European Commission

Health and Food Safety

2025 Annual Report **Alert & Cooperation Network**

Further information on the Health and Food Safety Directorate-General is available on the internet at:
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Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2026

PDF ISBN 978-92-68-40438-6 doi: 10.2875/9166958 EW-01-26-090-EN-N

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FOREWORD
Director General Sandra Gallina

2025 once again demonstrated a simple truth: in a world of increasingly complex and globalised supply chains, vigilance is not an option - it is our collective responsibility.

With more than 10,000 notifications exchanged, the Alert and Cooperation Network continued to prove its value as Europe's backbone for rapid information sharing and coordinated action. But beyond the figures, the past year also tested our systems. The cereulide contamination incident in infant formula stands as one of the most complex food safety events in recent years. The source of the risk was initially uncertain, and the identification of the source required time, persistence, and collective intelligence. This underlines a critical reality: in a global supply chain, risks do not always reveal themselves immediately. Yet, through the progressive consolidation of notifications and cooperation across Member States, using the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed, private companies and competent authorities were able to trace the contamination back to a common supplier. This was a decisive step. It not only enabled targeted risk management measures but also highlighted the fundamental importance of traceability and data aggregation across the network. The lesson is clear: even when signals are weak, the system works - and will continue to work, provided we continue to strengthen it. Other incidents reminded us of the human impact behind our work. The multi-country *Listeria* outbreak linked to cheeses – with severe consequences, including fatalities – reinforced the importance of rapid detection, transparent communication, and coordinated recalls. It is proof that our actions in this area are not abstract processes; they can save lives.

From crisis comes progress. At the beginning of 2026, we entered a new phase with the launch of TraceMap – a transformative tool already tested in real conditions, including during the cereulide incident. By enhancing traceability, connecting data and enabling earlier detection of weak signals and links, TraceMap will allow the European Commission and EU Member States to better target controls, identify emerging risks faster, and accelerate product recalls. It is a decisive step towards a more predictive, intelligent-driven system.

This evolution is equally critical in the fight against agri-food fraud. The work of the EU Food Fraud Network continues to mature, supported by the systematic analysis of notifications and the publication of monthly fraud overviews. These provide valuable insights into emerging patterns and cross-border cases. With the support of tools like TraceMap, Member States will be better equipped to detect anomalies, prioritise investigations, and act with greater precision. This is essential in a context where fraud is becoming more sophisticated and more international.

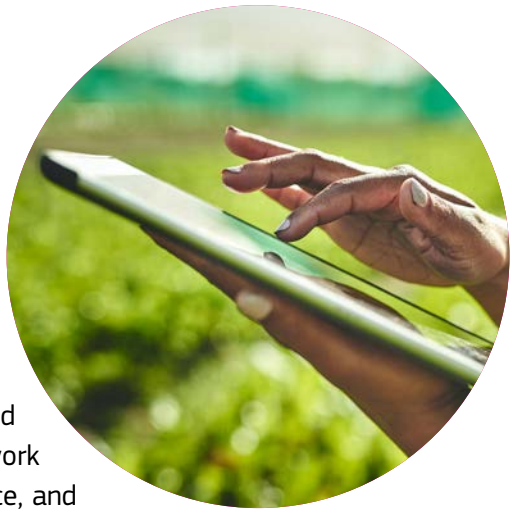
The Animal Welfare Network, in its first full year of operation, has shown remarkable dynamism, particularly in addressing cross-border transport issues.

The Pet Animals Network, focused on dogs and cats, has also proven highly active and promising. In the context of newly adopted legislation, it is becoming a key operational tool to combat illegal trade, document fraud, and associated public health risks. Its rapid development reflects both the scale of the challenge and the strength of coordinated action.

Our work in the plant health and phytosanitary domain further illustrates the importance of integrated enforcement –from pest detection to the fight against illegal plant protection products – relying on strong cooperation between competent authorities and enforcement partners.

What emerges from all these developments is clear: Europe has a well-functioning Alert and Cooperation Network that continues to mature with every incident and further refine its capabilities. In this endeavour, every notification matters. Every authority matters. Every signal – even the weakest – matters. Because beyond systems and tools, our mission remains unchanged: to protect citizens, to safeguard trust in the food supply chain, and to ensure the integrity of the food chain across Europe.

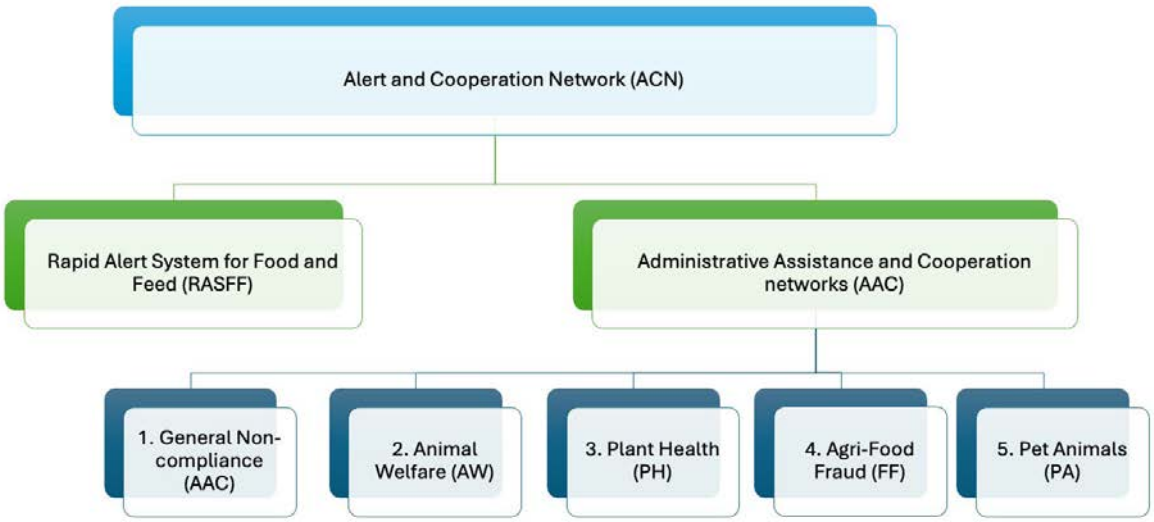
And trust, in Europe, is our most valuable asset.



ALERT AND COOPERATION NETWORK
IN BRIEF

The 2025 Annual Report provides an overview and analysis of the information exchanged within the Alert and Cooperation Network (ACN) through the electronic system iRASFF. The ACN is a network composed of the RASFF[1] and the Administrative Assistance and Cooperation networks (AAC)[2]. It is the EU's collaborative framework that allows authorities to share alerts, investigate non-compliance, and coordinate actions across borders to protect food safety, animal welfare, plant health, and consumers.

This report highlights the continued growth in the use of ACN by its members, as well as the growing involvement of non-EU countries in information sharing and cooperation. 2025 marks the second year of operation of two new networks: Pet Animals (PA) and Animal Welfare (AW). Since their launch in 2024, an increased number of notifications has been observed in both networks.

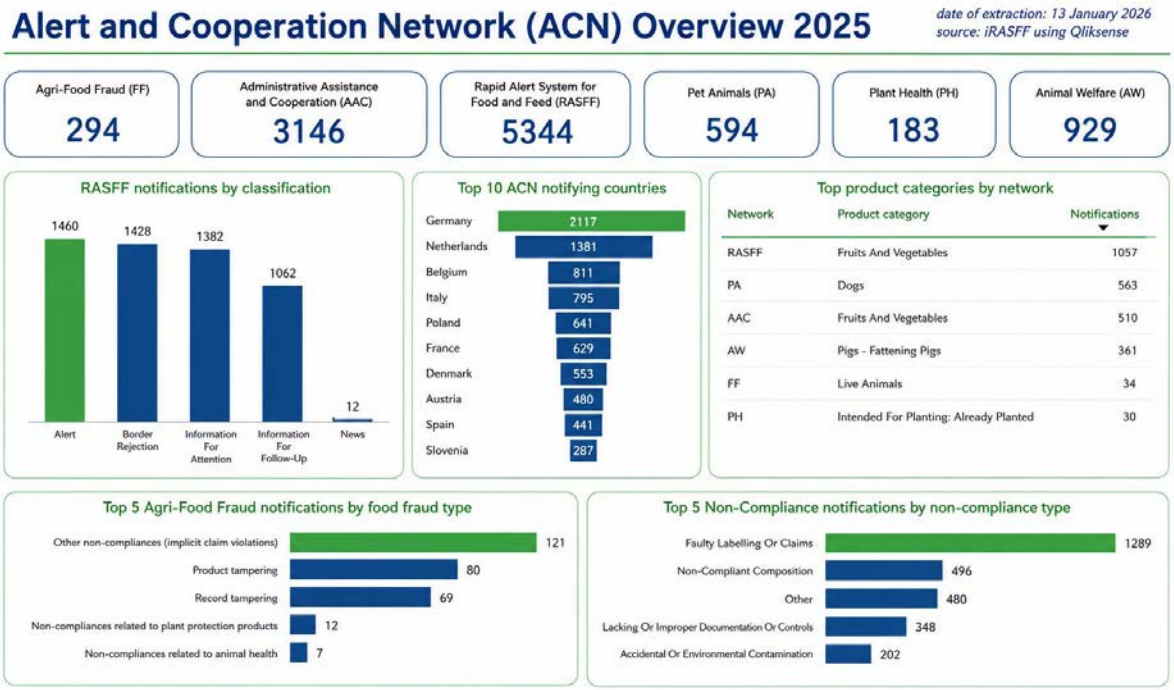


Graph 1: Components of the Alert and Cooperation Network

1 The Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) was established to ensure the exchange of information between member countries to support swift reaction by food safety authorities in case of risks to public health resulting from the food chain - Article 50 of Regulation (EC) N° 178/2002.

2 'AAC networks' mean the networks composed of the Commission and the liaison bodies designated by the Member States in accordance with Article 103(1) of Regulation (EU) 2017/625 for the purpose of facilitating cooperation between competent authorities.

1. Main Activities of the Alert and Cooperation network (ACN) in figures



The overall number of ACN notifications continues to increase in 2025 and has surpassed 10 000 (10490). This represents an increase of 11% compared to the year 2024, with RASFF notifications rising by 2%, AAC notifications decreasing by 2%, whereas PH notifications dropped by more than half (54%). The top notifying countries within the ACN are Germany, the Netherlands, and Belgium.

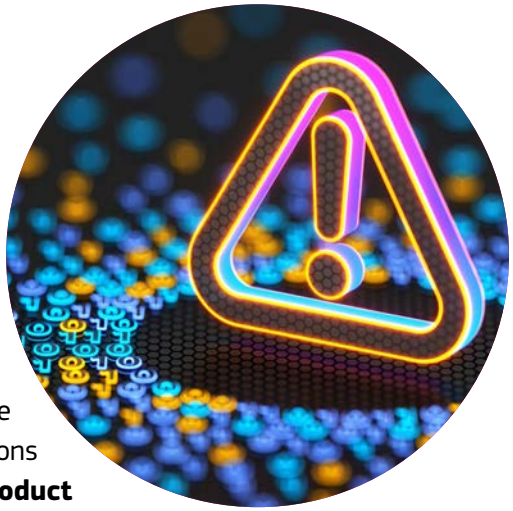
Whilst in previous years, around one-third of RASFF notifications concerned border rejections, the year 2025 has seen an increase of alert notifications by 14% compared to year 2024, relegating border rejections to the second place. Furthermore, the number of fraud notifications has declined by almost half (46%).

It was in October 2024 that the Commission launched the Pet Animals Network (PAN), a dedicated Administrative Assistance and Cooperation network aimed at addressing non-compliance related to companion animals, including suspected fraud and illegal trade. Since its launch, the number of notifications has been increasing reaching 594 cases in 2025. Moreover, the Animal Welfare Network (AWN), aimed at addressing cross-border non-compliances related to the transport, slaughter and keeping conditions of animals other than companion animals, was also established in 2024. The network completed its first full year of operation in 2025 and has already reached 929 notifications. This represents a remarkably rapid growth for a newly established network.

In the ACN, in addition to original notifications, national authorities and the European Commission can provide further details (such as investigation outcomes, measures taken, distribution information, and relevant documents) through follow-ups and the conversation module. This facilitates direct and effective communication to clarify and enrich notifications.

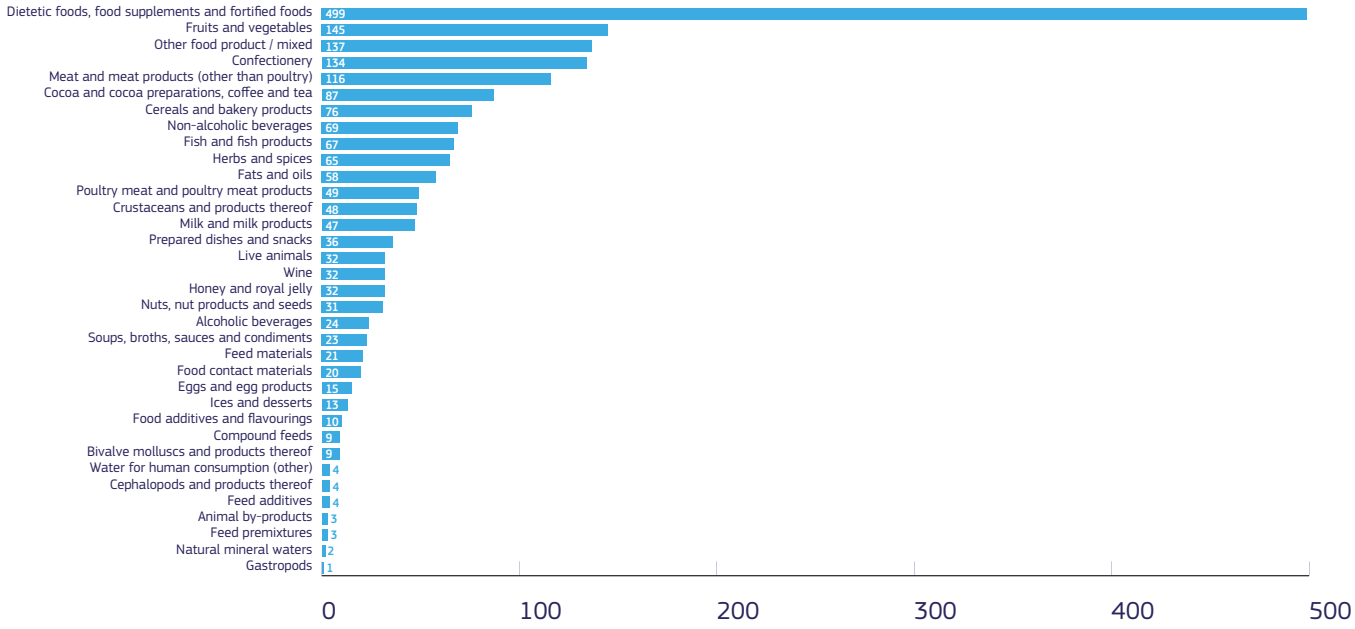
The European Commission is responsible for validating and coordinating notifications submitted through RASFF. Once a notification is submitted by a national authority, the Commission performs an initial screening to verify that it falls within the scope of food or feed safety and that sufficient supporting information is provided.

Fraud suspicions in the ACN



The Commission conducts a review of all notifications transmitted within the ACN. This review verifies the correct classification and categorisation of non-compliance cases and enables a systematic analysis of potential trends, links, and recurring issues across notifications. Cases requiring coordination or additional follow-up are subsequently transmitted to the competent authorities for possible further investigation. Suspicions of agri-food fraud are grouped into three main categories: **product tampering, record tampering**, and **other non-compliances**, each with further subcategories. The Commission publishes monthly reports highlighting cross-border cases recorded in the ACN that may indicate fraudulent practices. These reports cover the entire agri-food chain and support Member States in implementing risk-based controls, while helping food businesses assess their exposure to fraud.

Number of cases flagged as suspicion of fraud per product category in 2025



In 2025, a total of 713 AAC notifications and 1042 RASFF notifications were identified as potentially resulting from intentional actions, representing a 47% decrease compared with 2024. One factor contributing to this decrease was that notifications reporting pesticide residues on products originating from third countries were no longer systematically classified as suspected fraud. This is because the active substance concerned may be authorized in the country of origin.

2. The Alert and Cooperation Network (ACN) in figures

This section provides an analysis of the most frequently reported issues in the ACN for the year 2025. The percentages are calculated relative to the total number of notifications concerning food, feed, and food contact materials (FCM).

2.1. FOOD PRODUCTS

2.1.1 FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

In 2025, fruits and vegetables constitute 18% of the notifications (1572) within the ACN. 67% of these involve potential health risks, featuring hazards such as pesticide residues, mycotoxins, pathogenic microorganisms, metals, foreign bodies, and allergens.

Table (1) and Graph (1) reflect the main products affected and their most reported issues.

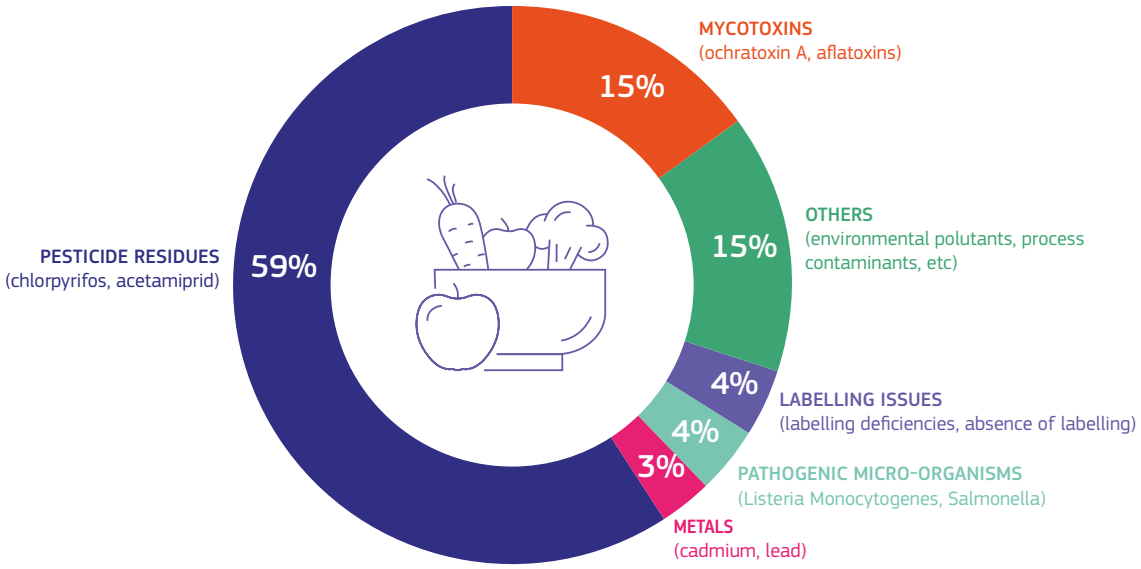
Table 1: fruits and vegetables reported in the ACN.

PRODUCTS	APPROXIMATE SHARE
Dried fruits	18%
Peppers	15%
Citrus fruits	6%
Other *(beans, berries, mushrooms, stone fruits)*	61%

Consistent with previous years, pesticide residues are the most frequently reported issue, particularly in peppers, tomatoes, citrus fruits, strawberries, beans, and vine leaves, with chlorpyrifos, acetamiprid, and formetanate being the most notified residues.

Notifications concerning mycotoxins follow, with aflatoxins and ochratoxin A in figs being the most frequently reported contaminants.

Graph 1: Most common issues reported for fruits and vegetables products in the ACN in 2025.



Products originating from non-EU countries account for 78% of the notifications regarding fruits and vegetables. As in 2024, Türkiye was the most frequently reported source of these products, especially in cases concerning figs, citrus fruits, and peppers, in line with the intensified controls applied to specific origin/product combinations under Regulation (EU) 1793/2009. Egypt ranks as the second most notified origin country, particularly in relation to oranges and other citrus fruits. Notifications also include products from India and China, at lower occurrences.

Regulation (EU) 2019/1793

Food products placed on the EU market must comply with very stringent requirements to protect human health. Member States must carry out official controls and enforcement activities according to Regulation (EU) 2017/625 at all stages of production, processing, distribution and use, including at the stage of import to ensure that only products in compliance with the applicable legislation are placed on the EU market.

Where food of non-animal origin from third countries poses a contamination risk, the Commission may take measures through Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/1793.

Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/1793 lays down rules concerning the temporary increase of official controls and emergency measures governing the entry into the Union of certain food and feed of non-animal origin from certain third countries, based on the empowerments provided in Article 47(2) (b) and Article 54(4) (a) and (b) of Regulation (EU) 2017/625 of the European Parliament and of Council (2), as well as Article 53(1)(b) of Regulation (EU) No 178/2002 of the European Parliament and of Council (3).

Commodities originating in third countries and subject to a temporary increase of controls, emergency measures or a suspension of entry into the Union are listed in the Annexes to Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/1793. The frequency of identity checks and physical checks on commodities subject to a temporary increase of controls and emergency measures is established taking into account in particular the level of risk associated with the hazard under consideration, non-compliances detected during official controls by competent authorities in the internal market, and the actual frequency of border rejections.

Article 12 of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/1793 requires the Commission to review the lists set out in the Annexes on a regular basis, and not exceeding six months, in light of new information related to risks and non-compliance.

Germany, Bulgaria, and France emerge as the top three Member States reporting cases regarding fruits and vegetables, mainly in relation to pesticide residues and mycotoxins. For mycotoxins, 77% of the notifications are triggered by border controls while 75% of these are rejected at the border. For pesticide residues, 54% the notifications are triggered by border controls while 39% of these are rejected at the border.

Labelling issues represent the third most frequently reported problem in fruits and vegetables, including incorrect or missing expiry dates, labels not provided in the language of the destination country, and the absence of required information such as ingredients, instructions for use, and nutritional details. Additionally, cases involving record tampering and other implicit claims violations (e.g., forgery of invoice, skipped mandatory border controls, traceability defects) have also been notified.

Paracetamol in cucumbers/gherkins in acetic acid

In October 2025, Slovenian authorities detected paracetamol contamination in a shipment of non-processed cucumbers/gherkins in acetic acid imported from India. The contaminated product was intended for processing and was immediately withdrawn from the market. While the specific risk was not fully defined, it was treated as a safety incident. Another smaller, separate consignment from a different Indian supplier was also found with low concentrations of paracetamol. Research indicates that paracetamol can be taken up by cucumber plants, with studies showing higher concentrations in roots compared to leaves, suggesting environmental contamination or potential for accumulation in agricultural products.

Potential sources can be grouped as follows:

- Acetic acid–related sources (distinct from plant uptake): paracetamol may be linked to the acetic acid solution itself, for example using recycled acetic acid from paracetamol production or contamination during transport and storage.
- Agricultural practices: contamination arising at primary production level, including the use of contaminated irrigation water, environmental exposure leading to plant uptake, and the possible use of contaminated inputs such as snake control products.

The EFSA considers these hypotheses on the contamination sources possible and add a hypothesis of contamination by snake control products.

Foodborne outbreak suspected (*Salmonella* Strathcona) to be caused by tomatoes from Italy

A prolonged, multi-country outbreak of *Salmonella* Strathcona ST2559 has been ongoing since 2023, primarily linked to contaminated small tomatoes from Sicily (Italy). From 2023 to 2025, over 400 cases were reported, mostly in the EU (Italy, Germany, Austria), but as well in the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States.

Epidemiological investigations have traced the outbreak to small tomatoes (cherry/plum) originating from Sicily. The detection of S. Strathcona in a sample of irrigation water collected at the site of a tomato producer in Sicily confirmed the role of the environment in tomato contamination.

Salmonella Strathcona is a highly persistent strain, with investigations linking this current outbreak to cases that occurred as far back as 2011.

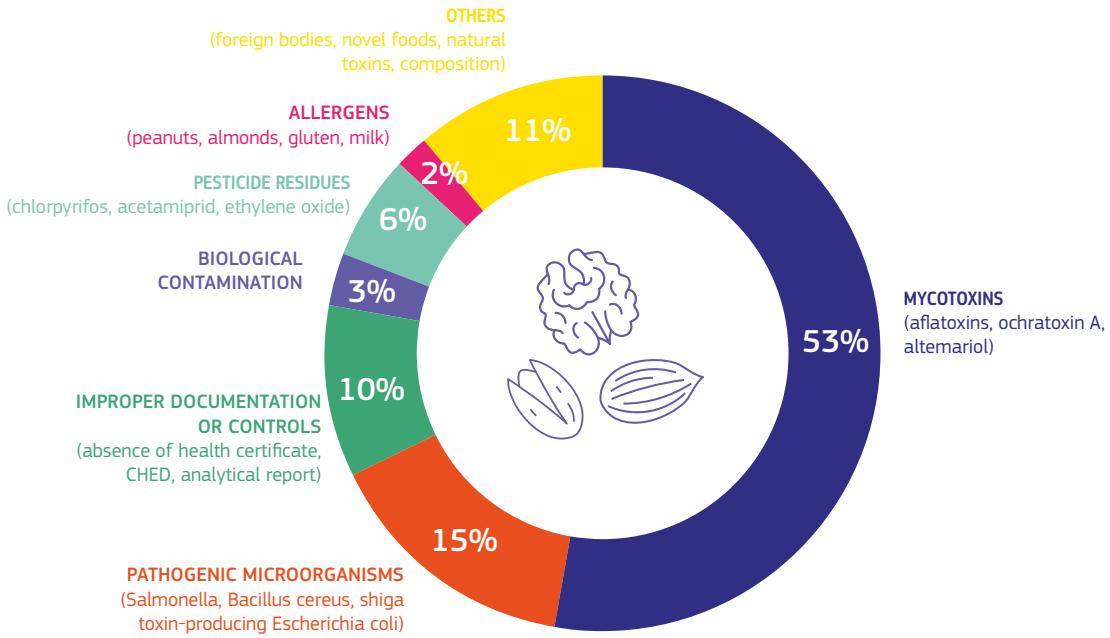
2.1.2 NUTS, NUT PRODUCTS AND SEEDS

In 2025, the ACN shows around 13% of notifications (703) on nuts, nut products and seeds. This represents a 5% increase from 2024. Of all notifications reported, 93% involve possible health risks. Table (2) and Graph (2) reflect the main products affected and their most reported issues.

Table 2: nuts, nut products and seeds reported in the ACN.

PRODUCTS	APPROXIMATE SHARE
Groundnuts	28 %
Sesame seeds	19 %
Pistachio nuts	17 %
Other seeds *(sunflower seeds, poppy seeds, cumin seeds)*	14 %
Other nuts *(almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts)*	13 %
Nut products *(nut paste, confectionery with nuts)*	8 %
Others *(legumes, psyllium husks)*	2 %

Graph 2: Most common issues reported for nuts, nut products and seeds in the ACN in 2025.



More than half of all reported issues for nuts, nut products, and seeds involve mycotoxin contamination (53%), mainly aflatoxins in groundnuts and pistachio nuts. Pathogenic microorganisms (15%) and improper documentation or controls (10%) are the second and third most common categories. Sesame seeds frequently appear in these notifications, often due to *Salmonella* contamination or missing health certificates.

Other issues include pesticide residues (6%), such as chlorpyrifos or acetamiprid, biological contamination (3%), allergens (2%), and various other problems (11%), including foreign bodies, novel foods, and additives.

As in 2024, most reported products originate from non-EU countries. The five most frequently implicated countries account for about 53% of all notifications in the ACN. Argentina is mainly linked to aflatoxin contamination in groundnuts, while the United States is associated with aflatoxins in groundnuts, pistachio nuts, and almonds. Pistachios from Türkiye are also linked to aflatoxins, and Turkish sesame seeds and nut products to *Salmonella* contamination. Notifications from Sudan relate entirely to missing health certificates, while Indian products are associated with pesticide residues, *Salmonella*, and industrial contaminants such as mineral oil. These patterns are consistent with the reinforced import controls and risk-based checks established under Regulation (EU) No 1973/2009. Groundnuts, sesame seeds, and pistachio nuts account for most notifications (64%). Sunflower and poppy seeds dominate the "other seeds" category, mainly due to mycotoxins (aflatoxin and ochratoxin A) and high levels of morphine and opium alkaloids, respectively. Other nuts, such as almonds and hazelnuts, are also commonly linked to aflatoxin contamination. Nut products like tahini and other pastes are most often associated with *Salmonella*, while a small number of notifications for other products (e.g., legumes) involve mineral oil contamination or foreign bodies, in line with the hazard categories monitored under Regulation (EU) No 1973/2009.

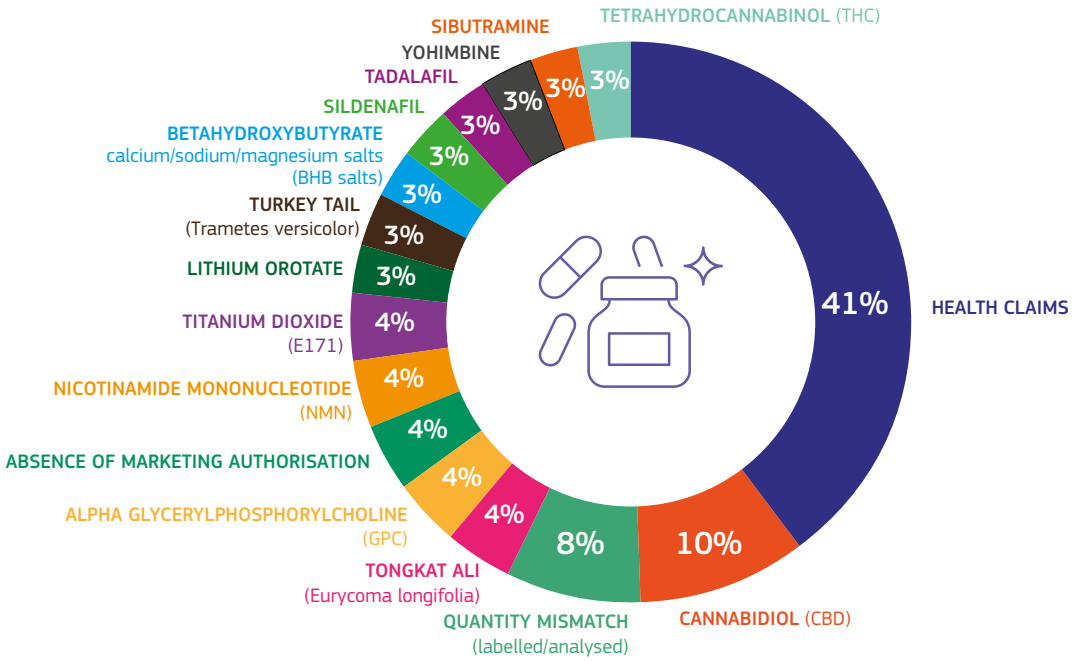
2.1.3 DIETETIC FOODS, FOOD SUPPLEMENTS AND FORTIFIED FOODS

In 2025, notifications related to dietetic foods, food supplements, and fortified foods account for 8% of the notifications (709) in the ACN, with 58% of them covering potential health risks. Notably, nearly 71% of reported cases are flagged as potential fraud. One every two cases is linked to online sales and underscore the difficulties involved in regulating the offerings of e-commerce platforms.

Table 3: dietetic foods, food supplements and fortified foods reported in the ACN.

PRODUCTS	APPROXIMATE SHARE
Food supplements	85%
Baby food (incl., infant formula, ...)	4%
CBD products	2%
Protein bars/powder	2%
Others	7%

Graph 3: Most common issues reported for dietetic foods, food supplements and fortified foods in the ACN in 2025.



Misleading product claims are the main concern, particularly unsubstantiated statements about health benefits or disease prevention (e.g. anti-infective effects, improved energy metabolism, or protection against Alzheimer's disease), which may deceive consumers.

Both authorised and unauthorised ingredients are frequently detected, sometimes undeclared. Many are classified as novel foods, such as CBD and tongkat ali (*Eurycoma longifolia*), or as unapproved, such as yohimbe, alongside substances like sildenafil and sibutramine, which commonly appear in products promoted for various claimed health benefits, including mental health, pain relief, sexual and cognitive enhancement, and weight control. The presence of titanium dioxide (E171) also remains a recurring issue.

Discrepancies between labelled and tested ingredient quantities, often involving lower vitamin levels than declared, are common and constitute consumer deception. Such inconsistencies may affect health, dietary compliance and fair competition.

Less frequent issues include heavy metals, foreign bodies, undeclared allergens and microbial contamination (e.g. *Salmonella*). Excessive levels of vitamins and iron have also been reported and may pose health risks.

Most non-compliance reports involve products from third countries, notably the United States, China and the United Kingdom, often due to substances not permitted under EU legislation, particularly novel foods. Within the EU, the highest number of reports concerns products from the Netherlands and Germany, mainly related to unauthorised substances and misleading claims.

Priority Control Area (PCA) on food supplements

Priority Control Areas (PCAs) are coordinated initiatives among Member States aimed at conducting more intensive customs controls on specific issues for a defined period. Their purpose is to ensure the consistent and uniform application of customs procedures across the Union. They are organised in accordance with Article 46(8) of the Union Customs Code.

A joint PCA by DG TAXUD and DG SANTE was carried out to strengthen customs controls on food supplements sold online to EU consumers, with a particular focus on low-value consignments under €150 from major e-commerce platforms.

The PCA targeted food supplements containing ingredients prohibited in the EU, grouped into four categories: sexual enhancement; sports performance and bodybuilding; weight loss; and mental distress, pain relief and disease management.

It consisted of a preparatory phase (July to mid-October), during which data on online food supplements available to EU consumers was collected and an operational plan was prepared with all the instructions and substances targeted, and an operational phase (mid-October to end-December), during which customs and food safety authorities jointly controlled suspicious consignments at the border. Customs authorities suspended suspect products and referred them to food safety authorities, who then decided on release, further examination, or refusal of entry to the EU market. Relevant cases were notified via RASFF, with DG SANTE forwarding notifications to DG TAXUD for customs follow-up.

In total, 134 ACN notifications were created, mainly concerning products originating from the USA, China and the United Kingdom, with the most frequent issues relating to novel foods, health claims, labelling non-compliance and unauthorised substances. The top four reported substances were Tongkat Ali (*Eurycoma longifolia*), lithium orotate, beta-hydroxybutyrate (BHB) and Turkey Tail (*Trametes versicolor*). The four e-commerce marketplaces most frequently reported for hosting non-compliant products were iHerb, Amazon, AliExpress and eBay.

Public information on the customs control results was made available on the European Commission website.

RASFF response to Cereulide contamination in infant formula - A Multi-Country Food Safety Incident

The cereulide contamination incident in infant formula represents one of the most significant multi-country food safety events managed through the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) in recent years. Detected in December 2025, the incident highlighted the importance of rapid cross-border coordination and demonstrated the effectiveness of RASFF in protecting public health across the EU and internationally.

Key Impact: Over 60 countries affected, multiple major manufacturers involved, affecting a crucial food commodity supply for a most vulnerable population group, enticing a comprehensive regulatory response within weeks of the initial detection. Global coordination was ensured through cooperation with the INFOSAN Secretariat at the World Health Organization.

➔ *Initial Detection Phase (Late November - December 2025)*

The incident originated at Nestlé's Nunspeet facility in the Netherlands in late November 2025, when routine quality checks following new equipment installation detected trace levels of cereulide in product samples[3]. The company immediately halted production and initiated comprehensive testing protocols.

December 10, 2025: Nestlé formally notified Dutch authorities and the European Commission, sharing analytical results and risk assessments. This marked the first entry into the RASFF system for what would become a global food safety incident[4].

December 2025: Initial precautionary recalls began, with Nestlé withdrawing several infant formula brands from markets across Europe and internationally.

➔ *Escalation Phase (January 2026)*

January 2026: Investigations revealed that the contamination source is arachidonic oil from a supplier in China, used as an essential ingredient of the infant formulae. As the supplier delivered this ingredient to several manufacturers of infant formulae, multiple companies identified cereulide contamination in their products. RASFF notifications were issued in fast tempo, including:

- Germany (RASFF 2026.0663): Cereulide in infant formula with raw material from Ireland
- France (RASFF 2026.0647): Cereulide contamination in French-produced infant formula
- Ireland (RASFF 2026.0598): Multiple product categories affected including follow-on formula and FSMP

January 28, 2026: DG SANTE activated the network of food and feed crisis coordinators, elevating the response to the highest level of EU food safety coordination[5].

➔ *Regulatory Response Phase (February 2026)*

February 2026: EFSA published its Rapid Risk Assessment establishing an Acute Reference Dose (ARfD) for cereulide in infants, providing scientific foundation for risk management decisions[6].

February 24, 2026: The European Commission adopted Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2026/459, implementing emergency measures for arachidonic acid oil imports from China, identified as the contamination source[7].

3 European Food Safety Authority. (2026, January 28). Precautionary global recall of infant nutrition products following detection of *Bacillus cereus* toxin. https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/news/precautionary-global-recall-infant-nutrition products-following-detection-bacillus-cereus

4 European Commission. (2026). Cereulide Incident - Food Safety. https://food.ec.europa.eu/food-safety/acn/acn-incidents/cereulide-incident_en

5 European Commission. (2026, January 28). Minutes of the meeting of crisis coordinators for food and feed safety. DG SANTE Crisis Coordination Network

6 European Food Safety Authority. (2026, February). EFSA Rapid Risk Assessment (RRA) on the acute reference dose (ARfD) of cereulide in infants and information on acute consumption of infant formulae. EFSA Journal, Pub 9941.

7 European Commission. (2026, February 24). Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2026/459 amending Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/1793 as regards the temporary increase of official controls and emergency measures governing the entry into the Union of arachidonic acid oil originating in China. https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/sante/newsletter-archives/72428

→ *Root cause analysis*

Primary contamination source

Investigations conducted by national competent authorities, coordinated through RASFF, identified arachidonic acid oil imported from China as the most likely source of contamination. This ingredient, essential for infant nutrition, was supplied by a chineese company and used by multiple infant formula manufacturers.

Contamination mechanism

The contamination is believed to have occurred during the production of the arachidonic acid oil, resulting in the presence of cereulide, a toxin produced by *Bacillus cereus*. Due to the heat-stable nature of cereulide, standard production and refining processes would not eliminate the toxin. No official confirmation of the contamination mechanism was received from the Chinese authorities.

Supply chain vulnerabilities

The incident highlighted several vulnerabilities in the global infant formula supply chain, including reliance on few suppliers for arachidonic acid oil, the potential for cross-contamination across multiple production sites, and possible delays in detection.

→ *Cross-Border Coordination Mechanisms*

The incident showcased several critical coordination mechanisms:

1. Crisis Coordinator Network: DG SANTE's activation of crisis coordinators enabled real-time decision-making across Member States
2. Scientific Support: EFSA's rapid risk assessment provided unified scientific foundation for regulatory decisions
3. Industry Engagement: Direct coordination with manufacturers facilitated comprehensive recall strategies
4. Global cooperation: through the INFOSAN network, coordination of actions could extend to a global scale

→ *Regulatory Response Integration*

The RASFF system effectively supported the implementation of emergency regulatory measures:

- **Border controls:** Enhanced inspection protocols for Chinese arachidonic acid oil imports
- **Certification requirements:** Mandatory laboratory testing and official certificates for imports
- **Supply chain traceability:** Comprehensive tracking of affected raw materials across the EU

Conclusion

The cereulide contamination incident in infant formulae represents a landmark case study in modern food safety crisis management. The RASFF system's performance during this incident demonstrates its critical value as part of the crisis management tools in protecting public health across borders and coordinating complex multi-country responses.

There was no confirmed severe health outcome despite the global scope. Due to the small quantity of arachidonic acid oil used in the products, exposure to the toxin remained very low and may not have been sufficient to lead to any acute symptoms. Still, the rapid implementation of regulatory measures, coordinated recall strategies, and comprehensive risk communication efforts have prevented any further exposure as soon as the contamination was found out.

Future Implications:

The lessons learned from this incident will inform the future operation of RASFF and food safety incident management, ensuring an even more robust protection for European consumers, particularly the most vulnerable populations such as infants.

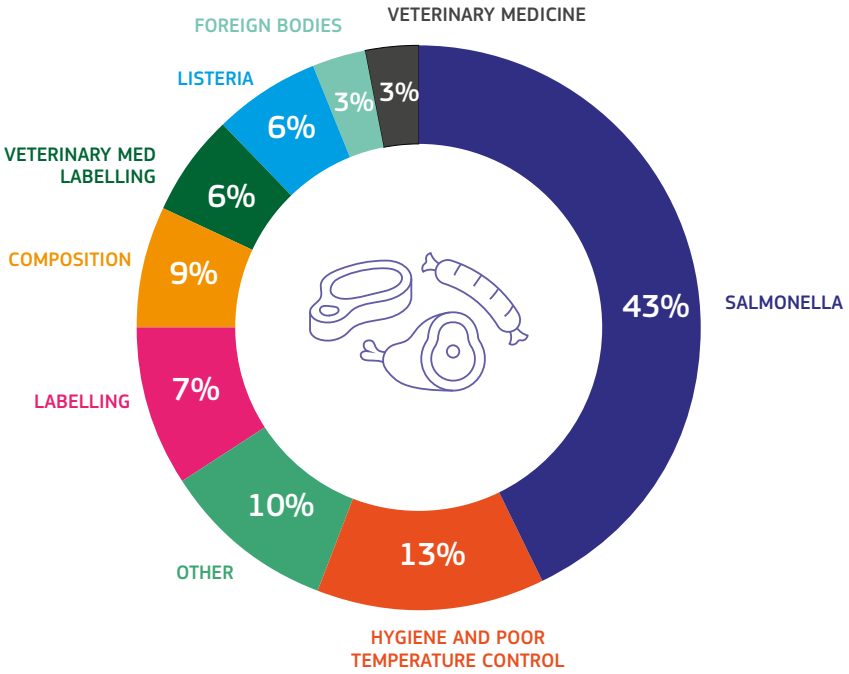
2.1.4 MEAT AND MEAT PRODUCTS

In 2025, meat-related notifications account for 10.4% of all alerts in the ACN, comprising 5.8% for poultry and 4.6% for other types of meat. A significant portion of these notifications are linked to potential health risks, affecting nearly 78% of poultry cases and 53% of meat cases. In contrast, potential fraud is reported at different rates across categories, representing 28.6% of meat notifications compared to only 9.7% of poultry notifications. Table (4) and Graph (4) reflect the main products affected and their most reported issues [8].

Table 4: meat products reported in the ACN.

PRODUCTS	APPROXIMATE SHARE
Poultry	
Chicken	47 %
Turkey	4 %
Duck	3 %
Meat (other than poultry)	
Pork	13 %
Beef	13 %
Sheep	3 %

Graph 4: Most common issues reported for meat products in the ACN in 2025.



Microbiological hazards account for almost half of notifications, with *Salmonella* being the main reported issue, and appearing mainly in poultry. *Shiga toxin-producing E. coli* (STEC) and *Listeria monocytogenes* are commonly reported in beef and pork products, while *Campylobacter* is mainly found in poultry. These findings may indicate hygiene issues during processing, highlighting the importance of proper handling, storage, and processing conditions to maintain food safety.

Several issues regarding the composition of the products are recurrent: undeclared substitutions (e.g., beef and lamb substituted with chicken meat in processed and mixed meat products), undeclared use of mechanically separated meat, and unauthorized or undeclared food additives (e.g. glutamic acid).

8 Percentage combines the categories “Meat and meat products” and “Poultry and poultry products” in iRASFF in 2025

Other notable issues relate to composition and labelling (e.g., false claims of origin or quality), indicating challenges related to product formulation and regulatory compliance. Additional concerns involve the misuse of protected denominations, as well as deficiencies in traceability and documentation, which are essential for ensuring transparency and accountability throughout the meat supply chain.

Furthermore, cases with physical hazards involving foreign bodies (e.g., metal fragments and plastic pieces from the manufacturing process or from packaging materials) in processed products remain common.

The most reported origins are Poland, the Netherlands and Brazil, mainly linked to *Salmonella* and hygiene issues.

2.1.5 CEREALS AND BAKERY PRODUCTS

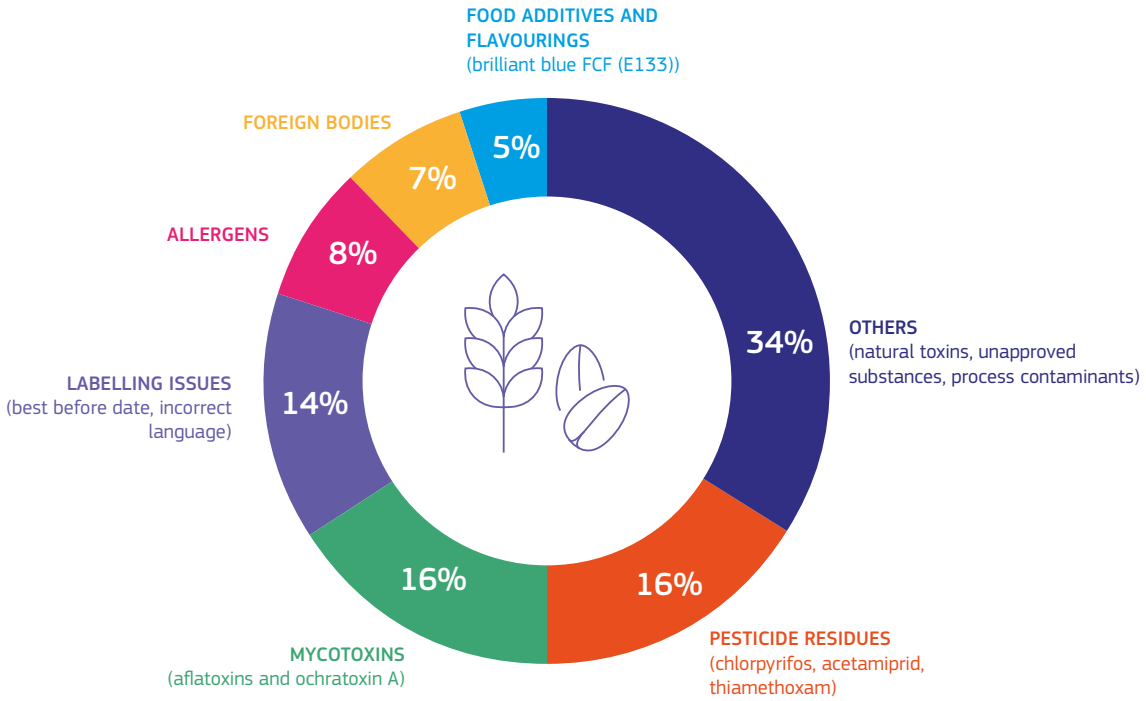
The product category cereals and bakery products represents around 6% of all notifications (487) in the ACN. Of these notifications, 70% cover potential health risks and nearly 16% are flagged as potential fraud.

Table (5) and Graph (5) reflect the main products affected and their most reported issues.

Table 5: cereals and bakery products reported in the ACN.

PRODUCTS	APPROXIMATE SHARE
Rice	28 %
Flour (e.g. wheat, maize, buckwheat)	13 %
Biscuits	13 %
Bread	8 %
Others (e.g. pasta, noodles, crackers)	38 %

Graph 5: most common issues reported for cereals and bakery products in the ACN in 2025.



The most frequently reported issues include pesticide residues in basmati rice and the presence of mycotoxins, which are commonly detected in rice and corn flour. These are followed by labelling issues in products such as biscuits and noodles.

Other recurring concerns include natural toxins (e.g., ergot and tropane alkaloids), Ergot sclerotia are fungal structures that develop on cereal grains, particularly wheat, and produce toxic ergot alkaloids. When consumed in large quantities, these alkaloids can pose health risks such as ergotism. They are most frequently detected in wheat and wheat flour. Tropane alkaloids, by contrast, are naturally occurring compounds associated with certain plant species and are known for their potential toxicological effects. They have been identified in maize used for popcorn, indicating distinct alkaloid concerns in different cereal crops compared with ergot alkaloids.

Natural toxins, unauthorised substances (e.g., Sunset Yellow FCF (E110) and benzoyl peroxide (E928)) in snacks, wheat, and flour, as well as process-related contaminants (e.g., acrylamide and glycidyl esters) are found in biscuits and flatbreads.

Products containing these natural toxins predominantly originate from within the EU, particularly from Germany and France. However, some implicated products also originate from non-EU countries, such as Argentina.

Cereal products implicated in these notifications predominantly originate from non-EU countries (e.g. India and Pakistan). However, several cases also involve products from within the EU, including those from Germany, France, and Italy (e.g., corn flour, organic wheat, and biscuits).

2.1.6 HERBS AND SPICES

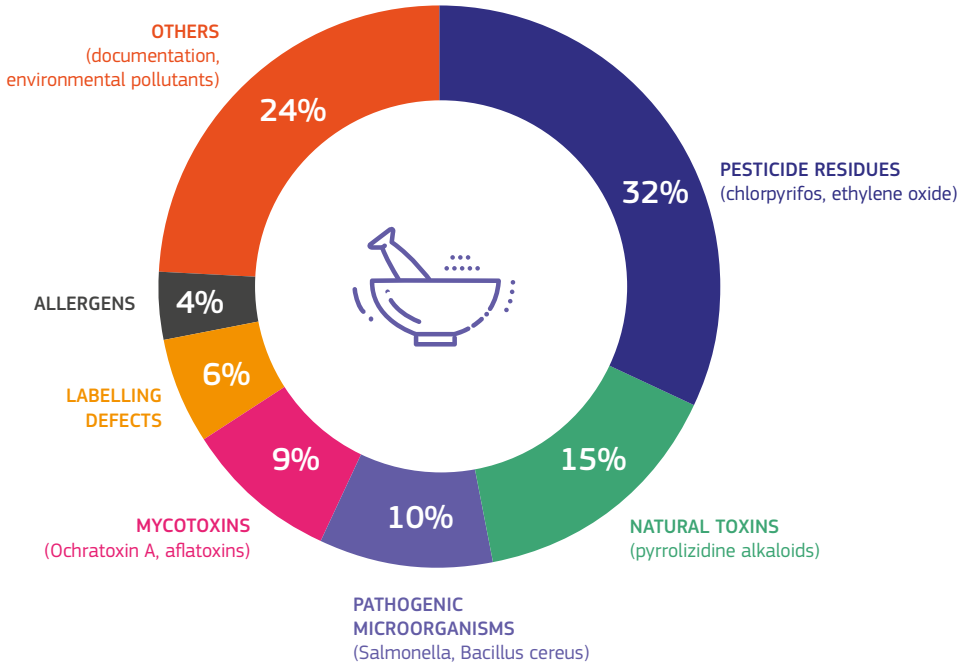
In 2025, notifications related to herbs and spices account for 4% of the notifications (377) in the ACN, with 83% of them covering potential health risks, while the suspicions of food fraud in this category account for 17%.

Table (6) and Graph (6) reflect the main products affected and their most reported issues

Table 6: herbs and spices reported in the ACN.

PRODUCTS	APPROXIMATE SHARE
Cumin	15%
Oregano	7%
Spice mix	7%
Chilli (powder, dried)	5%
Pepper	5%
Cinnamon	4%
Coriander	3%
Others (garlic powder, ginger, turmeric)	53%

Graph 6: most common issues reported for herbs and spices in the ACN in 2025.



The notifications reported for herbs and spices cover a range of hazards, with the main issues identified in this category presented in Graph 6. Pesticide residues represent the largest share of notifications (32 cases). These mainly concern cumin and turmeric, with chlorpyrifos and ethylene oxide appearing most frequently among the reported substances. Most cases involve products originating from India, followed by Türkiye, and largely concern ground or processed spices.

Notifications related to natural toxins predominantly involve pyrrolizidine alkaloids detected in oregano and cumin, with Türkiye representing the most frequently reported country of origin. Microbiological hazards mainly relate to the detection of *Salmonella* across a wide variety of herbs and spices, while *Bacillus cereus* is reported primarily in ginger and spice mixtures.

Mycotoxin notifications concern aflatoxins and ochratoxin A in comparable numbers. Aflatoxins are identified across several spices, including several cases involving nutmeg from Indonesia, as well as pepper and chilli powder, while ochratoxin A is mainly reported in chilli powder and pepper.

Labelling defects mainly involve spice mixes and relate primarily to non-compliant nutritional claims, whereas allergen notifications concern the presence of peanut traces in garlic products and undeclared gluten or sulphites in spice mixtures.

The category classified as “other” represents a substantial share of notifications and includes documentation issues, notably improper health certificates accompanying cumin consignments from India, as well as environmental contaminants such as polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons and mineral oil hydrocarbons. These contaminants have occurred in products such as cinnamon, cumin and parsley. Furthermore, a limited number of notifications concern heavy metals, mainly isolated cases of lead detected in cinnamon originating from Vietnam. Other cases also report unauthorised colourants, including Sudan dyes and rhodamine B in products such as curry and turmeric.

Overall, the most frequently reported countries of origin in this category are India, Türkiye, China and Germany. Suspicions of food fraud mainly involve pesticide residues and unapproved processes (such as the use of ethylene oxide or prohibited colourings).

2.1.7 FISH AND FISH PRODUCTS

In 2025, notifications involving “fish and fish products” represent 4% of the total of notifications (347) in the ACN. Most of the cases (68%) involve possible health risks, and 19% of cases are related to potential fraud.

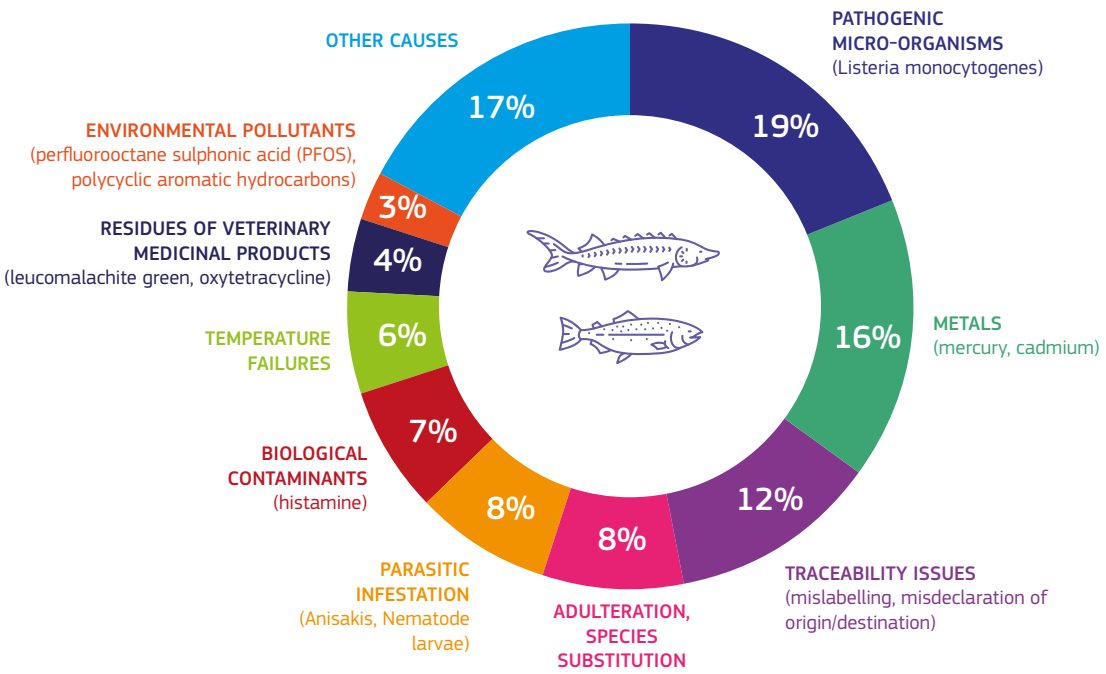
A breakdown of the approximate share of reported products is provided in Table 7.

Table (7) and Graph (7) reflect the main products affected and their most reported issues

Table 7: fishery products reported in the ACN.

PRODUCTS	APPROXIMATE SHARE
Salmon	18%
Tuna	13%
Swordfish	9%
Mackerel	6%
Herring	5%
Others (anchovy, hake, shark, pollock)	49%

Graph 7: most common issues reported for fishery products in the ACN in 2025.



Around half of all notifications in the ACN concern products made from salmon, tuna, swordfish, mackerel and herring. The main issues reported are summarised in Graph 7. The most frequent category relates to pathogenic microorganisms, particularly *Listeria monocytogenes*, representing 19% of notifications. This is followed by metal contamination (16%), mainly mercury and cadmium.

Traceability issues account for 12% of notifications and include mislabelling, incorrect declaration of origin or destination, and missing health certificates. Adulteration and species substitution and parasitic infestation (e.g. *Anisakis* nematode larvae) each represent 8% of notifications. Biological contaminants, primarily histamine, account for 7%, while temperature control failures represent 6%. Inadequate cold chain management, particularly for frozen products, can compromise product

quality and increase the risk of microbiological contamination.

Notifications involving residues of veterinary medicinal products account for 4%, while environmental pollutants such as PFOS, and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) represent 3%. Examples include cases of oxytetracycline detected in salmon from Chile and nitrofuran metabolites (furazolidone – AOZ) and beta-boldenone in catfish from Vietnam and Indonesia, as well as PAHs in smoked catfish from Indonesia.

Some hazards are more frequently associated with specific species. Tuna and sardine products are often linked to elevated histamine levels, while salmon notifications are frequently associated with microbiological hazards such as *Listeria monocytogenes*. Swordfish and shark products are commonly reported in relation to metal contamination, particularly mercury. Several fish species are also affected by temperature control failures and parasitic infestation (e.g. *Anisakis*).

Notifications concerning adulteration, including the addition of water to artificially increase weight and value, frequently involve pangasius and tuna. Additives such as sodium nitrate (E251) and ascorbic acid (E300) - the latter being authorised below 300mg/kg - are also reported in tuna products to maintain or enhance the appearance of freshness.

A significant share of the products involved originate within the EU, with France, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland and Spain amongst the most frequently reported sources.

Ciguatera poisoning cases linked to Malabar blood snapper from India

On 10/11/2025, German authorities reported three cases of gastrointestinal and neurological symptoms in a household following the consumption of Malabar blood snapper (*Lutjanus malabaricus*) steaks imported from India. The affected individuals were subsequently diagnosed with ciguatera poisoning (CP). According to the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), CP is a foodborne illness caused by the consumption of fish that have accumulated ciguatoxins, and it may result in both gastrointestinal and neurological symptoms.

The implicated product had been distributed to several other countries – Austria, Belgium, Finland, Germany, Luxembourg, Sweden, and Switzerland – all of which have withdrawn it from the market. No additional cases beyond the initial three have been reported in Germany or in the other affected countries.

2.1.8 CONFECTIONERY

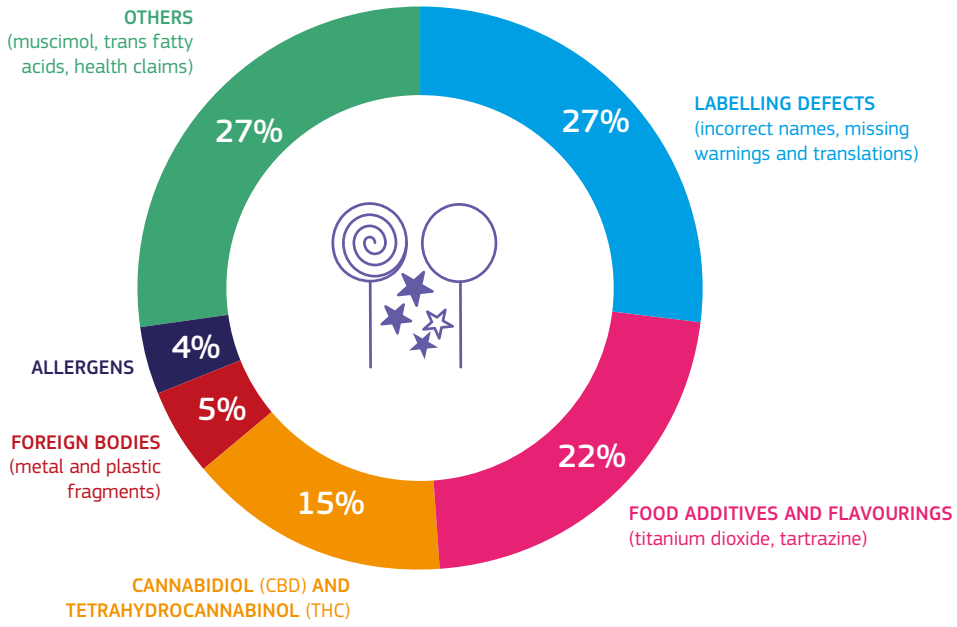
In 2025, notifications related to confectionery account for approximately 4% of the notifications (339) in the ACN, with 56% of them covering potential health risks and 40% involving possible food.

Table (8) and Graph (8) reflect the main products affected and their most reported issues

Table 8: confectionery products reported in the ACN.

PRODUCTS	APPROXIMATE SHARE
Sweets	45%
Chocolate	12%
Jelly	8%
Sugar	2%
Others (chewing gum, halva)	34%

Graph 8: most common issues reported for confectionery products in the ACN in 2025.



Notifications concerning confectionery products mainly relate to labelling defects, food additives and flavourings, and the presence of cannabinoids, with additional cases involving foreign bodies, allergens and other issues.

Labelling deficiencies represent the most frequently reported non-compliance. These mainly involve incorrect or misleading product designations, incomplete or improperly formatted ingredient lists, and failures in allergen declaration, particularly where allergens were not clearly highlighted. Several notifications also concern missing mandatory information in the required local language, most notably German, as well as incorrect or absent nutrition declarations. Other issues include unclear presentation of best-before dates, illegible font sizes, incorrect naming of additives, and missing warnings related to certain colourings.

Notifications related to food additives and flavourings mainly concern the presence of titanium dioxide (E171) in sugar confectionery products such as candies. Other additives reported include carrageenan (E407), Allura Red AC (E129), Sunset Yellow FCF (E110) and Cochineal Red A (E124), frequently identified in products originating from the Netherlands and Türkiye.

Cases involving cannabinoids primarily concern cannabidiol (CBD) and tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), particularly in candies originating from the Netherlands and the Czech Republic, followed by the United States. A limited number of notifications also report the presence of muscimol in gummy-type products.

2.1.9 MILK AND MILK PRODUCTS

In 2025, notifications involving milk and milk products account for 2.6% (228) of the total of notifications within the ACN, and 20.6% of these cases relate to possible fraud.

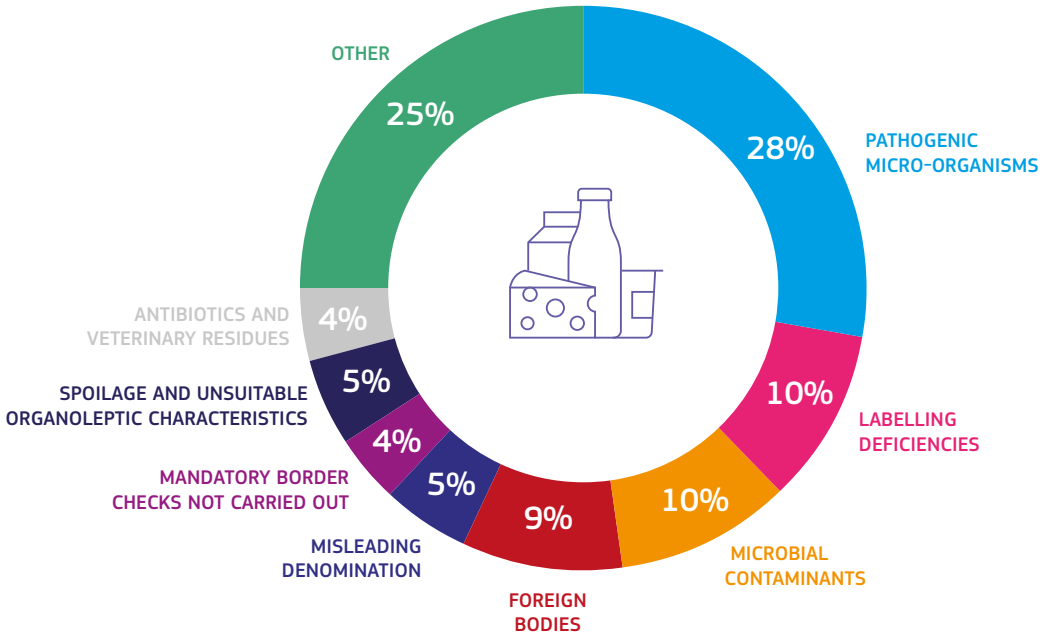
Table (9) and Graph (9) reflect the main products affected and their most reported issues.

Table 9: milk products reported in the ACN.

PRODUCTS	APPROXIMATE SHARE
Cheese and cheese products	61 %
Milk	12 %
Yoghurt	5 %
Others	22 %

Approximately 23% of the products originate from France, followed by Italy (12%) and the Netherlands (10%), whereas 12% come from non-member countries.

Graph 9: most common issues reported for milk products in the ACN in 2025.



Notifications concerning milk and milk products mainly relate to pathogenic microorganisms, labelling deficiencies, and microbial contamination, followed by issues involving foreign bodies and other irregularities.

Cases involving pathogenic microorganisms represent the largest share of notifications. The pathogens most frequently reported include *Listeria monocytogenes* and *Shiga toxin–producing Escherichia coli* (STEC). Additional cases involve other microbial contaminants, including moulds and yeasts.

Notifications related to labelling deficiencies mainly concern incorrect or incomplete product information, including inaccuracies in product description or composition. Cases of misleading product denomination are also reported, particularly where the designation of the product does not correspond to its actual characteristics.

Several notifications relate to the presence of foreign bodies, mainly plastic, metal or glass fragments. Other issues concern spoilage or unsuitable organoleptic characteristics, indicating deterioration of the product's quality.

Further notifications involve mandatory border checks not carried out, as well as the presence of antibiotics and veterinary residues, such as florfenicol detected in goat milk.

Additional irregularities not specifically represented in the graph include traceability deficiencies, the use of undeclared additives, and discrepancies in declared fat content (either lower or higher than indicated). Cases involving the misuse of protected designations of origin (PDO) and protected geographical indications (PGI) are also reported, mainly affecting cheese products.

Listeria in cheeses from France, made from pasteurised milk

On 20/6/2025 the German authorities reported presence of *Listeria* monocytogenes in pasteurised cow's and goat's milk cheeses from France. Investigations of 21 patients presenting fever, chills, and digestive symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, or diarrhoea led to identification of an epidemiological and microbiological link between cases of listeriosis and cheeses produced by a French operator. The product withdrawal, recall, and consumer information were issued together with an EpiPulse (the European surveillance portal for infectious diseases) notification.

At the beginning only two products from the same French operator were suspected, but in early August, France enlarged the withdrawal and recall from consumers to pasteurised cow's and goat's milk cheeses, marketed under private labels, store brands or unbranded, available fresh and frozen for international export. The food business operators in several countries redistributed the cheese received from the French supplier, after the refinement process and packaging, under own brands. All together 65 countries worldwide were involved in the withdrawal and recall of the contaminated cheese.

This outbreak had severe consequences: out of 21 human cases aged between 34 and 95, two persons died. As contamination of cheeses made from pasteurised milk is less common, such consumption of pasteurised cheeses is not discouraged for pregnant women, young children, the elderly or immunocompromised individuals. The contamination can nevertheless occur during the production process due to the presence of *Listeria* monocytogenes bacteria in the environment. The incubation period (time between initial infection and first symptoms appearing) is on average 3 weeks but can range between 3 and 70 days.

2.1.10 COCOA AND COCOA PREPARATIONS, COFFEE AND TEA

In 2025, notifications involving cocoa, cocoa preparations, coffee and tea products account for 2.6% (225) of the total of notifications in the ACN. Of these notifications, 63% are related to potential health risks, while 39% are associated with potential fraud.

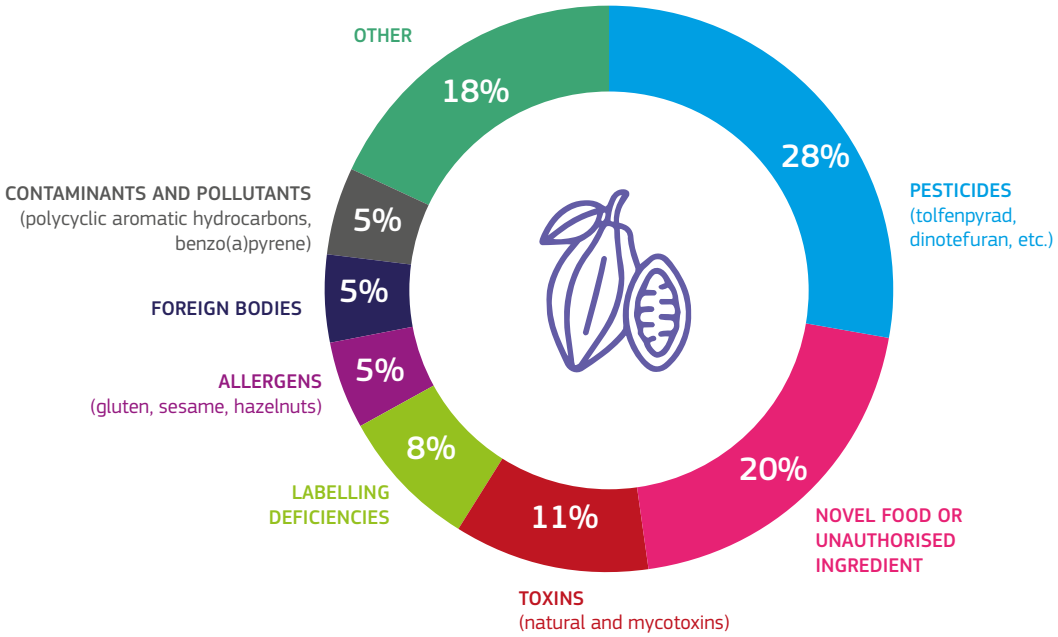
Approximately 15% of the products originate from the Netherlands, followed by China (11%) and Türkiye and Germany, with respectively 7%. A significant 54% of the products come from non-EU countries.

Table (10) and Graph (10) reflect the main products affected and their most reported issues.

Table 10: cocoa and cocoa preparations, coffee and tea products reported in the ACN.

PRODUCTS	APPROXIMATE SHARE
Tea and infusion	57 %
Cocoa and cocoa preparations	25 %
Coffee	16 %
Others	2 %

Graph 10: most common issues reported for cocoa and cocoa preparations, coffee and tea products in the ACN in 2025.



As shown in the figure, pesticides represent the largest share of notifications (28%), including substances such as tolfenpyrad and dinotefuran. Novel foods and unauthorised ingredients account for 20% of the cases. This category includes, among other substances, cannabidiol (CBD) and hemp-derived products, as well as botanical ingredients such as *Clitoria ternatea* and *Artemisia annua*. It also covers issues related to the use of non-authorised food additives, product substitutions (e.g., Robusta beans marketed as Arabica coffee), misleading product denominations, unauthorised health claims, and metal contamination.

Other issues represent 18% of the notifications, while toxins (natural toxins and specifically mycotoxins) account for 11%. Labelling deficiencies make up 8% of the cases. Smaller proportions relate to allergens, foreign bodies, contaminants and pollutants (such as polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, including benzo[a]pyrene), each representing 5% of the notifications.

In 2025, two notifications concerning sibutramine in this product category are reported, both originating from Türkiye and falling within the category of unauthorised substances. Sibutramine is a medicinal product initially developed as an appetite suppressant for the treatment of obesity. However, its use and marketing have been banned in the European Union since 2010 due to safety concerns, particularly its cardiovascular risks. The first case involved a consumer complaint regarding an herbal mixture purchased directly from a Turkish website, while the second concerned a coffee beverage that was rejected at the EU border.

2.2 FOOD CONTACT MATERIALS

In 2025, notifications on food contact materials (FCM) represent 2.8% (250) of the ACN notifications, with 68.8% of them involving possible health risks, and 8% of the notifications involve potential fraud.

Table (11) and Graph (11) reflect the main products affected and their most reported issues.

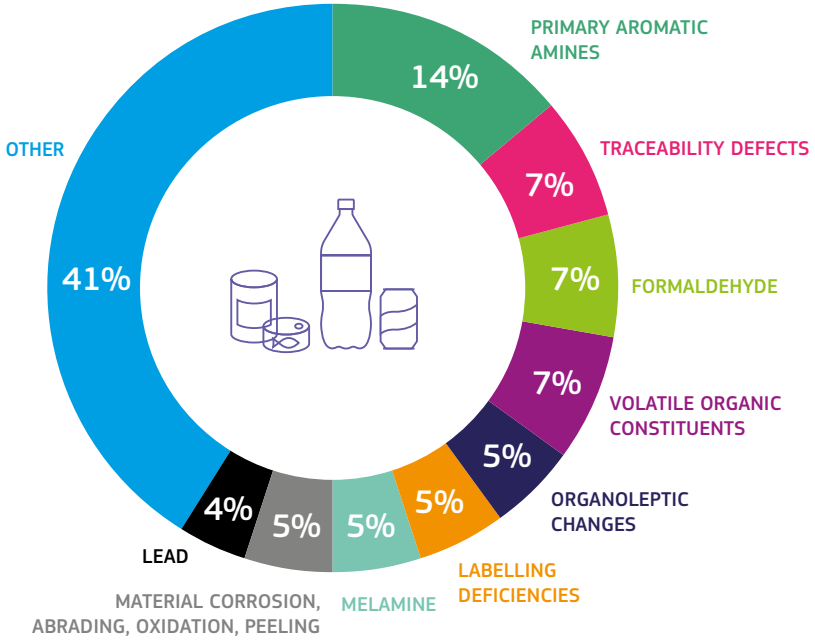
Table 11: FCM products reported in the ACN.

PRODUCTS	APPROXIMATE SHARE
Kitchenware and tableware	56%
Baking products	10%
Packaging materials	8%
Silicone products	8%
Food processing equipment	5%
Others (bottles, cutting boards, napkins)	13%

In 2025, more than 50% of the issues identified in food contact materials are related to migration hazards. This category includes primary aromatic amines, which account for 14% of all reported issues, formaldehyde at 7%, and volatile organic constituents at nearly 7%.

Beyond migration-related hazards, traceability defects represent more than 7.5% of the reported cases. Organoleptic changes, labelling deficiencies, melamine, and material deterioration (including corrosion, abrasion, oxidation, and peeling) each account for around 5% of the total notifications. Lead is reported in 4% of the cases, as illustrated in Graph 11.

Graph 11: most common compounds reported for migration from FCM in the ACN in 2025.



The remaining issues collectively constitute 41% of notifications and encompass a wide variety of hazards that are reported less frequently. These comprise both chemical contaminants and compliance-related problems. Among them are cases related to the unauthorised use of materials or ingredients, such as the unauthorised use of bamboo and other unauthorised ingredients. The presence of foreign bodies was also reported.

Several notifications concern the migration or presence of metals, including aluminium, cadmium, iron, chromium, manganese, arsenic, cobalt, barium, and lithium. Other chemical-related findings include volatile organic constituents migrating, per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), mineral oil, and benzophenone. Overall, these findings illustrate the wide variety of less common issues that were nevertheless detected during controls, contributing collectively to the large proportion represented by the "other" category in the figure.

Over 50% of the notified products originated from China, 5% were sourced from Hong Kong, followed by Germany and Spain, each respectively representing 4%.

Heavy metals migrating from enamel mugs from China

On 04/08/2025, Slovenian authorities informed about the migration of heavy metals such as lead, aluminium, nickel, barium, manganese, and cobalt from decorated enamel mugs originating from China, posing a serious risk to consumers. The products, manufactured in China and distributed via the United Kingdom, were widely sold across numerous European countries (Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland), including through online retailers.

The RASFF notification triggered extensive follow-up actions across involved countries, including product withdrawals, destruction, and detention. Subsequent updates clarified that certain variants (e.g. mugs with white inner surfaces) complied with safety requirements. Overall, authorities and businesses coordinated efforts to remove unsafe products from the market and ensure compliance with EU safety standards.

2.3 FEED

In 2025, notifications on feed products account for 5% (494) of the ACN notifications, with half of them involving possible feed safety risks, and 22.3% of reported cases are flagged as potential fraud. Furthermore, the most occurring origin in this category is China.

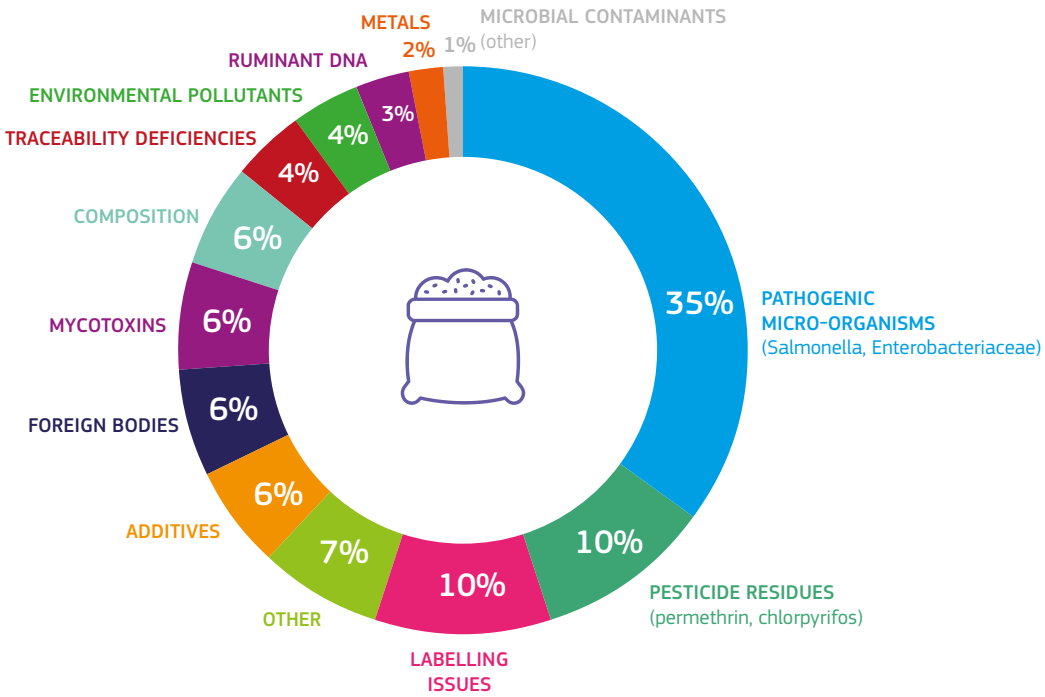
Table 12 reflects the main feed products reported in the ACN in 2025: treats and feed for cats and dogs account for about 24% of the total, followed by bird feed (7%), soybean meal (7%), fish feed (6%), rapeseed meal (6%), feed for domesticated animals like cows and pigs (5%), corn feed (4%), and other products making up the remaining 41%.

Table (12) and Graph (12) reflect the main products affected and their most reported issues.

Table 12: feed products reported in the ACN.

PRODUCTS	APPROXIMATE SHARE
Treats/feed for cats and dogs	24%
Bird feed (including poultry)	7%
Soybean meal	7%
Fish feed	6%
Rapeseed meal	6%
Domesticated animal feed (cows, pigs)	5%
Corn feed	4%
Other	41%

Graph 12: most common issues reported for feed products in the ACN in 2025.



Pathogenic microorganisms, mainly *Salmonella* and *Enterobacteriaceae*, represent the largest category, accounting for 35% of the notifications. These hazards are frequently detected in dog chews, soybean meal, poultry meal, and rapeseed meal.

Pesticide residues and labelling issues each account for 10% of the reported cases. Pesticide residues (particularly permethrin and chlorpyrifos) are often detected in products such as molasses, sorghum, and maize, with many of these notifications involving products originating from France.

Composition-related issues represent 7% of the notifications. Meanwhile, additives, foreign bodies, mycotoxins, and other issues each account for 6% of the total cases. Some notifications concerning additives involve substances such as CBD and ethoxyquin (E 324), which were found in treats or feed for cats and dogs as well as in fishmeal. Foreign bodies are also commonly reported in treats or feed for cats and dogs and horse feed, with Germany and the Netherlands frequently indicated as countries of origin.

Mycotoxins, including aflatoxins and zearalenone, are most detected in maize feed. In addition, environmental pollutants, such as dioxins, have been identified in products including fatty acids, apple pomace, and potato peels.

Additional categories include traceability deficiencies and environmental pollutants, each representing 4% of the notifications. Ruminant DNA accounts for 3%, while metals represent 2% of the reported cases. Other microbial contaminants constitute the smallest proportion, accounting for 1%.

Non-compliance issues are predominantly related to labelling deficiencies, unauthorised claims, unauthorised feed additives or ingredients, composition irregularities (such as lower levels of minerals and vitamins than declared), and environmental pollutants.

Overall, the figure highlights that microbiological hazards are the predominant concern, with a substantial proportion of notifications linked to pathogenic microorganisms.

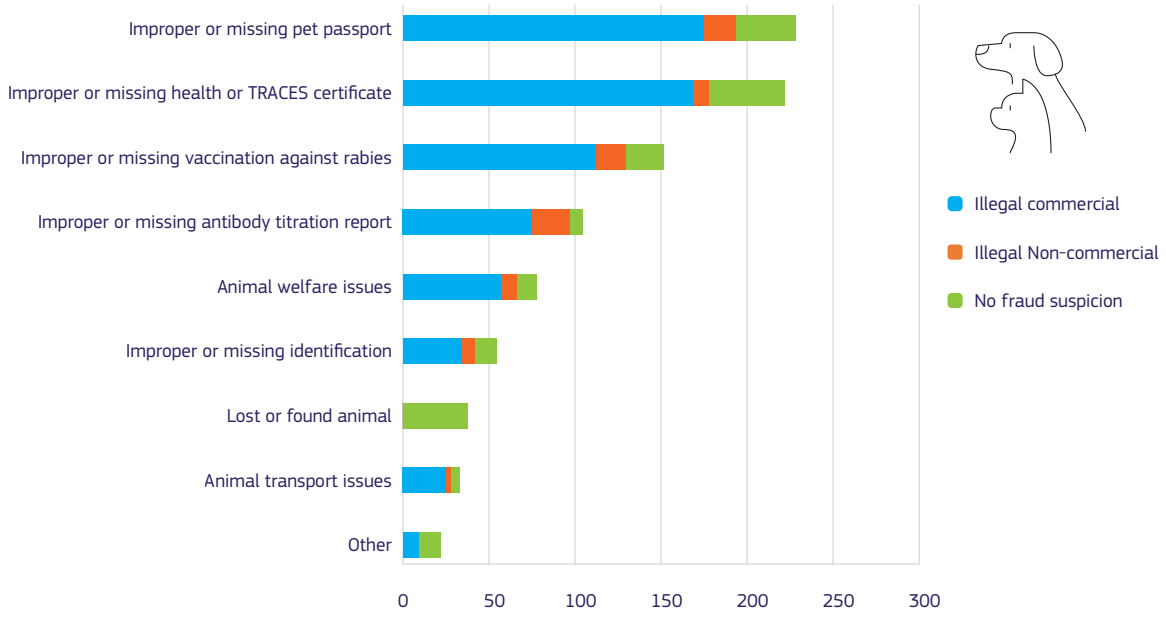
2.4 LIVE ANIMALS

2.4.1 PET ANIMALS

In 2025, a total of 594 notifications related to cats and dogs were submitted in the ACN, which translates to a 23% increase compared to the previous year (483). Of these, 67% (387 cases) relate to suspected fraudulent activities. After its launch in the previous year, 2025 was the first full year for the operation of the Pet Animals Network (PAN), a dedicated network aimed at addressing non-compliance related to companion animals, including suspected fraud and illegal trade. PAN enhances collaboration, communication, and coordination among EU MS' authorities, which is evidenced by the increase in MS' participation compared to previous years.

Among the cases suspected of fraudulent activities, 86% were connected to illegal commercial movements into or within the EU.

Graph 13: type of non-compliance notified for cats and dogs in 2025. It is important to note that each notification can encompass more than one non-compliance.



The top notifying countries in 2025 were Germany, the Netherlands, Slovenia and Italy. These four countries combined submitted over 70% of all notifications in the PAN. The main countries of origin were Romania (13%), Serbia (6%), Hungary (6%), Bulgaria (6%), Türkiye (6%), Poland (5%), Ukraine (4%) and Croatia (3%). A majority (54%) of notifications involved movements of EU-origin; 38% of non-EU origin, while in the case of the remaining 8%, no country of origin could be determined.

Over the course of the year, the Commission has worked on strengthening cooperation with third countries, manufacturers of the most used anti-rabies vaccines on the market, as well as law enforcement authorities via Europol. The collaboration between these stakeholders remains an essential part of the efforts to tackle cross-border crimes related to companion animals.

Between 2021 and 4 February 2026, a total of 215 notifications involving Serbian operators or animals of Serbian origin were reported within the ACN. These notifications primarily arose from suspicions of fraud, including the use of forged documents such as EU pet passports, rabies vaccine stickers and veterinary statements justifying the caudectomy and conchectomy. The absence of genuine documentation poses a significant risk, as animals may not be properly vaccinated, raising concerns about rabies transmission.

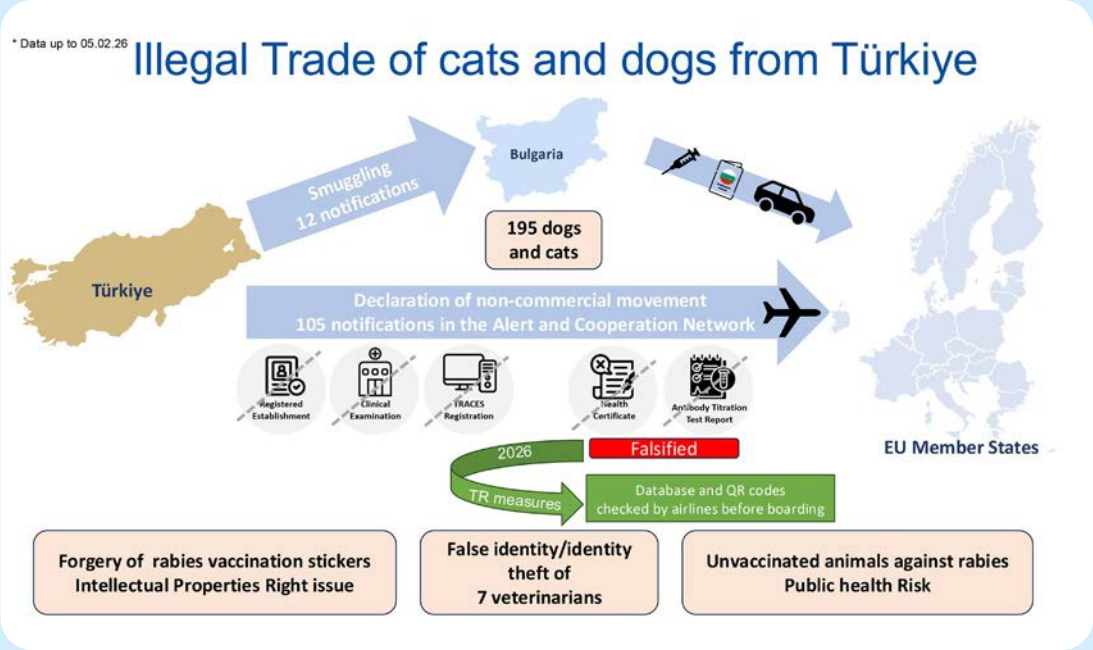
Most cases involve one or two animals, with the most reported dog breed being Doberman.

Animals are transported by road from Serbia to EU countries accompanied by forged EU pet passports, mainly from Greece and Bulgaria, enabling their onward movement by car as pets born in the EU, rather than Serbian-origin animals.

The cooperation with Serbian authorities, supported by DG SANTE and Europol, has led to judicial and/or administrative proceedings in Serbia, Greece, Hungary, Romania and France.

Between 2021 and 5 February 2026, a total of 117 notifications involving Turkish operators or animals of Turkish origin were reported within the ACN. These notifications primarily arose from suspicions of fraud, including the absence of documents and/or the use of forged documents such as health certificates, rabies antibody titration reports, and occasionally counterfeit rabies vaccine stickers. The absence of genuine documentation poses a significant risk, as animals may not be properly vaccinated, raising concerns about rabies transmission.

Most cases involve one or two animals, with the most reported dog breed being Pomeranians, followed by Poodles. For cats, British Shorthair and Longhair are the most frequently mentioned breeds.



Upon analysis, two main methods were identified for the illegal importation of cats and dogs into the EU, with the second route uncovered in 2025:

1. **Primary Route:** Animals are brought from Türkiye predominantly via airports using forged Health Certificates and rabies antibody titration reports. Their Turkish origin is not concealed.

2. **Secondary Route:** Animals are transported from Türkiye to Bulgaria without accompanying documentation. Once in Bulgaria, these animals receive EU Bulgarian pet passports and rabies vaccinations, enabling their onward movement by car to EU countries as Bulgarian pets, rather than Turkish-origin animals. Analysis suggest that 12 notifications might be linked to this Bulgarian route.

To address these illegal imports, Turkish authorities plan to create a database for verifying Health Certificates before animals are transported by plane to the EU, with this initiative becoming operational in early 2026. Airlines will be required to check certificate validity before boarding, enhancing early fraud detection. Additionally, since 2024, rabies titration reports from Turkish laboratories have included a QR code that links to the online version of the titration. If the QR code leads to a blank page, the titration is likely to be forged.

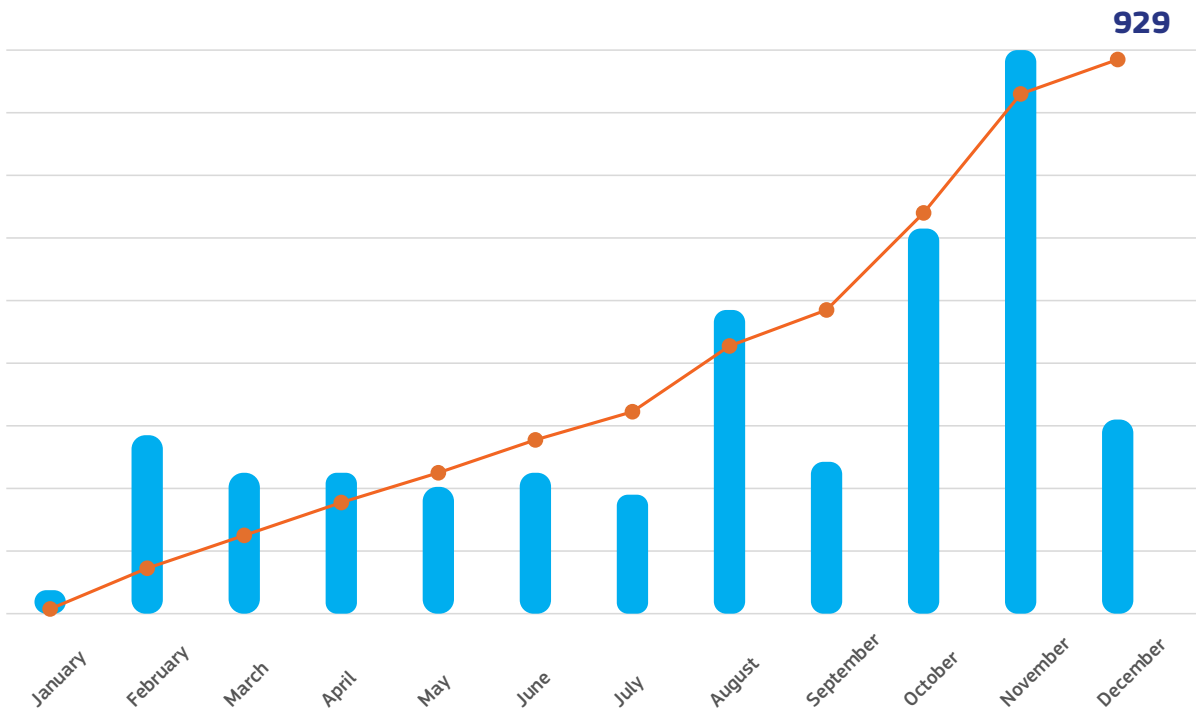
2.4.2 ANIMAL WELFARE

The Animal Welfare Network saw a major surge in activity during 2025, recording 929 notifications in total, as illustrated in Graph 14. This marks a substantial increase since the network's establishment in October 2024, particularly following the mandatory adoption of the system in February 2025.

While engagement across Member States has been strong, the bulk of the reporting mainly came from three countries: Denmark, Germany, and the Netherlands. Those three countries submitted 77.5% of all notifications in 2025.

Interestingly, even when the country of origin of the consignment was known, it was often left out of the notifications, indicating room for improvement in the standardization of notification practices.

Graph 14: Growth of the AWN in its first year of implementation (2025).



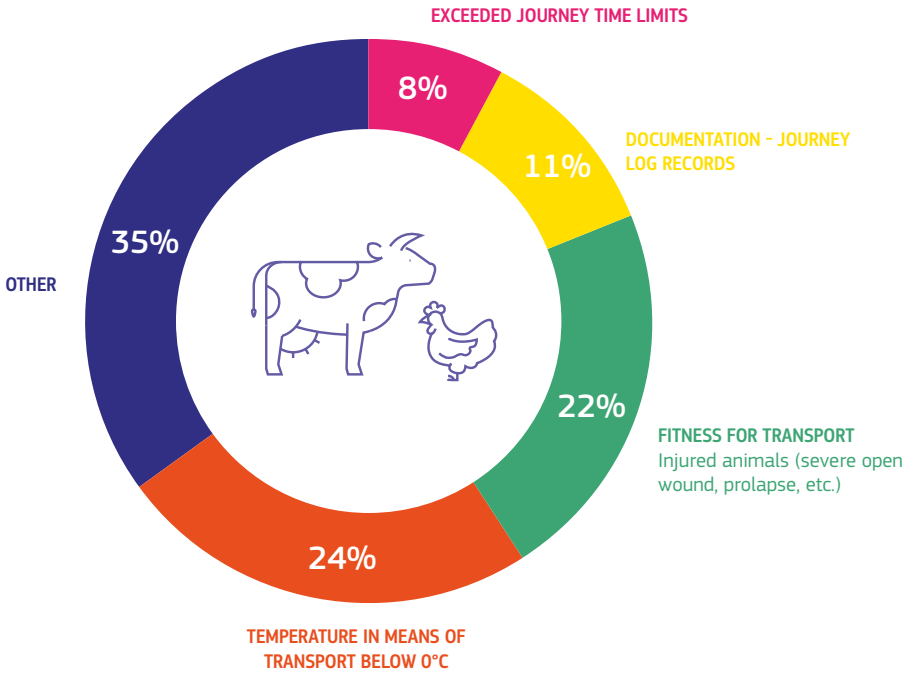
Transport-related non-compliances overwhelmingly dominated the data, representing 95% of all notifications, while farm and slaughter incidents account respectively for only 4% and 1%.

This disparity stems from the network's primary function of tracking cross-border non-compliances.

Within transport notifications, the three most common non-compliances reported were:

- temperature extremes (below 0°C or above 35°C) (24%);
- animals unfit for transport due to injuries (22%);
- wrongfully completed, incomplete or missing journey logs (11%).

Graph 15: Main reported non-compliances in the AWN in 2025.



Furthermore, the three most frequently reported species and animal categories are fattening pigs (41%), followed by fattening broilers (20%), and dairy cows (14%), while less common species, such as alpacas and other camelids, represented only 2% of notifications.

However, a significant proportion of notifications (6.2%) lacked proper species classification in the "product category" field, limiting data precision.

It is also important to highlight that, beyond direct non-compliance reporting, the AWN also facilitated information-sharing requests, which constituted 17.5% of all notifications in 2025. In 2025, 35% of the Animal Welfare notifications screened for fraud have been flagged as suspicions of fraud. The primary fraud indicators included failure to observe mandatory 24-hour rest periods as stipulated in the planning of the journey, significant space allowance discrepancies between measured and declared size of means of transport, and loading of animals which were clearly unfit for the journey (with severe open or necrotic wounds, visible prolapses or chronically unable to stand independently). Notably, most operators involved in flagged notifications are repeat offenders, being mentioned across multiple notifications.

2.5 PLANT HEALTH

The Plant Health Network consists of the 27 Member States of the European Union and Switzerland. Its purpose is to facilitate the sharing of notifications regarding non-compliances with other Member States and Switzerland for consignments intercepted between Member States within the European Union.

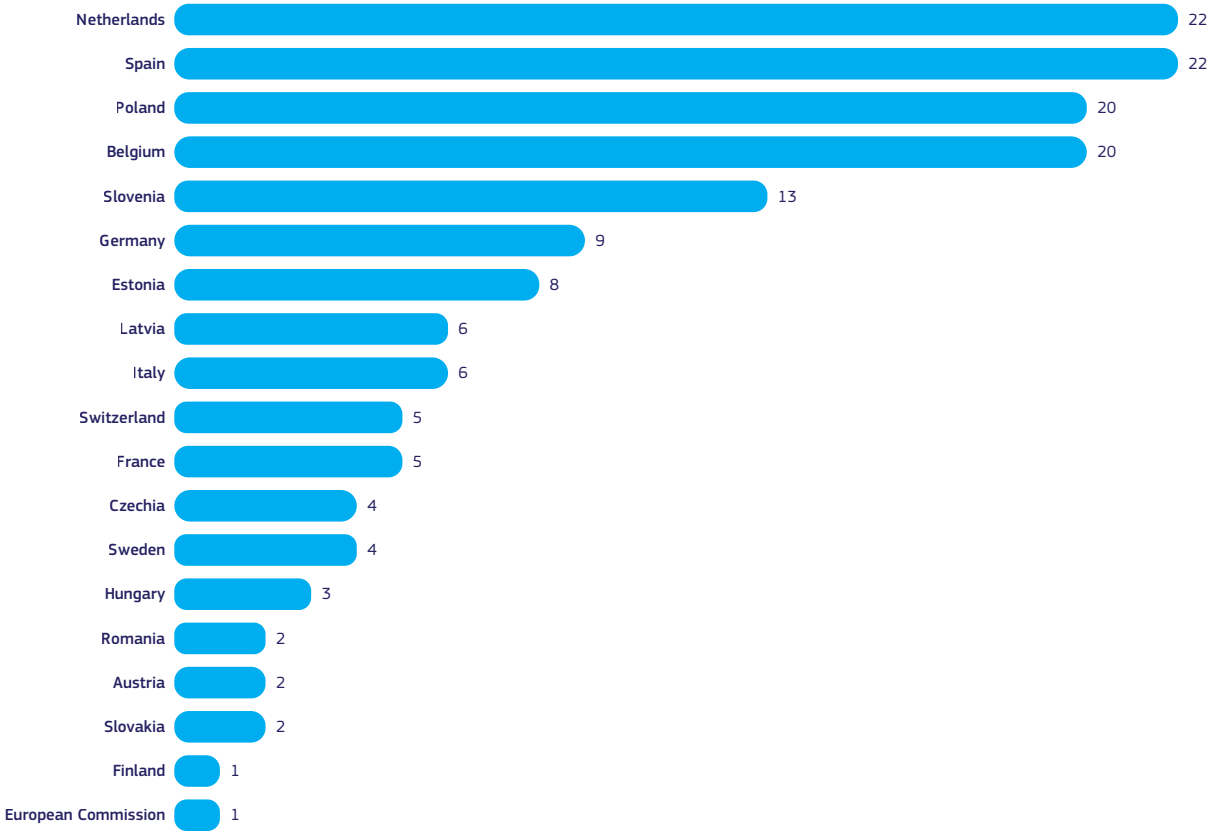
Additionally, goods originating from third countries may be imported into the EU, subsequently transported between Member States, and later found to be non-compliant.

In such cases, the iRasff system must be used. Moreover, the system can be used by Member States to share contingency plans for priority pests, suspicions of fraud, or requests for assistance.

In 2025, a total of 183 Plant health notifications were exchanged. Among those notifications, 157 were generated to report non-compliances, while 31 addressed issues regarding contingency plans.

Non-compliant notifications were issued by 20 Member States and Switzerland, and one notification issued by the Commission, with Netherlands and Spain generating the highest number of notifications (22), followed by Poland and Belgium (20) and Slovenia (13).

Graph 16: notifications created per Member State in 2025.

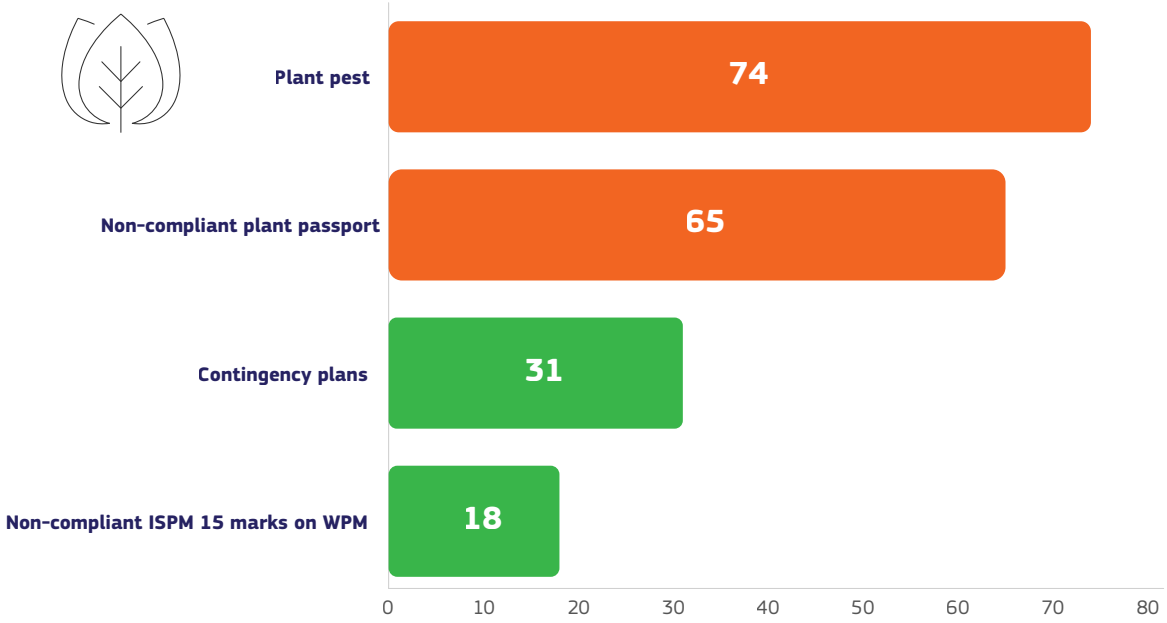


The most reported notification bases are official controls in operators' premises with 55 notifications, surveillance programs and monitoring samples with 29 notifications, and followed by official controls on the market with 24 notifications. 74 notifications involved the detection of regulated plant pests in consignments. Pests can include insects, viruses, nematodes, fungi, and bacteria. They can cause significant plant damages, such as decreased crop yields, necrosis, rotting or death of plants.

Additionally, 65 notifications were issued due to non-compliant plant passports, which certify consignment contents and provide traceability details.

18 notifications reported missing or incorrect ISPM (International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures) marks on wood packaging materials used to surround and secure certain products during transport. These markings – comprising the "ISPM 15" symbol, the country code, the treatment provider code, and the applied treatment code – are required on non-EU and Portuguese wood packaging to ensure compliance with EU regulations governing entry into, and circulation within, the Union.

Graph 17: number of notifications per type of issue reported.



Regarding the origin of the products, out of the 157 notifications, 139 concerned products originating from within the EU, with the Netherlands (31), Italy (27), and Portugal (25) being the most frequently reported origins. An additional 18 notifications involved goods originating from outside the EU.

The most frequently reported products were **pine wood** (Pinus spp.) appearing in 29 notifications mostly for wood packaging missing ISPM 15 marks, and **potatoes** (Solanum tuberosum) that were mentioned in 24 notifications. Given the wide range of plant species, many commodities were only reported in one or two notifications over the year.

By category, the most reported product categories were:

- Plants for planting (87 notifications);
- Fruits and vegetables (26 notifications);
- Dunnage wood (19 notifications).

MOREOVER, TOP 5 REPORTED PLANT PESTS WERE THE FOLLOWING:

1. **Aphelenchoides and live nematodes** (8 notifications): Detected on pine wood (Pinus spp.);

2. **Meloidogyne enterolobii** (6 notifications): Found in Ficus plants (Ficus microcarpa), Callistemon plants (Callistemon spp.), Dypsis plants (Dypsis lutescens), sweet potatoes (Ipomoea batatas), and Chrysalidocarpus plants (Chrysalidocarpus lutescens);

3. **Scirtothrips dorsalis** (3 notifications): Found in Baccharis plants (Baccharis genistelloides), Laurus plants (Laurus nobilis), and Viburnum plants (Viburnum tinus);

4. **Meloidogyne javanica** (3 notifications): Reported in Callistemon plants (Callistemon spp.) and Olea plants (Olea europaea);

5. **Hirschmanniella caudacrena** (3 notifications): Found on Vallisneria plants (Vallisneria spiralis and Vallisneria sp.).

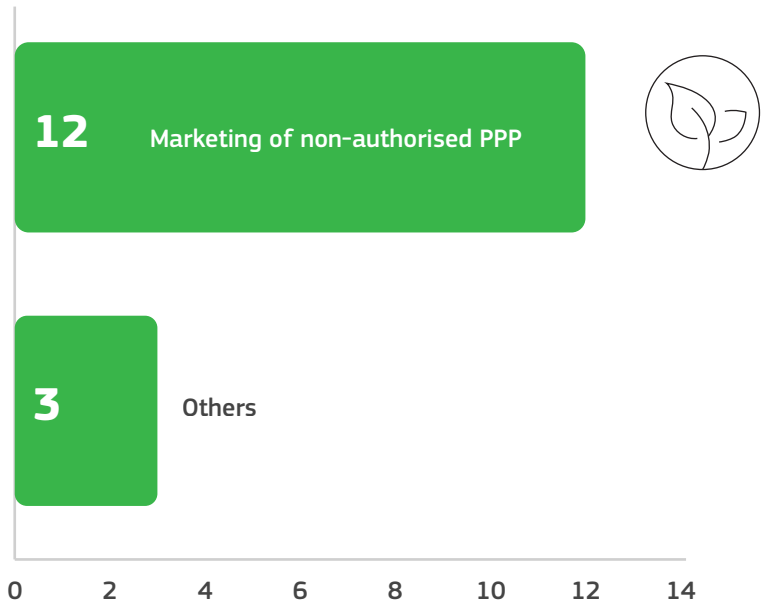
Similarly to plant species, the large diversity of plant pests resulted in many pests being reported in only one or two notifications over the year.

2.6 PLANT PROTECTION PRODUCTS

In 2025, 15 notifications concerning illegal plant protection products were reported, representing a 32% decrease compared with 2024. The European Commission's enforcement action addressing illegal plant protection products, launched in May 2023, continued throughout the subsequent two years and is scheduled to extend into 2026. The initiative is implemented by EUROPOL with the cooperation of the EU Food Fraud Network, within the framework of the EMPACT Envicrime sub-action on phytosanitary products and in connection with intellectual property rights (IPR) investigations conducted under Operation Silver Axe. Its main objective is to tackle the illegal trade in pesticides through a coordinated, multi-faceted approach involving both competent authorities and law enforcement bodies.

Effective coordination among participating actors, together with the secure exchange of confidential information between authorities, remains essential to the success of this action, notwithstanding occasional operational challenges.

Graph 18: reported issues for PPP in 2025.



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