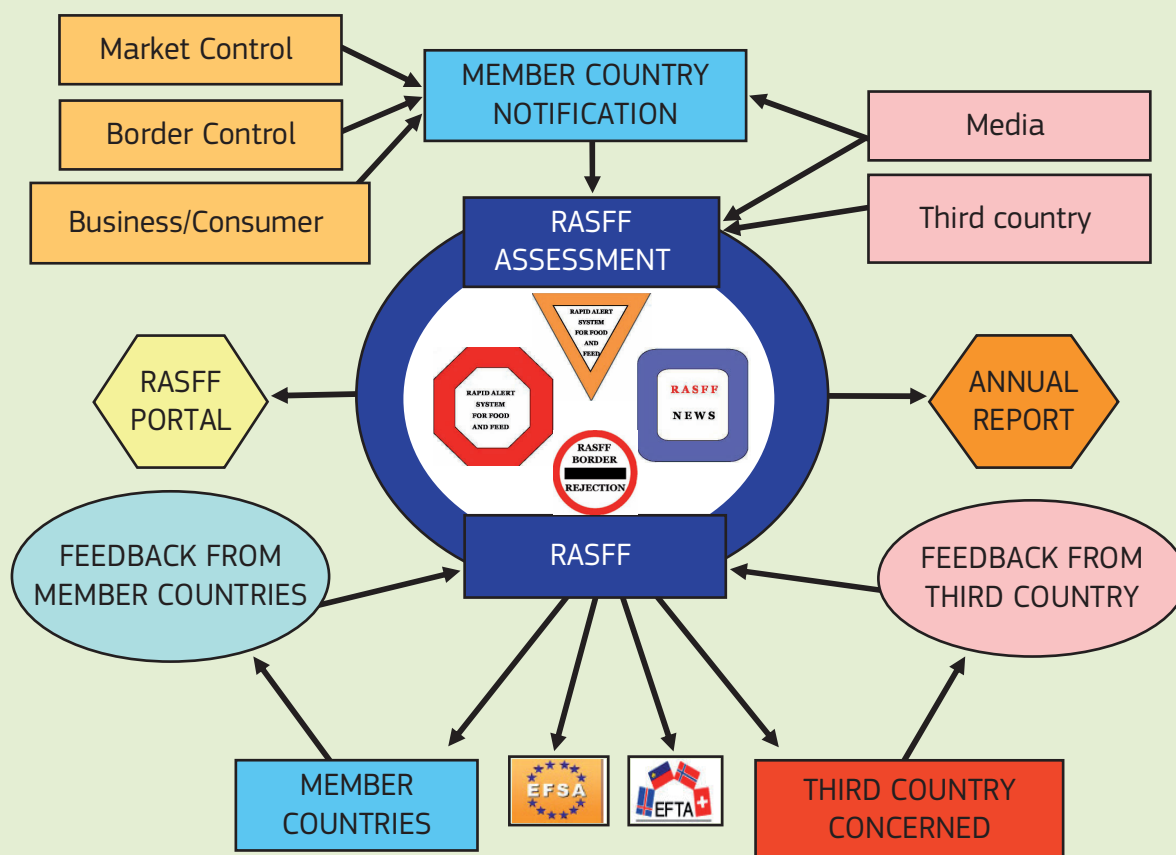
rejection notification, but which is judged interesting for the food and feed control authorities in member countries.

5.3.2 RASFF news

A 'RASFF news' concerns any type of information related to the safety of food or feed which has not been communicated as an alert, information or border

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.

Figure 13 – Schematic representation of the information flow of the RASFF



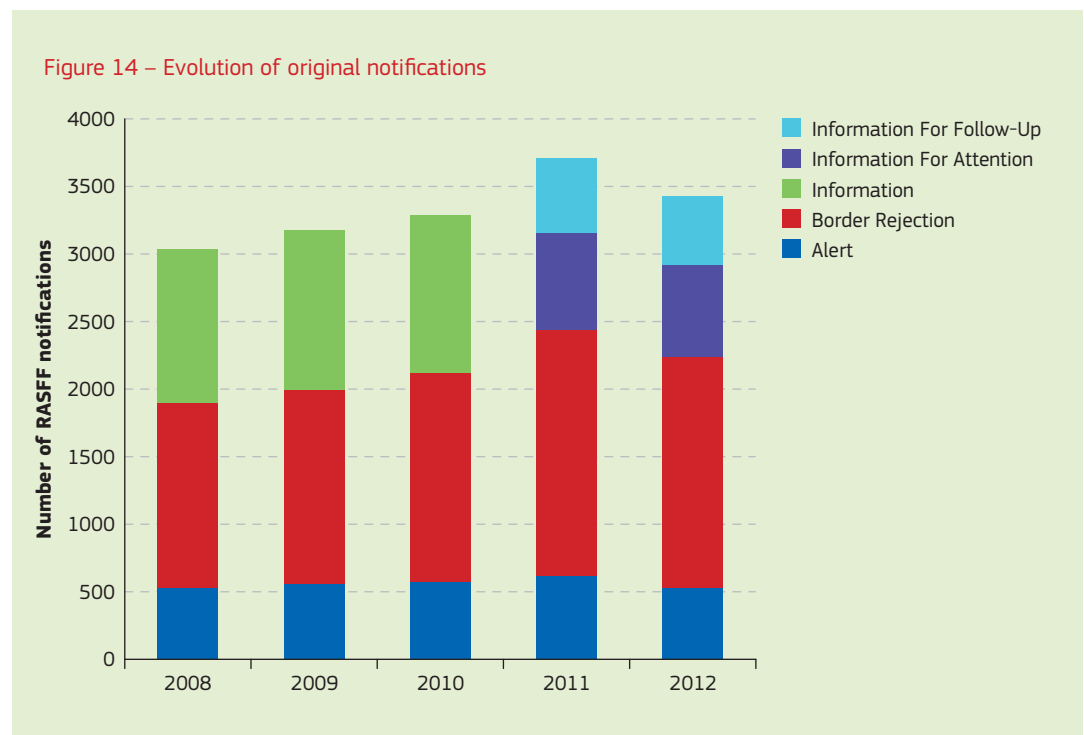
CHAPTER 6

RASFF facts and figures

6.1 Evolution of the number of notifications since 2008

Table 7 – Evolution of original notifications²³

Year	Alert	Border Rejection	Information	Information For Attention	Information For Follow-Up
2008	528	1367	1137		
2009	557	1441	1179		
2010	576	1544	1167		
2011	617	1824		718	551
2012	526	1715		682	509
% decrease	-14.7	-6.0		-5.0	-7.6

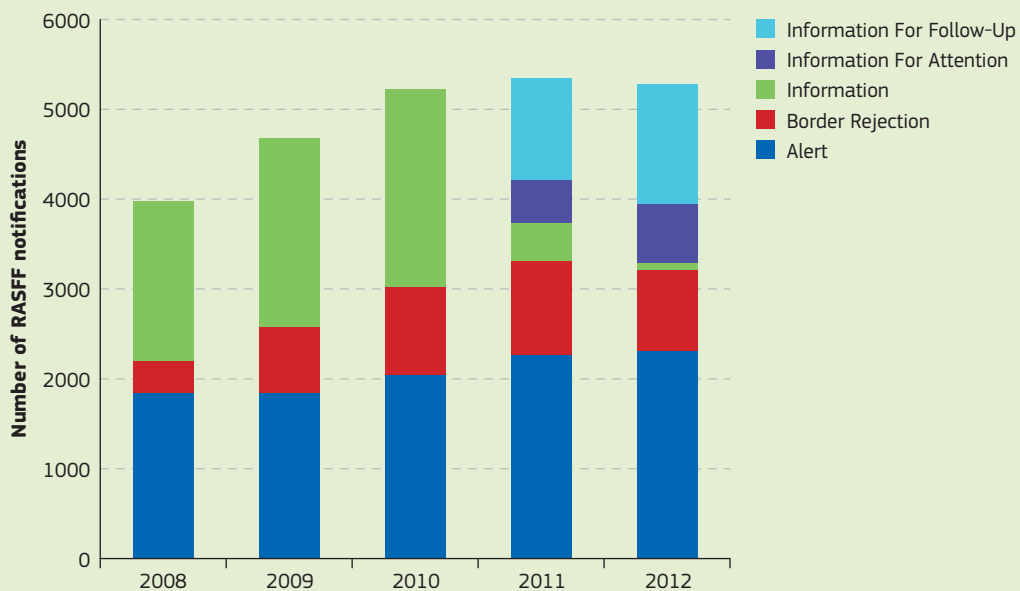


²³ In the numbers of original notifications in this table are not counted the notifications that were afterwards withdrawn.

Table 8 – Evolution of follow-up notifications²⁴

Year	Alert	Border Rejection	Information	Information For Attention	Information For Follow-Up
2008	1842	363	1770		
2009	1848	732	2099		
2010	2051	971	2202		
2011	2265	1053	421	480	1126
2012	2312	906	74	663	1326
% in/decrease	+2.1	-14.0	-82.4	+38.1	+17.8

Figure 15 – Evolution of follow-up notifications



²⁴ From the RASFF annual report 2012 onwards, in this table all follow-ups are counted, also the follow-ups to notifications that were afterwards withdrawn.

Table 9 – Evolution of notifications by notifying country

Notifying Country	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Austria	87	110	88	65	49
Belgium	106	117	94	128	143
Bulgaria	22	26	33	116	75
Commission Services	6	23	11	4	1
Cyprus	65	53	52	76	51
Czech Republic	55	68	90	95	72
Denmark	127	122	131	151	130
Estonia	11	13	18	9	17
Finland	93	141	130	111	105
France	137	157	171	199	275
Germany	437	412	396	415	362
Greece	106	160	157	127	66
Hungary	17	10	20	13	10
Iceland	1	1	2	6	3
Ireland	27	30	33	49	53
Italy	470	466	541	544	517
Latvia	32	14	21	17	26
Lithuania	44	33	48	39	51
Luxembourg	11	16	23	25	8
Malta	30	18	12	27	11
Netherlands	246	212	214	202	173
Norway	50	30	23	51	61
Poland	156	141	140	223	181
Portugal	14	8	18	22	28
Romania	13	18	25	21	14
Slovakia	56	52	56	35	35
Slovenia	76	73	56	45	43
Spain	142	255	285	297	239
Sweden	50	60	73	72	95
Switzerland		4	7	6	20
United Kingdom	345	334	319	507	517
Total	3032	3177	3287	3697	3431

Table 11 – 2012 notifications by product category and by classification

Product Category	Alert	Border Rejection	Information For Attention	Information For Follow-Up	Total 2012	2011	2010	2009
Alcoholic Beverages	4	2	0	1	7	14	7	3
Animal By-Products	0	2	1	5	8	0	2	5
Bivalve Molluscs And Products Thereof	22	13	13	5	53	68	78	52
Cephalopods And Products Thereof	5	41	5	2	53	78	44	39
Cereals And Bakery Products	36	69	33	34	172	180	172	165
Cocoa And Cocoa Preparations, Coffee And Tea	14	52	5	7	78	43	33	74
Compound Feeds	4	0	5	17	26	13	7	12
Confectionery	16	37	9	9	71	66	50	60
Crustaceans And Products Thereof	4	36	11	9	60	75	78	176
Dietetic Foods, Food Supplements, Fortified Foods	56	52	42	33	183	138	141	119
Eggs And Egg Products	5	0	6	6	17	13	16	15
Fats And Oils	4	11	1	1	17	20	25	21
Feed Additives	0	0	2	7	9	13	7	8
Feed For Food-Producing Animals – (Obsolete)	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Feed Materials	8	103	35	89	235	260	112	122
Feed Premixtures	0	1	1	6	8	6	4	4
Fish And Fish Products	63	166	98	46	373	482	452	445
Food Additives And Flavourings	3	2	4	2	11	7	1	5
Food Contact Materials	40	127	75	47	289	308	231	192
Fruits And Vegetables	40	479	145	52	716	671	494	405
Gastropods	1	1	2	0	4	0	10	0
Herbs And Spices	31	83	32	4	150	201	222	129
Honey And Royal Jelly	0	0	4	4	8	10	16	14
Ices And Desserts	3	1	2	6	12	7	6	5
Meat And Meat Products (Other Than Poultry)	65	40	44	35	184	172	195	137
Milk And Milk Products	25	2	14	11	52	50	76	38
Natural Mineral Water	1	0	1	2	4	8	6	2
Non-Alcoholic Beverages	3	22	5	13	43	31	36	28
Nuts, Nut Products And Seeds	15	272	23	19	329	522	537	675
Other Food Product / Mixed	7	17	9	2	35	15	14	5
Pet Food	5	15	11	7	38	63	56	49
Poultry Meat And Poultry Meat Products	19	53	29	16	117	72	75	94
Prepared Dishes And Snacks	18	8	7	5	38	33	24	36
Soups, Broths, Sauces And Condiments	6	8	6	6	26	51	54	39
Water For Human Consumption (Other)	2	0	0	0	2	4	5	3
Wine	1	0	2	0	3	1	1	1

6.3 2012 notifications top 10

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

Table 12 – Notifications top 10 by country of origin

Hazard	Product Category	Country Of Origin	# Of Notifications
Aflatoxins	Fruits And Vegetables	Turkey	134
Aflatoxins	Nuts, Nut Products And Seeds	China	59
Aflatoxins	Feed Materials	India	58
Migration Of Formaldehyde	Food Contact Materials	China	51
Migration Of Chromium	Food Contact Materials	China	50
Salmonella Spp.	Fruits And Vegetables	Bangladesh	42
Migration Of Manganese	Food Contact Materials	China	39
Migration Of Nickel	Food Contact Materials	China	33
Migration Of Primary Aromatic Amines	Food Contact Materials	China	33
Monocrotophos	Fruits And Vegetables	India	33

Table 13 – Notifications top 10 by notifying country

Hazard	Product Category	Notifying Country	# Of Notifications
Aflatoxins	Fruits And Vegetables	France	62
Aflatoxins	Feed Materials	United Kingdom	49
Migration Of Chromium	Food Contact Materials	Italy	49
Salmonella Spp.	Fruits And Vegetables	United Kingdom	47
Mercury	Fish And Fish Products	Italy	45
Aflatoxins	Nuts, Nut Products And Seeds	Netherlands	44
Migration Of Manganese	Food Contact Materials	Italy	43
Aflatoxins	Nuts, Nut Products And Seeds	Germany	41
Aflatoxins	Nuts, Nut Products And Seeds	United Kingdom	41
Poor Temperature Control – Rupture Of The Cold Chain	Fish And Fish Products	Spain	37

6.4 Notifications by country of origin

Table 14 – Evolution of RASFF notifications by country of origin

Country Of Origin	2010	2011	2012
China	450	561	540
India	251	336	338
Turkey	255	319	310
Germany	156	152	103
United States	160	113	127
Spain	138	129	126
Italy	121	116	112
Thailand	131	95	120
France	116	122	90
Brazil	102	94	109
Argentina	158	93	51
Poland	75	98	118
Viet Nam	71	108	72
Netherlands	52	74	97
Ukraine	50	93	68
United Kingdom	71	65	63
Morocco	56	73	60
Belgium	40	61	63
Bangladesh	13	77	56
Egypt	39	55	48
Iran, Islamic Republic Of	66	45	26
Chile	23	57	20
Denmark	25	38	34
Indonesia	25	19	35
Nigeria	25	13	35
Peru	25	25	22
Pakistan	29	25	17
Dominican Republic	14	21	34
Senegal	20	31	14
South Africa	25	26	11
Greece	17	22	23
Austria	22	21	14
Ireland	25	11	18
Ghana	18	22	14
New Zealand	7	36	10
Tunisia	13	25	15

Country Of Origin	2010	2011	2012
Sweden	12	17	24
Russian Federation	14	15	24
Sri Lanka	20	9	23
Hungary	17	15	19
Czech Republic	20	22	8
Japan	4	30	16
Ecuador	23	10	12
Mauritania	22	13	10
Portugal	16	13	13
Lithuania	15	7	18
Israel	14	14	12
Croatia	19	12	8
Canada	16	12	10
Hong Kong	5	19	13
Slovakia	13	8	13
Romania	6	12	16
Taiwan	12	4	17
Philippines	8	12	12
Latvia	9	14	7
Moldova, Republic Of	4	24	1
Uruguay	9	13	7
Malaysia	9	9	10
Norway	3	13	12
Mexico	9	14	4
Serbia	12	11	4
Bulgaria	9	10	7
Slovenia	10	6	10
Syrian Arab Republic	8	7	10
Mozambique	3	12	8
Colombia	1	12	8
Unknown origin	6	9	6
Uzbekistan	9	3	8
Switzerland	12	3	4
Georgia	6	10	3
Korea, Republic Of	8	3	8
Jordan	3	14	1

Country Of Origin	2010	2011	2012
Australia	8	4	6
Estonia	4	8	3
Madagascar	4	7	4
Kenya	4	7	3
Malta	3	8	2
Gambia	8	1	3
Namibia	6		6
Nicaragua	5	2	5
Côte D'Ivoire	4	3	4
Bolivia	7	2	2
Lebanon	2	4	5
Belarus	1	2	8
Macedonia, The Former Yugoslav Republic Of	7	1	3
Sierra Leone	2		8
Mauritius	3	3	4
Maldives	2	8	
Guatemala	1	6	2
Afghanistan	2	1	6
Uganda	3	4	2
Costa Rica	5	2	1
Papua New Guinea	2	4	2
Albania	2	5	
Azerbaijan	2	2	3
Algeria	3	3	1
Yemen		4	2
United Arab Emirates	4	1	1
Panama	1	4	1
Bosnia And Herzegovina	4	1	1
Guinea Republic – Conakry	1	3	1
Cuba	2	2	1
Finland	1	1	3
Kazakhstan		4	1
Paraguay		2	2
Togo	1	1	2
Seychelles	1		3
Iceland	1	3	
Greenland		1	3

Country Of Origin	2010	2011	2012
Suriname	1	3	
Singapore		1	3
Falkland Islands (Malvinas)		1	3
Kyrgyzstan	2	1	
Nepal	1	1	1
Cyprus	1		2
Cameroon	2	1	
Ethiopia	1	2	
Benin	2		
Mali			2
Bahrain	1	1	
Swaziland			2
Lao People'S Democratic Republic			2
Venezuela			2
Liechtenstein		2	
Jamaica			2
Cape Verde	2		
Oman	1	1	
Congo, The Democratic Republic Of The			1
Honduras	1		
Congo-Brazzaville		1	
Kosovo, Autonomous Region Of	1		
Niger			1
Mongolia			1
Faroe Islands		1	
Cambodia			1
Zimbabwe	1		
Iraq	1		
Jersey	1		
Guadeloupe			1
Burkina Faso			1
Guyana			1
Armenia			1
Saudi Arabia	1		
Tanzania, United Republic Of			1

6.5 Notifications by follow-up type and by notifying country

Table 15 – 2012 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	GR	HU	IE	IT	LT	LU	LV	MT	NL	NO	PL	PT	RO	SE	SI	SK	
accompanying documents	2	6		1		1	5	30	8	2	25	3	13	20	9			55	1				8	6	3			4	2	5	
additional information	15	42	9	17	20	15	38	96	13	2	81	5	39	40	19	21	16	105	9	1		1	58	8	55	11	8	18	7	2	
additional lot(s)		2			1	1							1				1	12					2	1							
corrigendum	2	8	4	1	176	3	1	23	7	1	13	3	5	10	3	1	2	31	5		1		6	3	9		1	3	3		
information on sampling/analysis		4						5			11	1	2	9	1			13			1		1	6	1			10	1		
lifting of the reinforced control measures											403		95	1				4													
measures taken	20	17	17	4		18	7	8	4	2	37	2	10	7	5	8	5	22				10	12	2	11	25	4	9	10	15	8
notification downgrade					12																				1						
notification reclassification		1	1		21				1		1				1			3											1		
notification upgrade					15			4	1		2		2	1	1		1	5							3						
outcome of investigations	29	72	12	36		15	40	145	36	9	227	5	71	60	28	47	26	133	35	3	13	10	71	9	140	24	40	32	30	22	
outcome of investigations and measures taken	8	49	11	27		20	55	69	45	4	196	3	32	22	30	42	16	31	18	3	9	6	22	12	58	34	24	16	23	36	
re-dispatch information	2	1	4			2	3	6	9	16	37		8	9		1	4	20				2	2		11		2	1	2	1	
request	1	6	2	1	2	3	6	9	16		37		8	9		1	4	5	4	1		1	7	2	5	1				2	
translation					44						5																				
withdrawal of follow-up notification					27		1	1			1							1													
withdrawal of original notification		2			22		8	4		1	12		2	2	1		1	46			2		1		2		1	1	2		

The coloured cells indicate the country with the highest number of follow-up notifications for a given follow-up type.

Table 16 – Non-member countries having provided follow-up to RASFF notifications in 2012

Country	# of follow-up notifications	Country	# of follow-up notifications
Afghanistan	1	Mauritius	1
Albania	2	Mexico	1
Andorra	1	Mongolia	2
Argentina	6	Morocco	1
Bosnia and Herzegovina	13	Mozambique	4
Brazil	52	Namibia	6
Chile	8	New Zealand	1
China	4	Papua New Guinea	1
Costa Rica	1	Russia	2
Croatia	2	Senegal	16
Ecuador	5	Singapore	1
Georgia	8	Sri Lanka	10
Hong Kong	67	Swaziland	1
India	3	Thailand	40
Indonesia	20	Togo	1
Israel	1	Turkey	55
Japan	1	United States	5
Madagascar	5	Vietnam	1



The European Commission's RASFF team in 2012:

Adrie ten Velden, Jan Baele, Dawid Łacinski, Anna Młynarczyk, Enrique Beltrán Poveda and Magda Havlíková

Not in the picture: Nathalie de Broyer, Stefanie Roth, Rossella Maresca, Jovita Girleviciute and Juan Prieto Gomez

European Commission

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