

4 March 2024

URN: IMPEN24006

Letter category: Imported Food

Classification: Official

Priority type: Digest

Notification: Hygiene / Standards / Imports / Feed

Keywords: EWS, RASFF, Early Warning, Feed, Food

For feed and food law enforcement, port health authorities in England, industry, and any other interested parties

Early Warning System (EWS) for Imported Food & Feed, January 2024

Summary: Recent results based on the analysis of EU RASFF (Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed) notifications for imports of food and feed both from outside and inside the EU; other international intelligence gathered via the FSA's Signal Prioritisation dashboard; and since January 2021 UK Border Notifications (BNs) issued when unsatisfactory imports are rejected at UK ports or found inland. Awareness of these findings can assist enforcement officers and others' sampling programmes.

Dear colleagues,

Please bring this letter to the attention of all relevant officers in your authority and/or other interested parties if appropriate. The EWS priority ranking (high/medium/lower) is based on the level of health risk in the product, the extent of risk to the population as a whole based on consumption, and extent of benefits of sampling. ***Commodities of special interest this month are highlighted***

Early warning system for imported food & feed
RASFFs non-EU food & feed not of animal origin (FNAO)
& products of animal origin (POAO)
Period covered: February 2023 to January 2024

Product	Country of origin	Hazard	RASFFs in last year	RASFFs in last 6 months	RASFFs in last month	Issued by/ EU risk (S)=serious (UD)=undecided (NS)=not serious	Priority (High/ Medium/ Lower)
Carrots **	Egypt **	Pesticide residues	6	1	1	Romania (S)	High

Shrimp/ Prawns (frozen)	Ecuador	<i>Vibrio vulnificus</i>	37	18	1	France (potentiall y serious)	Medium
Shrimp/ Prawns (frozen)	India	<i>Vibrio vulnificus</i>	4	4	2	France (S)	Medium
Raisins (dried grapes)	Türkiye	Ochratoxin A	9	4	1	Italy (potentiall y serious)	Medium
Raisins (dried grapes)	Uzbekistan	Ochratoxin A	9	1	1	Spain (S)	Medium
Strawberri es	Egypt	Pesticide residues	6	6	1	Romania (S)	Lower
Pineapple	Ghana	Pesticide residues	5	3	1	Belgium (S)	Lower
Dried figs (clipped, halved)	Türkiye	Ochratoxin A	15	10	1	Germany (S)	Lower
Shrimp/ prawns (cooked)	Venezuela	Sulphite - too high content	6	3	2	Portugal (NS)	Lower
Chicken (gallus gallus)	China	Unauthorised substance chlorate	25	25	4	Netherlan ds (potentiall y serious)	Lower
Chicken	Brazil	<i>Salmonella</i>	18	4	1	Netherlan ds (S)	Lower

RASFFs for non-EU commodities not controlled by UK/GB but now being controlled by EU legislation:

Product	Country of origin	Hazard	RA SFF s in last yea r	RA SFF s in last 6 mo nth s	RA SFF s in last mo nth	Issued by / EU risk (S)=serious (UD)= undecided (NS)=not serious	Priority (High/ Medium /Lower)
Pistachios	USA	Aflatoxin B1	11	2	2	Germany & Italy (S), via Türkiye	High
Oregano **	Türkiye **	Pyrrolizidin e alkaloids	13	11	1	Netherlands (S)	Medium
Grapefruit (fresh)	Türkiye	Pesticide residues	9	6	3	Bulgaria (S)	Lower
Grape/ vine leaves	Egypt	Pesticide residues	12	9	1	Belgium (S)	Lower
Chilli peppers (fresh)	Kenya	Pesticide residues	9	4	1	Italy (potentially serious)	Lower

Cumin (whole seed, ground/ powder)	India	Pesticide residues	20	15	3	Sweden (potentially serious) Bulgaria & Netherlands (potential risk)	Lower
Oranges	Egypt	Pesticide residues	33	5	3	Romania & Slovenia (potentially serious), Slovenia (no risk)	Lower
Rice	India	Pesticide residues	46	29	2	Greece (potentially serious) France (NS)	Lower
Rice (including Basmati)	Pakistan	Pesticide residues	41	29	8	[2] Italy Estonia Netherlands (potentially serious) Ireland Slovakia, [2] Netherlands (potential risk)	Lower
Moringa oleifera (drumsticks)	India	Pesticide residues	17	10	3	France [1] (S) [2] (NS)	Lower

RASFFs non-EU banned FNAO

Period covered: January 2024

Product	Country of origin	Hazard	Comments
Jelly straws (confectionery)	China	Unauthorised food additives (E407 and E410) (choking hazard)	RASFF 2024.0301 from Denmark (S)

RASFFs food & feed from the EU, food & feed not of animal origin (FNAO) & products of animal origin (POAO)

Period covered: August 2023 to January 2024

Product	Country of origin	Hazard	RASFFs in last 6 months	RASFFs in last month	Issued by/ EU risk (S)=serious (UD)=undecided (NS)=not serious	RT*	Priority (High/ Medium /Lower)

Chicken (fresh, frozen)	Poland	<i>Salmonella</i>	52	2	Poland (potential risk) Italy (NS)	N	High
Poultry meat	Poland	<i>Salmonella</i>	17	2	Bulgaria & Italy (NS)	N	High
Salmon (smoked)	Lithuania	<i>Listeria monocytogenes</i>	4	2	Italy (S) Germany (potential risk)	Y	High
Cheese ** (Raclette)	France **	<i>Listeria monocytogenes</i>	18	2	France (S)	?	High
Cheese	France	<i>E. coli</i> STEC	11	1	Netherlands (S)	Y	Medium
Oysters	France	Norovirus	13	8	[3] France Denmark Finland via Sweden All (S) [2] Italy (potentially serious) Sweden (potential risk)	Y	Lower
Chicken (fresh, frozen, raw)	The Netherlands	<i>Salmonella</i>	19	4	Italy, [3] Netherlands, All (S)	N	Lower

*RTE = ready to eat (Yes / No)

**UK Border Notifications (BNs), non-EU
food & feed not of animal origin (FNAO) & products of animal origin (POAO)
Period covered: February 2023 to January 2024**

Product	Country of origin	Hazard / Risk decision (S)=serious (UD)=undecided (NS)=not serious	BNs last year	BNs last 6 months	BNs last month	Priority High/Medium/Lower
2 types of jelly confectionery: Crystal ball jelly; Agar crystal pearls	Taiwan	(NS) Food additives: Konjac (choking hazard)	10	7	2	Medium
Soft drinks: Fanta orange	Nigeria	(NS) Food additives: Sunset yellow	13	11	1	Lower
Taro powder	Taiwan	(NS) Food additives: non-	1	1	1	Lower

		permitted E127 (erythrosine)				
Jasmine green tea (dried)	Taiwan	(UD) Pesticide residues:	1	1	1	Lower
Raisins (dried grapes)	Türkiye	STEC	No notifications issued but various alerts & outbreaks			High
Melons (including cantaloupe)	Brazil Mexico	<i>Salmonella</i>	No notifications issued but various alerts & outbreaks			High
Enoki mushrooms	China Taiwan S Korea Thailand Vietnam	<i>Listeria monocytogenes</i>	No notifications issued but various alerts received			High
Biscuits & chickpea snacks	India Pakistan Bangladesh	Undeclared allergens: milk, nuts	No notifications issued but various alerts received			Medium
Sesame seeds & products (tahini, halva)	Syria	<i>Salmonella</i>	No notifications issued but various alerts received			Medium

Seasonal food imports to watch out for pesticides

Product	Country of origin	Comments
Grapes	India	April and May are the peak months for pesticide failures
Oranges	Egypt	April and May are the peak months for pesticide failures
Apples	Argentina	May and June are the peak months for pesticide failures
Coriander	Thailand	April and May are the peak months for pesticide failures

Imported Food Sampling Program

FERA recent results for pesticides in **strawberries from Egypt**: from 40 samples there were 6 failures.

UK Health Security Agency

Imported food & feed issues – January 2024

412 samples tested from 39 countries (13 EU and 26 non-EU countries) of which the following gave cause for concern:

Product	Country of origin	No. of samples	Organism	Result
Bean curd	China	1 (from 1 consignment)	<i>Bacillus cereus</i> group	2.4x10 ⁵ cfu/g
Frozen lamb	New Zealand	2 (from 2 consignments)	STEC	Detected in 25g (culture positive)

FSA Signal prioritisation dashboard / Prevention-Signals team

Date: February 8, 2024

Issue: Food Safety News article reporting that advice for vulnerable people in Sweden has changed regarding Listeria in sliced fermented sausages and vegetarian sandwich toppings.

[Sweden relaxes advice for groups at risk from Listeria | Food Safety News](#)

Date: February 7, 2024

Issue: Food Safety News article reporting that the Food Standards Agency (FSA) is inviting public comments on a proposal that limits ethylene oxide in food additives. The consultation also includes four novel food and three food additive applications submitted for authorization and plans to remove the approval for 22 food flavourings. Responses are required by March 25. A similar consultation has been opened by Food Standards Scotland, which closes on March 29.

[FSA proposes an ethylene oxide limit to align with the EU | Food Safety News](#)

Date: February 7, 2024

Issue: Food Safety News article reporting that the US Food and Drug Administration has revealed the name of the company that supplied tainted cinnamon used to make applesauce for children in the US. To date, more than 400 children have been diagnosed with elevated levels of lead in their blood after eating the applesauce.

[Cinnamon producer named in outbreak of elevated lead levels in children | Food Safety News](#)

Date: February 6, 2024

Issue: Food Poisoning Bulletin article reporting that a deadly Listeria outbreak is linked to Rizo-López Queso Fresco and Cotija cheese, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). As a result, Rizo-Lopez Foods recalled all cheeses and other dairy products made in their facility.

[Deadly Listeria Outbreak Linked to Rizo-López Queso, Cotija Cheese \(foodpoisoningbulletin.com\)](#)

Date: February 2, 2024

Issue: Food Safety News article reporting that a Norwegian company has revealed that it sold frozen salmon for several years, which was not suitable for human consumption.

[Norwegian firm found to have sold unfit-to-eat salmon | Food Safety News](#)

Date: February 1, 2024

Issue: Food Safety News article reporting that the European Commission has extended restrictions on imports of bivalve molluscs from Turkey. The measures for bivalve molluscs, such as clams, oysters, and mussels, will now apply until the end of December 2026.

[EU extends Turkish shellfish curbs; updates other rules | Food Safety News](#)

Please contact Imported.Food@food.gov.uk if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,

Beatriz Lopez-Melgar, Imported Food Intelligence Adviser, UK & International Affairs