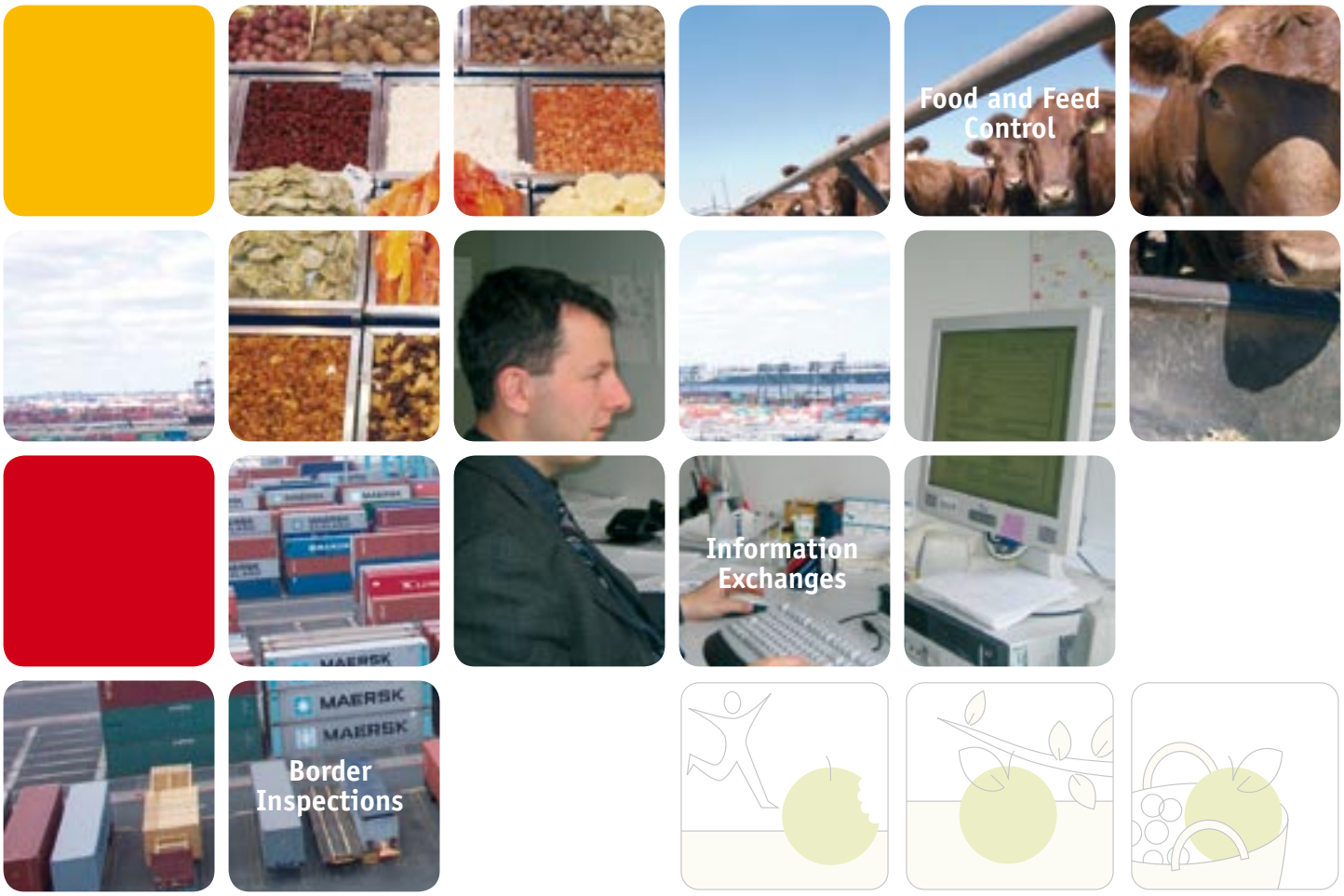
European Commission

Health & Consumer Protection
Directorate-General

The Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF)

Annual Report 2005



The Health and Consumer Protection 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 2005.

Further information on the Health and Consumer Protection Directorate-General is available at:
http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_consumer/index_en.htm
and RASFF weekly reports at: http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/rapidalert/index_en.htm

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2006

ISBN 92-79-01820-5

The Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF)

Annual Report **2005**

Introduction

A rapid alert system for food has been operating within the European Commission since 1979 but it was the publication of the General Food Law (Regulation (EC) N° 178/2002) which saw the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) take a huge leap forward. Detailed reports have been issued every year since 2002 and now, I am delighted to present the 2005 report on the RASFF.

The RASFF is primarily a tool for exchange of information between food and feed central competent authorities in the Member States in cases where a risk to human health has been identified and measures have been taken, such as withholding, recalling, seizure or rejection of the products concerned.

This quick information-exchange allows Member States to immediately identify whether they are also affected by a problem, take the appropriate measures, thereby ensuring coherent and simultaneous actions and consumer safety. The RASFF is therefore a concrete and visible result of European integration.

The RASFF has evolved to include new areas like the feed sector and, of course, ten new Member States since May 2004. I am delighted that this 2005 report demonstrates the active participation of these Member States.

This report describes the functioning of the RASFF in 2005, including the number and origin of notifications, the countries involved, the products and the identified risks. In total 3 158 notifications of food and feed risks were received through the RASFF last year, compared to 2 588 in 2004, indicating a 22% increase. This report also looks at some of the bigger food safety incidents in 2005 and how they were followed up. Since May 2003, the Commission has also been publishing a weekly report containing information on all notifications on the SANCO web site: http://ec.europa.eu/comm/food/food/rapidalert/index_en.htm.

I would like to thank all Member States for making this report possible and also all Commission Delegations in the world that have facilitated transmission of the notifications to the third countries concerned, allowing problems originating there to be resolved.

I hope that this report will provide useful data to all interested stakeholders and in particular to the Member States. It should prove very useful in priority-setting by Member States, within the internal market, at border posts and it will also be used within the Commission by other services dealing with the legislation or inspections.

Robert Madelin
Director General

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF)

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 (EU + EFTA/EEA), the Commission and the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA).
Whenever a member of the network has any information relating to the existence of a serious direct or indirect risk to human health, 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 gives further details on 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.

This report provides information on the functioning of the RASFF in 2005 and, in particular, on the number of notifications, the origin of the notifications, the countries involved, the products and the identified risks. Some caution needs to be exercised when drawing conclusions from these figures. For example, it is not because a Member State has a relatively high number of notifications that the situation regarding food safety would be bad in that country. On the contrary, it could indicate that a greater number of food checks are carried out or that the communication systems in that Member State function well.

The number of notifications concerning third countries cannot be compared with those concerning Member States. For third countries, controls can only be carried out on the product as it enters the Community. On the other hand, within the EU, controls are performed throughout the entire food and feed chain, and therefore food or feed hazards are often detected at an early stage of production. For all these hazards detected during production, there is no RASFF notification since the product did not reach the market.

To assist the members of the network[1], information is classified under three different headings:

Alert notifications

Alert notifications are sent when the food or feed presenting the risk is on the market and when immediate action is required. Alerts are triggered by the Member State that detects the problem and that has initiated the relevant measures, such as withdrawal/recall. The notification aims at giving all the members of the network the information to verify whether the concerned product is on their market, so that they also can take the necessary measures.

Products subject to an alert notification have been withdrawn or are in the process of being withdrawn from the market. The Member States have their own mechanisms to carry out such actions, including the provision of detailed information through the media if necessary.

1 . http://ec.europa.eu/comm/food/food/rapidalert/members_en.htm

Information notifications

Information notifications concern a food or feed for which a risk has been identified, but for which the other members of the network do not have to take immediate action, because the product has not reached their market. These notifications mostly concern food and feed consignments that have been tested and rejected at the external borders of the EU.

Products subject to an information notification have not reached the market or all necessary measures have already been taken.

For both types of notifications follow-up notifications are sent by members of the network giving details of the distribution or the origin of the product, additional analytical results, documents accompanying the consignment, measures taken etc. These follow-up notifications are referred to as "additional information notifications".

News notifications

Any type of information related to the safety of food or feed which has not been communicated by a Member State as an "alert" or an "information" notification, but which is judged interesting for the food/feed control authorities in the Member States, is classified and made available as a news notification.

As far as alert and information notifications are concerned, two types of notifications are identified:

- original notifications, representing a new case reported on a health risk detected in one or more consignments of a food or feed;
- additional information notifications that are reactions from RASFF members reporting follow-up of an original notification.

An original notification sent by a member of the RASFF system can be **rejected** from transmission through the RASFF system, after evaluation from the Commission, if the criteria for notification are not met or if the information transmitted is insufficient. The notifying country is informed of the decision not to transmit the information through the RASFF system and is invited to provide additional information allowing the rejection to be reconsidered by the Commission.

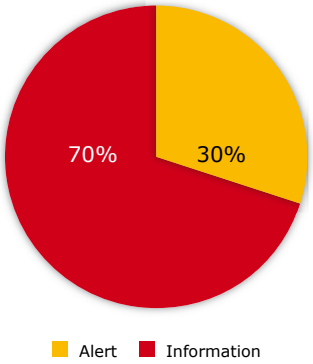
An alert or information notification that was transmitted through the RASFF system can be **withdrawn** by the Commission at the request of the notifying country if the information, upon which the measures taken are based, turns out to be unfounded or if the transmission of the notification was made erroneously.

SUMMARY

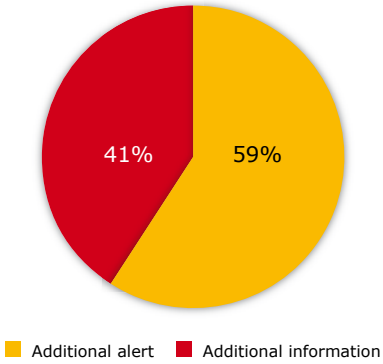
The number of notifications transmitted through the RASFF rose from 698 in 1999, 823 in 2000, 1 567 in 2001, 3 024 in 2002, 4 414 in 2003 and 5 562 in 2004 to 6 897 in 2005.[1]

In 2005, a total of 3158 original notifications, classified as 956 alert and 2202 information notifications, were received through the RASFF, giving rise to 3739 additional information notifications, representing on average about 1.2 follow-ups per original notification.

Alert and Information notifications in 2005



Additions to Alert and Information notifications in 2005

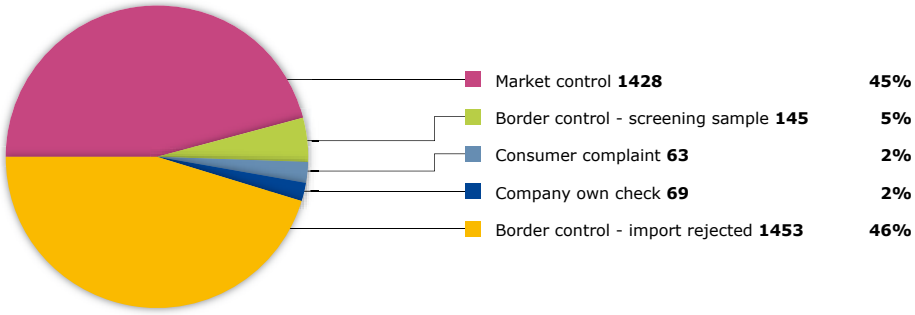


During 2005, the Commission sent 86 news notifications through the system. After the receipt of additional information, 6 information notifications were upgraded to an alert notification. Also after the receipt of additional information, 23 alert notifications and 36 information notifications were withdrawn. Notifications that were withdrawn are excluded from the statistics on the following pages.

64 notifications were not uploaded onto the system since, after evaluation, they were found not to satisfy the criteria for a RASFF notification (rejected notifications).

When notifications are classified according to the type of control carried out, the chart below is obtained. The largest category of notifications concerns controls at the border posts of the outer EU (and E.E.A.) borders when the consignment was not accepted for import ("import rejected"). In some cases, a sample was taken for analysis but the consignment was meanwhile released to the market ("screening sample"). All other notifications concern controls on the internal market ("market control") with two special cases identified when a consumer complaint was at the basis of the notification and when a company notified the outcome of an own-check. Food poisoning outbreaks are classified in the category of consumer complaints.

2005 notifications according to type of control



1 . From 2003 on, this figure includes all notifications (alert, information, news and additional information) but not the rejected notifications.

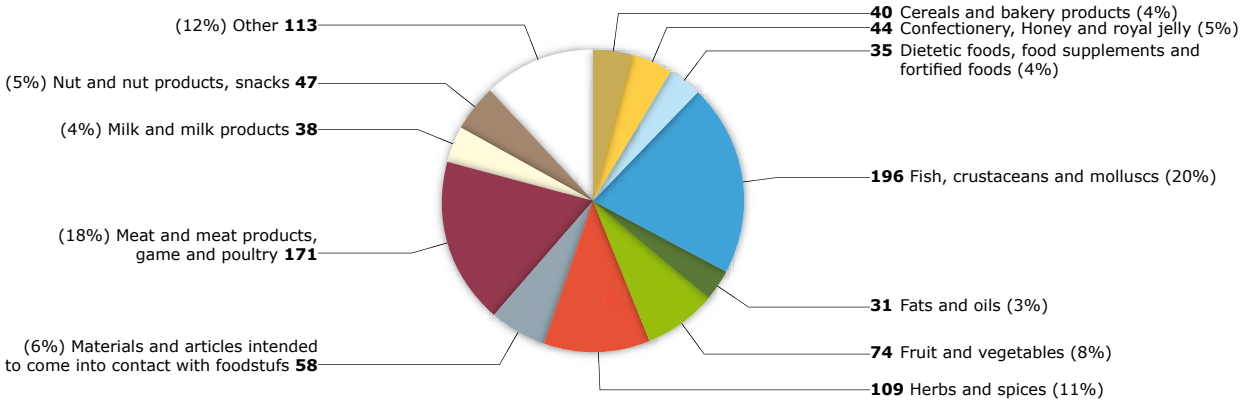
2005
Alert notifications according to product origin

Member States (EU + EFTA/EEA)	**589**	61%
Candidate Countries (Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Turkey)	**28**	3%
Third Countries	**351**	36%

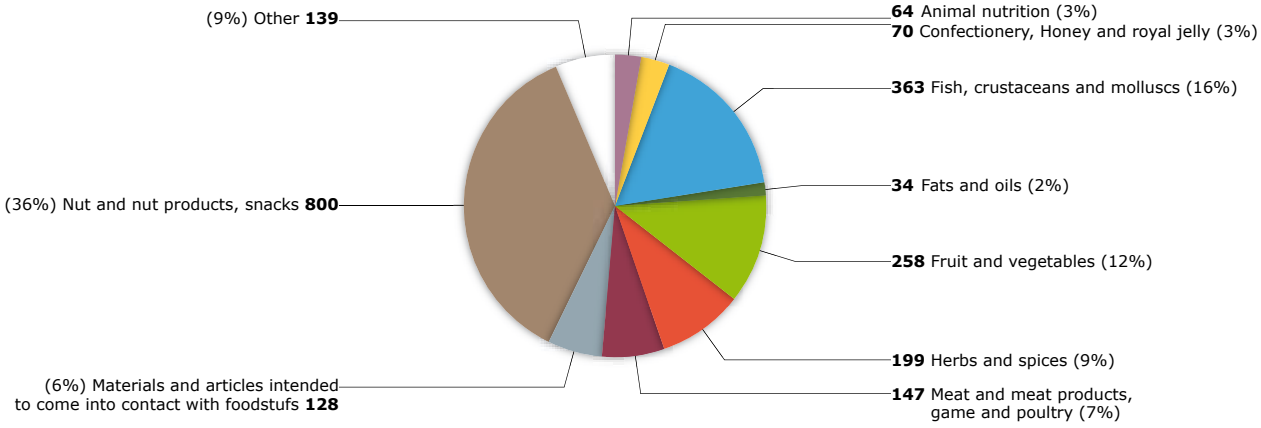
2005
Information notifications according to product origin

Member States (EU + EFTA/EEA)	**300**	13%
Candidate Countries (Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Turkey)	**203**	9%
Third Countries	**1733**	78%

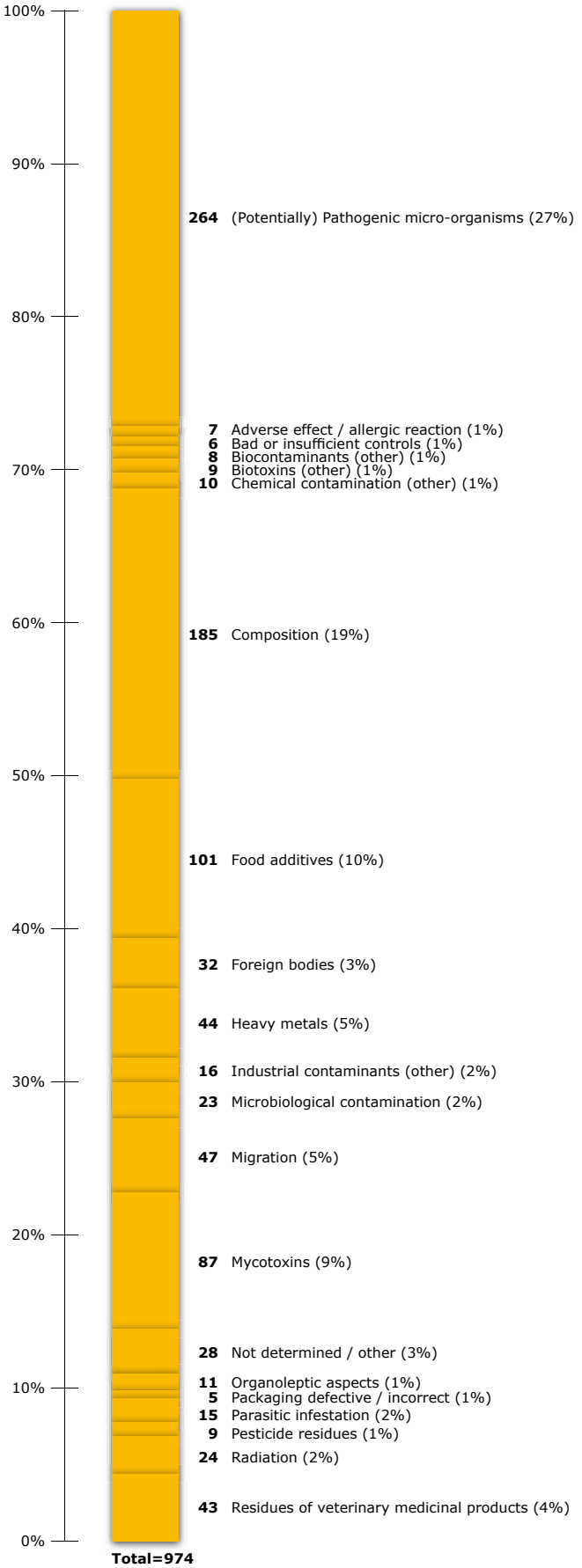
2005
Alert notifications according to product category



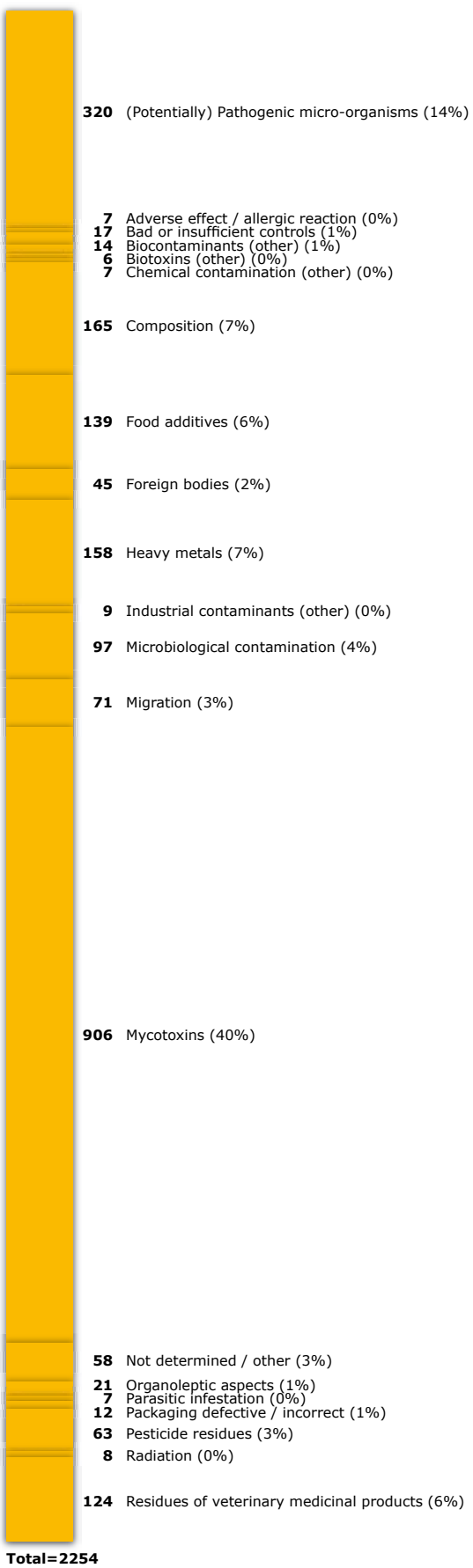
2005
Information notifications according to product category



2005
Alert notifications according to identified risk



2005
Information notifications according to identified risk



Analysis of trends in hazards notified through the RASFF in 2005

Explanation of the symbols used

- ↑ Slow/little increase of the number of notifications received.
- ↑↑ Quick/significant increase of the number of notifications received.
- → Number of notification follows the same trend as the year before.
- 2003 Year in which a "peak" number of notifications was received.
- 2004 Year in which a very high "peak" number of notifications was received.
- 2003 ↓↑ Year in which a "peak" number of notifications was received, but the number of notifications is on the rise again.
- new New hazard in the RASFF system with a significant number of notifications.

Remark: to take any trends into account there needs to have been at least one year with "double figure" numbers of notifications in the period reviewed.

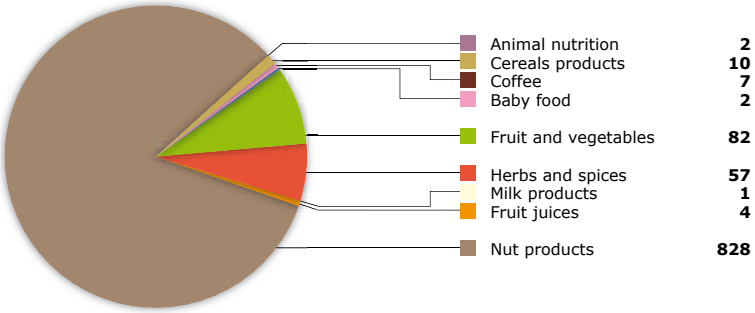
2005		Food of animal origin							Food of plant origin						Mixed		Other
		Fishery products	Honey	Eggs and egg products	Meat and meat products (other than poultry)	Milk and milk products	Molluscs and products	Poultry meat and products	Cereals	Confectionery	Fruits and vegetables	Herbs and spices	Non-alcoholic beverages	Nuts and nut products	Fats and oils	Soups, broths and sauces	Food contact materials
Veterinary drug residues	(leuco)malachite green	↑↑															
	chloramphenicol	2002	↑↑		2003	2002											
	nitrofuran metabolite SEM	2003↓↑		2003				2003									
	nitrofuran metabolite AOZ	2003		2003	2003			2002									
	nitrofuran metabolite AMOZ							2002									
	sulphonamides		2003														
	streptomycin		2002														
Food additives	too high content of sulphites	↑									2003						
	too high content of E 210 - benzoic acid												2003				
	too high content of colour additives																
	unauthorised use of colour additives								↑↑	↑↑	2004	↑					
	unauthorised colour Sudan 1								2004			2004				2004	
	unauthorised colour Sudan 4											2004			2004		
	unauthorised colour Para Red											new					
	carbon monoxide treatment	↑↑															
	suffocation risk									2004							
Heavy metals	cadmium	2003					2003										
	mercury	→															
	lead									2003							
Mycotoxins	aflatoxins										↑	↑↑		↑			
	fumonisins								2004								
	ochratoxin A										↑	↑					
Pesticide residues	pesticide residues																
	chlormequat										2002						
	methamidophos										2002						
Food contact materials	migration of chromium																↑↑
	migration of lead																↑↑
	migration of nickel																↑↑
	migration of isopropyl thioxanthone																new
	migration of primary aromatic amines																↑↑
	too high level of total migration																↑↑
Microbiological hazards	histamine	2004															
	parasites	2004															
	Listeria monocytogenes	↑			↑	→		2004									
	Salmonella spp.	2003			↑		↑	↑			↑	↑↑					
	Campylobacter spp.							2004									
	Vibrio	2001															
	DSP/PSP/ASP/AZP toxins						2001 2002										
	too high count of Escherichia coli						→					↑↑					
	too high count of Enterobacteriaceae	2002					2003					↑↑					
	too high count of aerobic mesophiles	2003					2003										
	too high count of faecal coliforms						2004										
Foreign bodies	insects/mites										↑						
Other	feed additives			2003													
	polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons	2002													2001		
	high content of iodine										→						
	illegal import/unauthorised transit				new			↑↑									
	3-monochlor-1,2-propanediol (3-MCPD)															2003	
	erucic acid															2004	

Notifications with increased occurrence and/or of particular interest in 2005

Mycotoxins

Mycotoxins are naturally occurring metabolites produced by certain species of moulds (e.g. *Aspergillus spp, Fusarium spp*) which develop at high temperatures and humidity levels and may be present in a large number of foods. This group of toxins includes a number of compounds of varying toxicity and frequency in food. The mould may occur on the growing crop or after harvesting during storage or processing. Whilst the moulds can be considered as plant pathogens, the ingestion of the toxin can result in disease in animals and humans. Mycotoxins like aflatoxins and ochratoxin A are known to be carcinogenic.

Sampling plays a crucial part in the precision of the determination of the levels of mycotoxins, which are very heterogeneously distributed in a consignment. Therefore, in Commission Directives, a sampling procedure and general criteria were fixed to ensure that laboratories in charge of the analysis use methods of analysis with comparable levels of performance.



Aflatoxins

In 2005, the RASFF received a total of 993 notifications on mycotoxins, of which 947 concerned aflatoxins. Most of these notifications concerned pistachio nuts (498) primarily originating from Iran (457). Aflatoxins are also regularly reported in peanuts and derived products (219 notifications) originating from China (79), Brazil (32), Argentina (22) and Ghana (peanut butter, 14).

Within the group of nuts and nut products, 64 notifications concern hazelnuts and derived products, originating from Turkey (53) and Azerbaijan (11) and 33 notifications concern almonds and derived products, primarily originating from the United States (28).

Within the group of fruits and vegetables, 48 notifications concern dried figs and derived products primarily originating from Turkey (46) and 13 notifications concern melon seeds primarily originating from Nigeria (10).

Within the group of herbs and spices (48 notifications), mainly the following products (including derived products) were found contaminated with aflatoxins at levels above the EU-maximum level: chilli (27), paprika (10), curry (4) and nutmeg (4). The products originated primarily from India (27) and to a lesser extent from Turkey (5) and Pakistan (5). Worthwhile to note is that in three notifications high levels of aflatoxins and ochratoxin A were simultaneously found.

	Animal nutrition	Cereals products	Coffee	Baby food	Fruit and vegetables	Herbs and spices	Milk products	Fruit juices	Nut and nut products	Total
Aflatoxins	2	3	0	0	66	48	1	0	827	**947**
Fumonisins	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**2**
Ochratoxin A	0	5	7	0	17	12	0	0	1	**42**
Patulin	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	4	0	**6**
Total	**2**	**10**	**7**	**2**	**83**	**60**	**1**	**4**	**828**	

Other mycotoxins

In 2005, 50 notifications concern mycotoxins other than aflatoxins (in 4 notifications ochratoxin A was simultaneously found with aflatoxins). The large majority of notifications concern ochratoxin A (42) and to a much lesser extent patulin (6) and fumonisins (2). The ochratoxin A notifications concerned mainly dried vine fruit (15), spices (13) coffee and coffee products (7) and cereals and cereal products (5).

New EU-measures as regards mycotoxins in 2005

- Commission Regulation (EC) N° 123/2005 of 26 January 2005 amending Regulation (EC) N° 466/2001 as regards ochratoxin A (OJ L 25, 28.1.2005, p. 3).

  This Regulation establishes maximum levels for ochratoxin A in roasted coffee and coffee products, wine and grape juice in addition to the existing maximum levels for ochratoxin A in cereals and derived cereal products, dried vine fruit, baby foods and processed cereal based foods for infants and young children and dietary foods for special medical purposes intended specifically for infants. Accompanying provisions as regards sampling and analysis have been provided for in Commission Directive 2005/5/EC of 26 January 2005 amending Directive 2002/26/EC as regards sampling methods and methods of analysis for the official control of the levels of ochratoxin A in certain foodstuffs (OJ L 27, 29.1.2005, p. 38).

- Commission Regulation (EC) 856/2005 of 6 June 2005 amending Regulation (EC) N° 466/2001 as regards Fusarium-toxins (OJ L 143, 7.6.2005, p. 3)

  Fusarium-fungi are important pathogens in cereals, including maize. The presence of these fungi can result in a significant yield loss but is also an important problem in the cereal food and feed chain because of their ability to produce mycotoxins in the grain, such as deoxynivalenol, fumonisins, zearalenone, T-2 and HT-2 toxin potentially causing serious health effects in humans and animals.

  The Commission Regulation sets maximum levels for deoxynivalenol in cereals and cereal products, for zearalenone in cereals and cereal products, except maize and maize products. Maximum levels for zearalenone and fumonisin B1 and B2 in maize and maize products are announced in order to stimulate all the operators in the cereal chain to perform investigations on the sources of the formation of these mycotoxins. Identification of the sources will enable determination of the preventative measures that can be taken to avoid as much as possible the presence of these mycotoxins in cereals and cereal products.

  Accompanying provisions as regards sampling and analysis have been provided for in Commission Directive 2005/38/EC of 6 June 2005 laying down the sampling methods and the methods of analysis for the official control of the levels of Fusarium toxins in foodstuffs (OJ L 143, 7.6.2005, p. 18).

Safeguard measures

- The stricter measures for pistachios originating from Iran (mentioned in the annual report of the functioning of the RASFF in 2004) have been adopted by Commission Decision 2005/85/EC of 26 January 2005 imposing special conditions on the import of pistachios and certain products derived from pistachios originating in or consigned from Iran.

- A guidance document for competent authorities for the control of compliance with EU legislation on aflatoxins has been elaborated and is available in all Community languages on the website of the Health and Consumer Protection DG of the Commission[1]. The guidance document focuses mainly on the official control of aflatoxin contamination in food products which are subject to specific Commission Decisions. Nevertheless, the provisions in this guidance document are also applicable where relevant to the control of aflatoxins in food products not subject to specific Commission Decisions.

1 . http://ec.europa.eu/comm/food/food/chemicalsafety/contaminants/aflatoxin_guidance_en.pdf

Dioxins

Dioxins are a group of environmentally persistent chlorinated organic compounds. There are a few natural sources of dioxins, such as forest fires and volcanic activity, but dioxins are for the largest part unintentional by-products of combustion and industrial processes.

Dioxins share similar chemical structures and mechanism of toxicity and bioaccumulate in animals and humans due to their fat solubility. These compounds belong to three closely related families: the polychlorinated dibenzo-p-dioxins, polychlorinated dibenzofurans and certain polychlorinated biphenyls. Seventeen of the dioxins are thought to be toxic, of which 2,3,7,8-tetrachlorodibenzo-p-dioxin, abbreviated as 2,3,7,8-TCDD or TCDD is the most toxic.

In 2005, the RASFF received 4 notifications on dioxins. The 4 notifications concerned products intended for animal feeding: one notification on the feed additive zinc oxide, two on fish meal and one on shrimp hulls. It does not concern new problems. The presence of dioxins in dried shrimp hull above the maximum level was already reported in 2002, 2003 and 2004. Unacceptable levels of dioxins in zinc oxide were already reported through the RASFF in 2003 and also in another trace element intended for animal feeding copper oxide.

Currently no EU maximum level has been established for dioxins in trace elements such as zinc oxide and copper oxide but because of known problems with unacceptable dioxin contamination, a maximum level of 1,0 ng WHO-PCDD/F-TEQ/kg has been established by Directive 2006/13/EC (see below).

New EU-measures as regards dioxins

- Commission Regulation (EC) N° 199/2006 of 3 February 2006 amending Regulation (EC) N° 466/2001 setting maximum levels for certain contaminants in foodstuffs as regards dioxins and dioxin-like PCBs (OJ L 32, 4.2.2006, p. 34).

- Commission Directive 2006/13/EC of 3 February 2006 amending Annexes I and II to Directive 2002/32/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on undesirable substances in animal feed as regards dioxins and dioxin-like PCBs (OJ L 32, 4.2.2006, p. 44)

Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) are a group of 209 different congeners which can be divided into two groups according to their toxicological properties: 12 congeners exhibit toxicological properties similar to dioxins and are therefore often termed "dioxin-like PCBs". The other PCBs have a different toxicological profile. From a toxicological point of view, any maximum level should apply to the sum of dioxins, furans and dioxin-like PCBs. In 2001, maximum levels were set only for dioxins and furans and not for dioxin-like PCBs, given the very limited data available at that time on the occurence of dioxin-like PCBs in food and feed.

In the meantime, an active approach has been followed to generate and collect data on the presence of dioxin-like PCBs in feed and food. Therefore this Directive and Regulation establish new maximum levels for the sum of dioxins, furans and dioxin-like PCBs in feed and food, applicable from November 2006 onwards. In order to ensure a smooth transition, it is considered appropriate to maintain for a transitional period the existing maximum levels for dioxins and furans, in addition to the new maximum levels for the sum of dioxins, furans and dioxin-like PCBs.

Residues of veterinary medicinal products

Community legislation on residues of veterinary medicinal products provides that only substances that have undergone a human safety evaluation with a positive result according to Regulation 2377/90 may be used in food producing animals. The use of substances that have not undergone a human safety evaluation is not authorised. Moreover the use of some specific substances is expressly prohibited in Community

legislation. As a consequence, residues of non-authorised or prohibited substances are not to be present in food offered for sale on the Common Market.

39 RASFF notifications in 2005 show that residues of a variety of unauthorised or prohibited antimicrobials, including chloramphenicol, are still detected in honey. This may partly be due to the fact that only very few substances have been evaluated for use in bees, in the Community or elsewhere.

Honey and royal jelly

In 2005, 27 RASFF notifications concerned the presence of chloramphenicol in honey and in royal jelly. Chloramphenicol is an antibiotic banned in the EU for food safety reasons. Analytical tests to detect chloramphenicol in honey and other bee products have begun in 2002 with the controls induced by the safeguard measures on Chinese products of animal origin, imposing tests for chloramphenicol on each consignment arriving. The safeguard measures were lifted in 2004. Each year since then there are notifications on positive cases of chloramphenicol detected in honey and honey products in the EU. For this year, 18 out of the 27 notifications concern royal jelly, a highly priced bee product used for its high content in vitamins and minerals. This product is mainly imported from China or neighbouring countries. Italy, Spain and Germany have specifically implemented controls on royal jelly which explains the high number of notifications on this particular product sent by these Member States.

Honey and royal jelly are considered more as grocery products by trade than as animal products. There is often no appropriate traceability. Switzerland is mentioned in 5 notifications as the country of origin although this country does not produce royal jelly. Switzerland is most likely a trading focal point where honey and honey products are imported from third countries and re-exported to the EU. With 12 notifications for chloramphenicol in honey and honey products of which the origin was established as Asian (4 for Vietnam, 3 for India and 5 for China), it is fair to say that chloramphenicol is still in use there.

Fishery products

In 2005, far more notifications concerning residues of veterinary medicinal products were issued on fish than in 2004 (62 as opposed to 30). The unauthorised fungicidal dye malachite green was the most detected unauthorised substance in fish (50 notifications). Alarming with respect to antibiotic resistance is the detection of the fluorquinolones ciprofloxaxin and enrofloxacin in fish from Vietnam. The fear exists that use these antibiotics may cause the spread of resistant pathogenic bacteria. Notifications concerning crustaceans (42) were predominantly linked to nitrofurans (33).

> *For detailed charts on this topic, see page 29.*

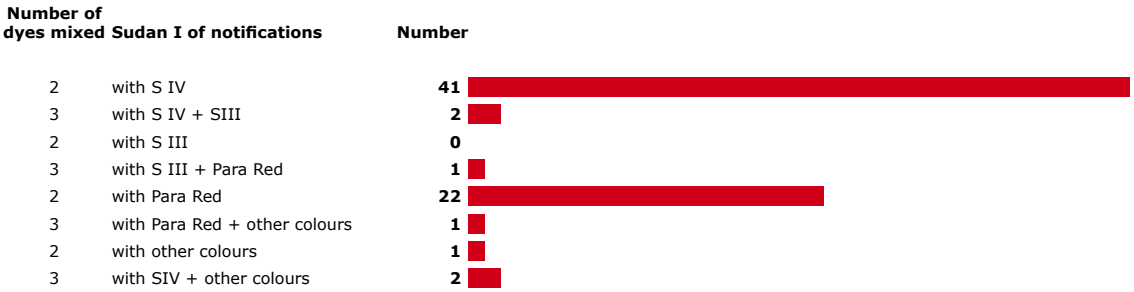
Illegal use of dyes in spices

Sudan dyes in spices and other food products continued to be detected in 2005. However, other similar illegal dyes have also been discovered in spices and spice products this year.

The most important of these dyes is Para Red, which was originally detected in the Netherlands as a result of a company's own check in April 2005. Since then, 42 RASFF notifications concerning the detection of this dye in chilli, chilli powder and products containing chilli were received in 2005. 85% of the positive findings for Para Red were done in Germany and the United Kingdom. In addition to the testing capability for Sudan dyes, these two Member States had also developed an analytical test for Para Red. Since then some other Member States (France, Belgium) have also notified detection of this dye. As regards the origin of the contaminated products, it should be noted that in one third of the notifications on Para Red, spices originated from the Russian Federation or a former Soviet Republic. In many other cases, the exact origin was not determined because of the lack of traceability in the spices market. In comparison, the most frequent origin mentioned for Sudan dyes notifications was India. As Germany is a key player for the import of spices in the EU it has logically notified many positive cases and is also identified as the most frequent origin of the contaminated products (when the exact origin could not be determined).

For Sudan I and Para-Red, tests have revealed that in more than half of the cases of fraudulent use of these dyes, a mix of 2 or more different dyes had been used (see graph below). The most common mix found in spices is Sudan I associated with Sudan IV.

Importance of dyes mixes in the adulteration of spices.



Finally, in addition to Sudan dyes and Para Red, tests carried out in Member States on spices and other food products have also revealed the presence of other dyes such as Orange II (2 notifications), Rhodamine B (5 notifications) and inappropriate use of colours authorised for other food use (tartrazine, butter yellow, norbixin, etc.).

To conclude, no decrease has been observed in the number of notifications made by the Member States as regards the adulteration of spices and other food products by illegal compounds. Furthermore, it seems that this fraud involves several different dyes and colours.

Poor microbiological quality of fresh herbs and spices

A high number of notifications (87) were made due to poor microbiological quality of herbs and spices in 2005. A majority of these notifications (52/87; 60%) concerned fresh herbs imported from Thailand. The presence of *Salmonella* and/or a high count of indicators, such as Enterobacteriaceae, *Escherichia coli* were found indicating a poor microbiological quality.

In the current Community legislation, no microbiological criteria for herbs and spices have been set down. However, fresh herbs being contaminated with *Salmonella* can be considered unsafe due to being generally consumed raw, without heat treatment. Commission Regulation (EC) N° 2073/2005 on microbiological criteria for foodstuffs[1], applicable from 11 January 2006, sets down a *Salmonella* criterion for certain vegetable products, such as sprouted seeds and precut fruit and vegetables. This criterion (a food safety criterion) applies to products placed on the market and furthermore, to import control. The *E. coli* criterion (a process hygiene criterion) set down in this new Regulation does apply only to the point of production process, not to products placed on the market.

Salmonella in fresh meat and products thereof

The number of notifications due to presence of *Salmonella* in meat and products thereof has constantly increased in previous years (175 notifications in 2005, compared to 141 in 2004). For poultry meat most notifications concern products of EU origin (56/75; 75%), while the imported poultry meat originated particularly from Brazil. For meat other than poultry 83% of the notifications concerned products of EU origin.

In the current legislation, there is a *Salmonella* criterion for minced meat and meat preparations, but not for fresh meat. The new Commission Regulation on microbiological criteria sets down stricter *Salmonella* criteria than the current legislation for minced meat, meat preparations and also for meat products. The new criteria are slightly different for products intended to be eaten raw than for those to be eaten cooked.

1 . Commission Regulation (EC) N° 2073/2005 of 15 November 2005 on microbiological criteria for foodstuffs (OJ L338, 22.12.2005, p.1).

These criteria (food safety criteria) apply to products placed on the market. A process hygiene criterion for *Salmonella* in carcases has been set down permitting a few out of 50 samples being positive, when tested after slaughtering. The establishment of this criterion reflects the occurrence of *Salmonella* at present in primary production and may be strengthened later when the *Salmonella* situation has improved in the beginning of the food chain. The new process hygiene criterion applies only to the production process. For fresh meat placed on the market, no *Salmonella* criterion has been set in Regulation (EC) N° 2073/2005.

Listeria monocytogenes in meat and meat products

There was a moderate increase of *L. monocytogenes* notifications in the food category of meat and meat products other than poultry. Most of the notifications (20/31; 65 %) were dealing with *L. monocytogenes* in meat products such as salami, ham and cooked meat, regarded as ready-to-eat foods. In a few cases enumeration of *L. monocytogenes* was carried out (maximum level 260 cfu/g), but in most cases the level of contamination remained unknown. In 11 cases, the notification was made on the basis of detection of *L. monocytogenes* in fresh meat.

In the existing legislation, a *L. monocytogenes* criterion has been set only for milk products. Commission Regulation (EC) N° 2073/2005 on microbiological criteria includes a *L. monocytogenes* criterion (a food safety criterion) for all ready-to-eat foods and special attention has been paid to ready-to-eat foods permitting growth of *L. monocytogenes* during their shelf-life. If the limit of 100 cfu/g is exceeded, the food is regarded as unsafe and must be withdrawn from the market. This limit applies to products placed on the market during their entire shelf-life. No criterion was set for fresh meat because it is not regarded as a high risk product in relation to *L. monocytogenes*.

> *Detailed charts regarding microbiology of foods are on page 27.*

Carbon monoxide treatment of tuna

Carbon monoxide is used in meat and fish products to maintain the red colour. Fish such as tuna can be processed by the direct addition of carbon monoxide or by indirect addition through the use of purified smoke described variously as: "liquid smoked", "clear smoked", "cold smoked" or "filtered smoked". Products treated with carbon monoxide exhibit a more intense colour than non-treated products, but they cannot be organoleptically distinguished from the untreated products.

By maintaining a fresh looking red colour of fish, the use of carbon monoxide could mask spoilage leading to a risk of microbiological contamination being visually undetected. This is particularly a risk in relation to the presence of histamine in fish and could also mislead the consumer as to the freshness of the product.

Carbon monoxide is considered as a food additive. It is not authorised for use in foodstuffs by the European Parliament and Council Directive 95/2/EC of 20 February 1995 on food additives other than colours and sweeteners. Therefore, the treatment of fish with carbon monoxide is prohibited.

Furthermore, Council Directive 91/493/EEC of 22 July 1991 laying down the conditions for the production and the placing on the market of fishery products only allows the treatment of fishery products with potable water or clean seawater for hygienic purposes. Concerning processed fishery products, Council Directive 91/493/EEC provides that:

> *"Where the processing treatment is carried out to inhibit the development of pathogenic micro-organisms, or if it is a significant factor in the preservation of the product, the treatment must be scientifically recognized by the law in force... (omission)."*

Therefore, as the treatment with purified smoke has not been scientifically recognised or authorised, it cannot be used.

In The Netherlands, a court decision ruled that carbon monoxide treated fish could not be banned from the market. Even though this ruling only applies to the Dutch market, the Dutch authorities did not prevent that carbon monoxide treated tuna having been imported in The Netherlands was subsequently distributed to other Member States. In 2005, Member States (other than The Netherlands) transmitted 37 notifications on carbon monoxide treated tuna that was imported through The Netherlands.

> *On this topic, see also the chart on page 28.*

Infringement of UK beef embargo

As from August 2005, following the detection of 23 tons of poultry meat coming from China, but bearing an Italian health mark at a Northern Irish Border Inspection Post, investigations led to the finding of unused labels at a Northern Irish cold store which had ordered the meat. This cold store had also previously sent frozen beef to two other Member States with false labels, as well as poultry and pork meat to seven Member States. The finding of the unused labels led to a RASFF alert notification.

Council Decision 98/256/EC on the UK beef embargo (as amended) compels the UK to ensure that live bovine animals and products thereof are only dispatched to other Member States or third countries under exceptional, strict conditions. As far as the poultry meat is concerned, the importation from China has been banned for several years for animal health reasons due to the widespread occurrence of avian influenza (HPAI H5N1).

In so far as the origin of the beef and poultry meat has not been established, the Commission cannot assess any possible risk to public or animal health linked to the trade which has taken place.

In order to clarify the background to the incidents further, the Commission encouraged all Member States during several occasions to report all relevant information, as well as investigation results through the RASFF. This incident and the one in Germany (see next heading) have resulted in Member States reviewing their controls regarding cold stores and exchanging information in order to check the authenticity of health marks placed on the stored meat.

Entry of animal by-products into the food chain in Germany

During several incidents, certain animal by-products not intended for human consumption have entered the food chain in Germany. A considerable quantity of these by-products concerned various kinds of meat stored beyond the maximum durability date. The material was partly supplied by operators in other Member States and was also partly distributed to other Member States. The incidents led to two RASFF alert notifications, as well as a number of follow-up messages due to Member States' and German authorities' investigations.

Community legislation (General Food Law – Regulation (EC) N° 178/2002, as well as Directive 2000/13/EC on the labelling of foodstuffs) sets clear requirements under which circumstances foodstuffs can be regarded as fit for human consumption. Animal by-products falling under the scope of Regulation (EC) N° 1774/2002 may not be re-channelled into the food chain and may only be used for specific purposes, such as the production of pet food from material fit, but not intended for human consumption.

In case foodstuffs beyond their maximum durability date are supplied for food purposes, they cannot be regarded as safe for human consumption by virtue of Regulation 178/2002. If animal by-products re-enter the food chain, risks for public health may arise as they are not transported and handled under the same hygiene conditions – regardless of any risks possibly arising from the sanitary condition of the by-products themselves.

The Commission has followed the investigations closely and has encouraged the Member States concerned to provide additional information through the RASFF.

Illegal imports of animal products from third countries

In the last two years particularly there has been a rise in the number of attempts to introduce animal products illegally into the EU by various means. "Illegal import" is a loose definition but for the purposes of this report, it is assumed to refer to efforts to fraudulently import animal products which do not meet our animal and public health requirements. It does not directly address, therefore, fraudulent imports aimed at evading customs duties, rules of origin etc. These are dealt with purely by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) and the Directorate General Taxation and Customs Union.

The RASFF and the TRACES (TRAde Control and Expert System) systems are both relatively recent innovations in regards to border controls which have also considerably strengthened the protective framework in relation to illegal trade. The former ensures very rapid circulation of information to all Border Inspection Posts (BIPs) regarding any illegal interceptions. The latter provides for much improved information on the traceability of imported consignments.

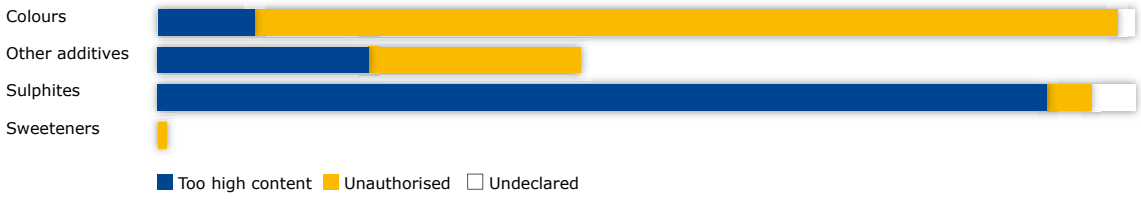
Under the RASFF system all relevant information concerning attempts to import banned products are rapidly circulated to BIPs in other Member States which allows for increased vigilance on the part of the authorities there. It has been found that some traders will attempt to re introduce consignments in a second BIP with false documentation, and the RASFF notifications are helping to counteract such practices.

There have been 26 notifications under the RASFF system in the period in question purely in regard to potential illegal imports of meat and meat products.

Notifications concerning food additives

Following notifications to the RASFF about the use of titanium dioxide in roasted chickpeas from Turkey (7 notifications), the permanent delegation of Turkey to the European Union requested to consider roasted chickpeas as snacks where the use of titanium dioxide (E 171) would be allowed in accordance with Directive 94/36/EC. The matter was referred to the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health on 16 December 2005, where the Committee concluded that roasted chickpeas, which are edible pulses, should not be considered as snacks. As a consequence, the use of E 171 titanium dioxide remains not permitted in this product.

From the chart below, it appears that two issues concerning food additives are primarily notified: unauthorised use of food colours (81 notifications) and too high content of sulphites (101 notifications).

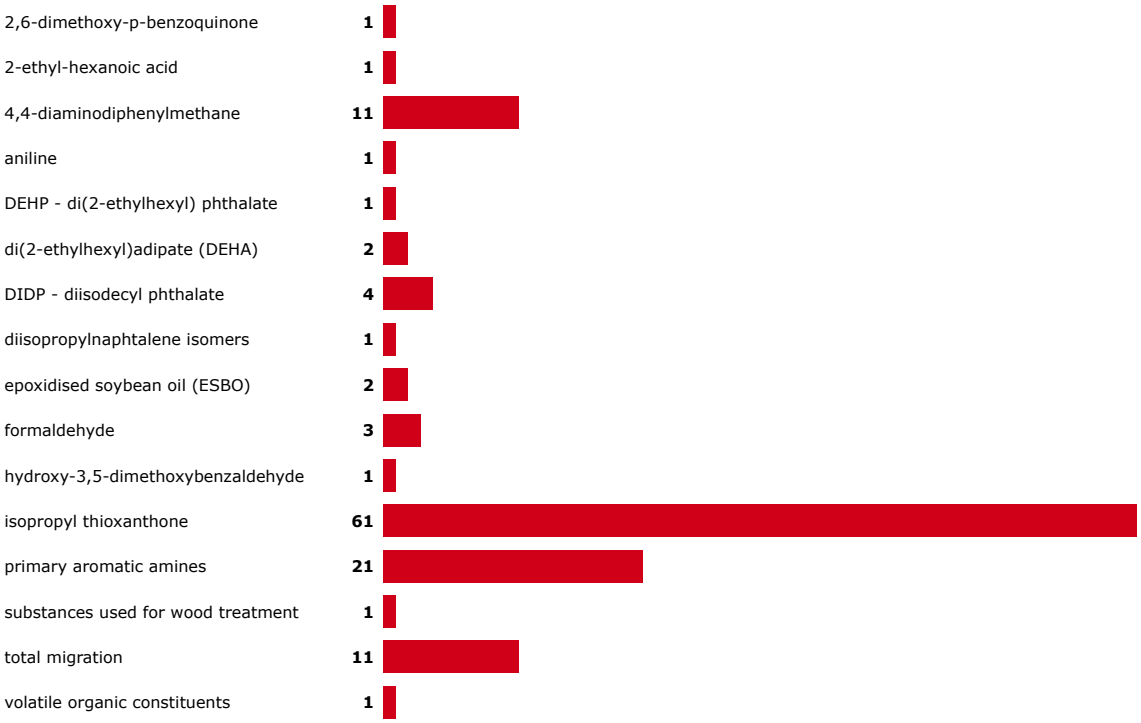


As regards the unauthorised use of food colours, the following cases were frequently notified: E 160b annatto/bixin/norbixin in spices and palm oil (21 times), where they may have been applied as an 'alternative' to the illegal Sudan colours, and E 102 tartrazine in noodles (14 times).

The too high content of sulphites is not a new problem notified in the RASFF system. An important number of these notifications (63) apply to the content of sulphites in crustaceans like shrimps and lobster. Many of these concern cooked shrimps for which a lower limit of 50 mg/kg is set. There is evidence that raw shrimps respecting the sulphite content limit for raw shrimps could exceed the limit for cooked shrimps once cooked. For this reason, the Commission prepared a proposal for amendment of Directive 95/2/EC that would adjust the limit for cooked shrimps to the one for raw shrimps.

A new legislative proposal has been presented by the Commission to the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health on 16 December 2005. According to the proposed directive amending Directive 95/45/EC, the presence of Sudan I, which may be formed as an impurity during the production of Sunset Yellow FCF (E 110), will be restricted to an amount below the limit of detection, i.e. 0.5 mg/kg. The limit for lead in Sunset Yellow is reduced to 2 mg/kg.

Notifications concerning food contact materials



1. Primary aromatic amines

Directive 2002/72/EC Annex V specifies that plastic materials and articles should not release any primary aromatic amines (PAA) into food or food simulant in detectable quantities. The detection limit is set at 0.02 mg of PAA expressed as aniline and already includes an analytical tolerance. Exempted are PAAs which are listed in the Directive.

PAAs are suspected human carcinogens. They can be formed primarily from isocyanates used in glues or adhesives in laminates and from azodyes used as colorants. Other sources for formation of PAAs may exist.

Rapid alerts on PAAs relate in most cases to the migration from kitchen utensils made of nylon imported from China. National enforcement campaigns on PAAs detected several non-compliances with the EU limit. A possible source for PAAs could be the black dye used in the manufacturing of the nylon. The Commission services have contacted the Chinese authorities concerning the increasing numbers of notifications on food contact materials imported from China also sending references of the legislation applicable.

The Commission's Directorate General Health and Consumer Protection and the Chinese Agency for Quality Supervision Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ) signed a Memorandum of Understanding on product safety. It aims to establish better communication and co-operation between the responsible authorities on general product safety, food safety, and sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) issues, with a view to boosting the overall protection of both EU and Chinese citizens. The Commission envisages a mission of the Food and Veterinary Office to China in 2006 with the aim of further increasing communication and co-operation in the area of control of food contact materials.

2. Migration of lead from ceramic ware

Directive 84/500/EEC lays down migration limits for lead and cadmium from ceramic ware into 3% acetic acid. The levels are the following

	Pb	Cd
Category 1 Articles which cannot be filled and articles which can be filled, the internal depth of which, measured from the lowest point to the horizontal plane passing through the upper rim, does not exceed 25 mm.	0.8 mg/dm²	0.07 mg/dm²
Category 2 All other articles which can be filled.	4.0 mg/l	0.3 mg/l
Category 3 Cooking ware; packaging and storage vessels having a capacity of more than three litres.	1.5 mg/l	0.1 mg/l

Directive 2005/31/EC foresees a declaration of compliance for ceramic articles and appropriate documentation to demonstrate that the ceramic articles comply with the migration limits for lead and cadmium to be made available by the manufacturer or the importer into the Community to the national competent authorities on request. That documentation shall contain the results of the analysis carried out, the test conditions and the name and the address of the laboratory that performed the testing.

Adverse health effects to humans, caused by very high lead intakes from food, which has been stored for longer periods in ceramic articles with a high transfer rate of lead, cannot be completely ruled out today. The symptoms of mild lead poisoning tend to be rather non-specific like tiredness, headache and the onset of anaemia. Neurological disorders may also occur especially in developing organisms like foetuses, infants and small children. Chronic lead poisoning can manifest itself in a feeling of faintness, loss of appetite, nervousness, nausea and weight loss. The Provisional Tolerable Weekly Intake (PTWI) of lead is 25 µg/kg body weight. The Provisional Tolerable Weekly Intake (PTWI) of cadmium is 0.7 µg/kg body weight.

3. Heavy metals migrating from metal ware such as chromium, nickel

Metal ware is not specifically regulated at Community level. It is covered by the Framework Regulation (EC) N° 1935/2004 on materials and articles in contact with food according to which materials and articles should not transfer substances into food in concentrations that may endanger human health and/or change the composition, the taste or odour of the food in an unacceptable way.

Specific national legislation on metal ware exists in some Member States. The RASFF notifications originate all from the Member States that have national legislation in place. In these countries regular controls are carried out to verify if the levels present are in accordance with this legislation.

> *A detailed chart regarding notifications on heavy metals, including migration from food packaging materials, can be found on page 29.*

4. Migration of isopropylthioxanthone (ITX) from carton packaging

In September 2005, the Italian competent authorities informed the European Commission via a RASFF notification that some batches of liquid baby milk contained a substance called isopropylthioxanthone, in short ITX. It was present in the milk at levels of up to 250 parts per billion (ppb). ITX is a photoinitiator used in printing inks for offset printing on the outside of beverage cartons. Following the notification, the concerned business operators informed the Commission that this substance was accidentally present due to the manufacturing process in which the multilayer cardboard was rolled on reels and the substance was then transferred from the outer printed surface to the inner plastic surface prior to the construction of the individual cartons.

The Commission informed all Member States through the RASFF on all notifications and on information exchange between the Commission and the concerned business operators. In addition, on 6 October 2005, further information was provided at a meeting of Member States experts.

Industry provided its own risk assessment on ITX and indicated that there was no health risk. Nevertheless, the Commission asked industry to provide the toxicological dossier and sent this data to EFSA for advice. Following the withdrawal of concerned products from the Italian market on 22 November 2005 and a preliminary EFSA statement on ITX on 24 November 2005 indicating no immediate health concern, the Standing Committee on 30 November 2005 concluded that there was no need to take measures at EU level. This conclusion was supported by EFSA's opinion of 9 December 2005 stating that the presence in food, whilst undesirable, does not raise health concerns at levels reported.

The major beverage carton producer committed to cease the use of ITX in packaging for all baby milk as from the end of September 2005, for fatty products by the end of December 2005 and for other concerned products by end of January 2006.

To date, no Member State other than Italy has taken measures. The Italian Ministry has intensified controls on products on the market, including milk products and fruit juices and continues to withdraw the batches where ITX was found.

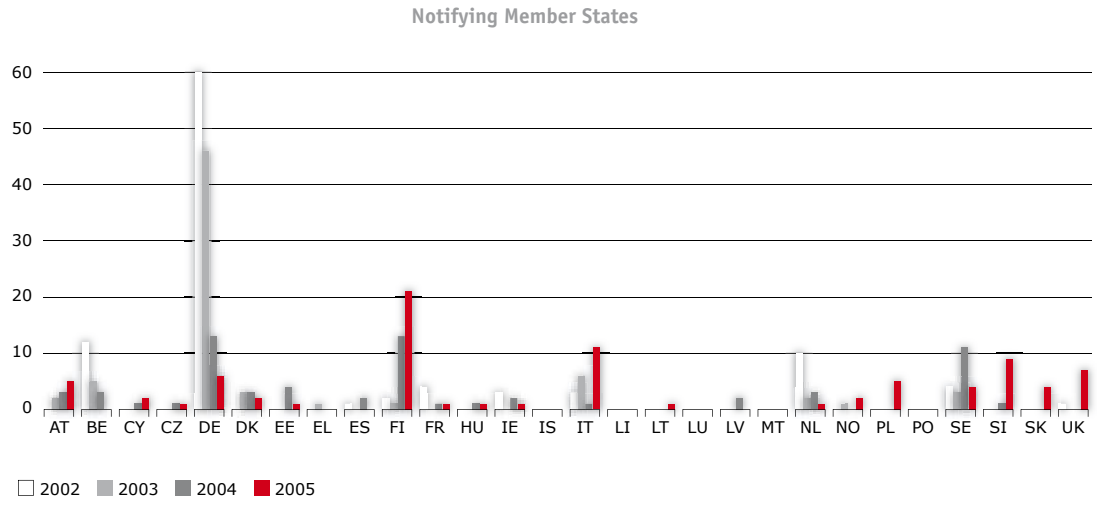
Neither cartons nor printing inks are yet subject to detailed EU harmonisation. They are covered by the Framework Regulation (EC) N° 1935/2004 on materials and articles in contact with food according to which materials and articles shall not release substances into the food which endanger human health and/or bring about unacceptable changes in the composition of the food or bring about a deterioration of the organoleptic properties of the food. As in all cases, the overall requirement that food must be safe applies under the primary responsibility of the food industry.

To avoid similar contamination incidents, the Commission will propose a measure detailing the requirements for good manufacturing practice which the packaging industry should apply. This measure will be proposed to the Member States as an implementing measure of the Regulation on food contact materials.

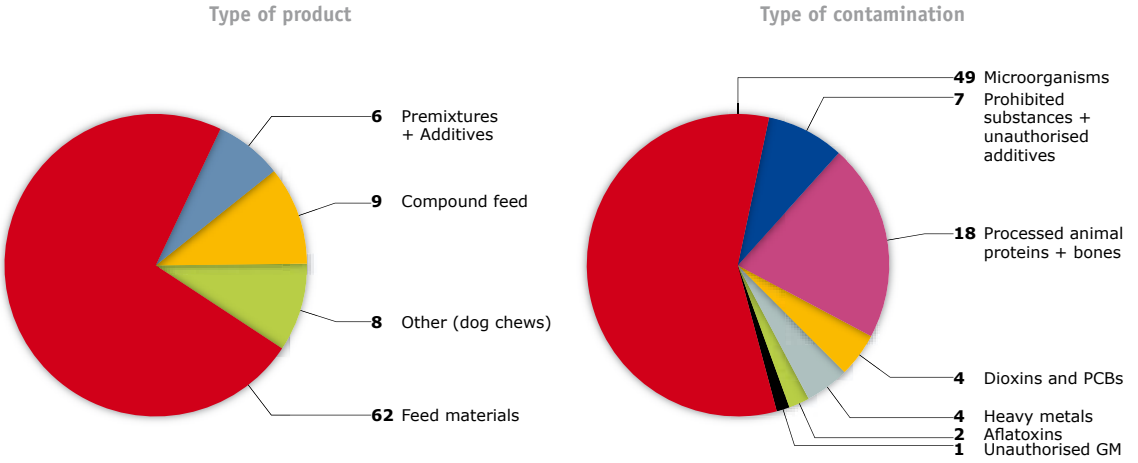
Notifications concerning feed

The total number of notifications for feed in 2005 was 85, making up 3.0% of all RASFF notifications. This figure represents a moderate increase compared to the previous year: 65 notifications (2.5% of the total) in 2004.

These 85 notifications comprised 22 alert and 63 information notifications. Nineteen Member States sent notifications about feed, but 25% of the total was transmitted by Finland, followed by Italy and Slovenia. About 59% of the total number of notifications concerned feed originating from Member States, in particular Germany (18 notifications) and the Netherlands (10), while 41% related to feed from third countries.



The main problems were related to microbiological contamination of feed (49 notifications), mostly Salmonella in feed materials and dog chews. Other identified problems were the presence of fragments of bones (18 notifications) mainly in sugar beet pulp and the detection of unauthorised feed additive organic selenium in several products (5 notifications).



Recurrent problems for which the Commission required specific guarantees from third countries and Member States

In order to avoid the recurrence of the problem detected, the RASFF informs third countries of origin in a systematic way via the Commission Delegations. Member States are informed directly through the RASFF system. In 2005, third countries were informed 2 188 times of a problem with a product originating from their country. Following the transmission of more details in the RASFF, 185 e-mails with additional information were sent. Third countries were informed 278 times of a distribution of a contaminated product to their country.

Moreover, when a serious problem is detected on several occasions, a letter is sent to the competent authority of the country concerned. In 2005, 5 such letters were sent (see table below). As a consequence of these letters, third countries take measures such as delisting of establishments, suspension of exports, intensification of controls and change of legislation. Also, Member States intensify checks at import. In addition to that, when the guarantees received are not sufficient, the Commission may take measures such as prohibition of import, systematic control at the EU borders, mandatory presentation of health certificates, etc... Additionally, the Food and Veterinary Office uses, among other criteria, the information transmitted through the RASFF to identify the priorities for its inspections programme.

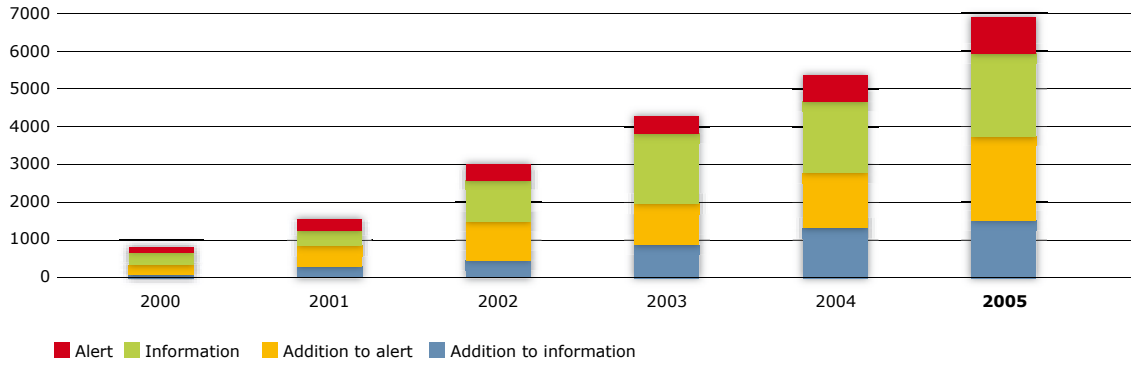
The Commission can also send a letter to a Member State when it wants to draw its attention to a recurrent problem notified in the RASFF, requesting that specific guarantees are given that the problem is being or has been dealt with.

List of letters sent:

Country	Hazard	Product
Turkey	Aflatoxins	Fruit and vegetables, herbs and spices, nuts and nuts products
Turkey	Sulphites	Fruit and vegetables
Thailand	Salmonella and Escherichia coli	Vegetables and herbs
China	Migration of various chemicals	Food contact materials
China	Illegal import	Various products of animal origin

ANNEX
Detailed statistical breakdown

Evolution of the number of notifications since 1999



Year	Alert	Information	Addition to alert	Addition to information	Total
2000	133	340	253	98	**824**
2001	302	406	549	310	**1567**
2002	434	1092	1032	466	**3024**
2003	454	1856	1098	878	**4286**
2004	692	1897	1449	1329	**5367**
2005	**956**	**2202**	**2218**	**1521**	**6897**
2005 increase (%)	+ 38.2%	+ 16.1%	+ 53.1%	+ 14.4%	+ 28.5%

Rejected notifications in 2005

Notifications rejected for the following reasons

The notification contains inaccurate information	1
The notification contains no evidence of a direct or indirect risk to consumer health	20
Levels found are below the legal limits	3
Levels found do not pose a risk to the health of the consumer	6
The notification does not contain sufficient information to perform a proper evaluation	9
The notification is outdated	1
The problem indicated falls outside the scope of the Regulation	24
Total	**64**

Type of hazards identified in the rejected notifications

Adulteration	1
Chemical contamination (other)	3
Food additives	2
GMO / novel food	1
Labelling absent/incomplete/incorrect	13
Microbiological contamination	2
Mycotoxins	1
Not determined / other	32
Organoleptic changes	1
Pesticide residues	6
Residues of veterinary medicinal products	2
Total	**64**

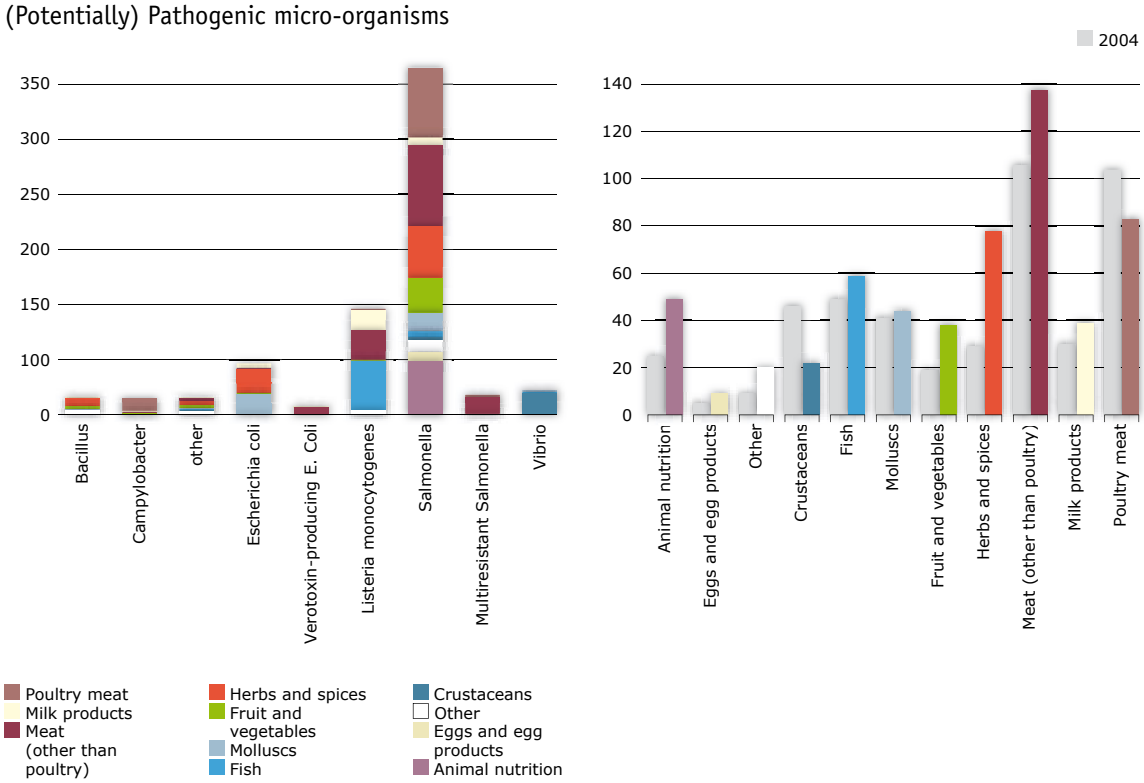
Breakdown of 2005 notifications by hazard and product category

Overview

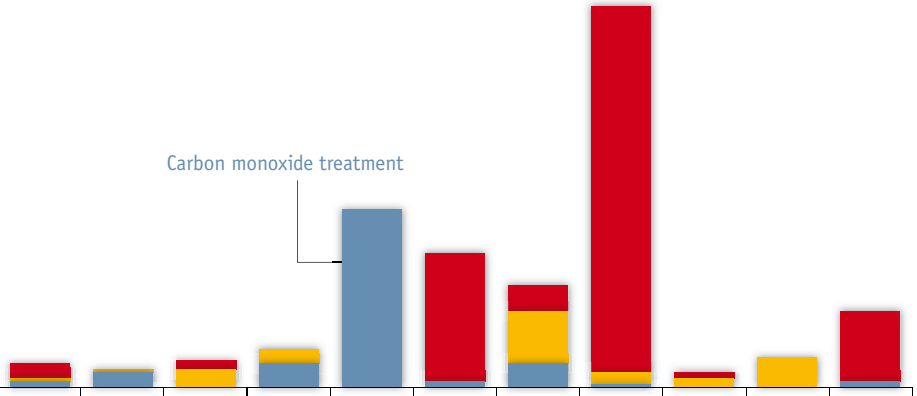
Hazard category	Confectionery, honey and royal jelly	Meat (other than poultry)	Poultry meat	Milk products	Fish	Crustaceans	Molluscs	Fats and oils	Soups, broths and sauces	Nut products and snacks	Fruit and vegetables	Herbs and spices	Cereals and bakery products	Dietetic foods, food supplements	Animal nutrition	Food contact materials	Other
(Potentially) Pathogenic micro-organisms	1	138	83	39	59	22	44	1		3	38	78	3	4	49		19
Adverse effect / allergic reaction	1	1		1						1			3	1	2		4
Bad or insufficient controls		4	5		6	1		4					1				2
Biocontaminants (other)					22												
Biotoxins (other)		1				5	9										
Chemical contamination (other)		3			1					1	1		1	4		4	1
Composition		5	1		61	1		46	26		35	131	9	13	6	2	6
Feed additives			3														
Food additives	38	3		2	2	66		6	4	1	55	19	21				13
Foreign bodies	5	3		2	1		1		2	6	19	5	9	1	17		5
GMO / novel food											3			5	1		
Heavy metals	4	2			51	20	20		2	2	15	2		13	4	63	
Industrial contaminants (other)					5			5	10		1				4		
Labelling absent / incomplete / incorrect	1			1										2			1
Microbiological contamination	1	6		11	19	5	22		1	4	14	16	4	3			5
Migration																118	
Mycotoxins				1		1		1	1	827	81	57	9	2	2		7
Not determined / other	6	32	13	1	1			1				1	1		1	3	7
Organoleptic aspects		4	2			1	1		1	5	6	4	1			5	1
Packaging defective / incorrect		6			4				1		1			1		1	2
Parasitic infestation		2			20												
Pesticide residues	3							1			64	4					
Radiation		1			1	1			1		4	4		8			12
Residues of veterinary medicinal products	55	4	3	1	62	42											

For a detailed chart of the mycotoxins and migration data, see the special topics respectively on mycotoxins and on food contact materials.

(Potentially) Pathogenic micro-organisms



Composition



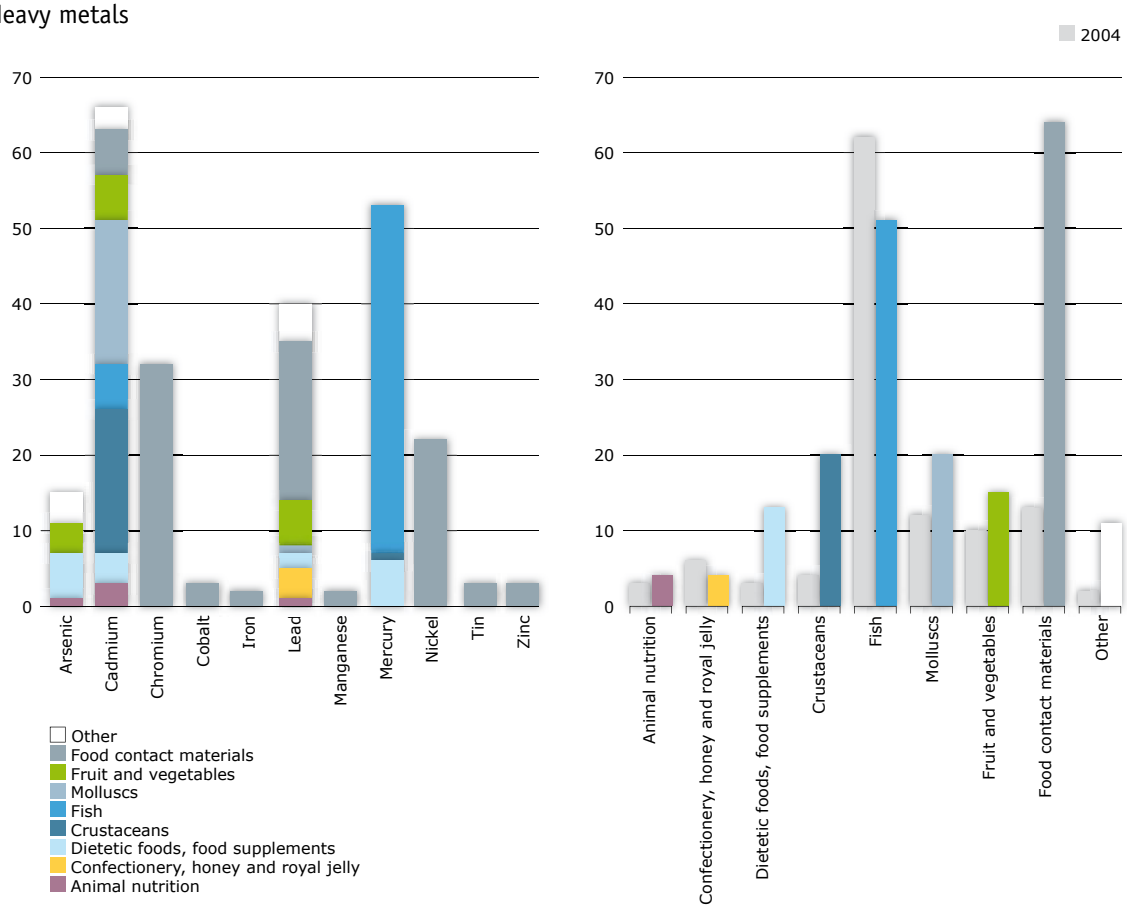
	Other	Animal nutrition	Cereals and bakery products	Dietetic foods, food supplements	Fish	Fats and oils	Fruit and vegetables	Herbs and spices	Meat (other than poultry)	Non-alcoholic beverages	Soups, broths and sauces
Unauthorised colour	5	–	3	–	–	44	9	126	2	–	24
Too high content	1	1	6	5	–	–	18	4	3	10	–
Other	2	5	–	8	61	2	8	1	–	–	2

Note: the "too high content" category refers to chemical substances, other than food additives, for which thresholds existing in food law, as to the quantity present in a specific foodstuff, were exceeded, e.g. nitrates in leafy vegetables, spore elements in drinking water etc.

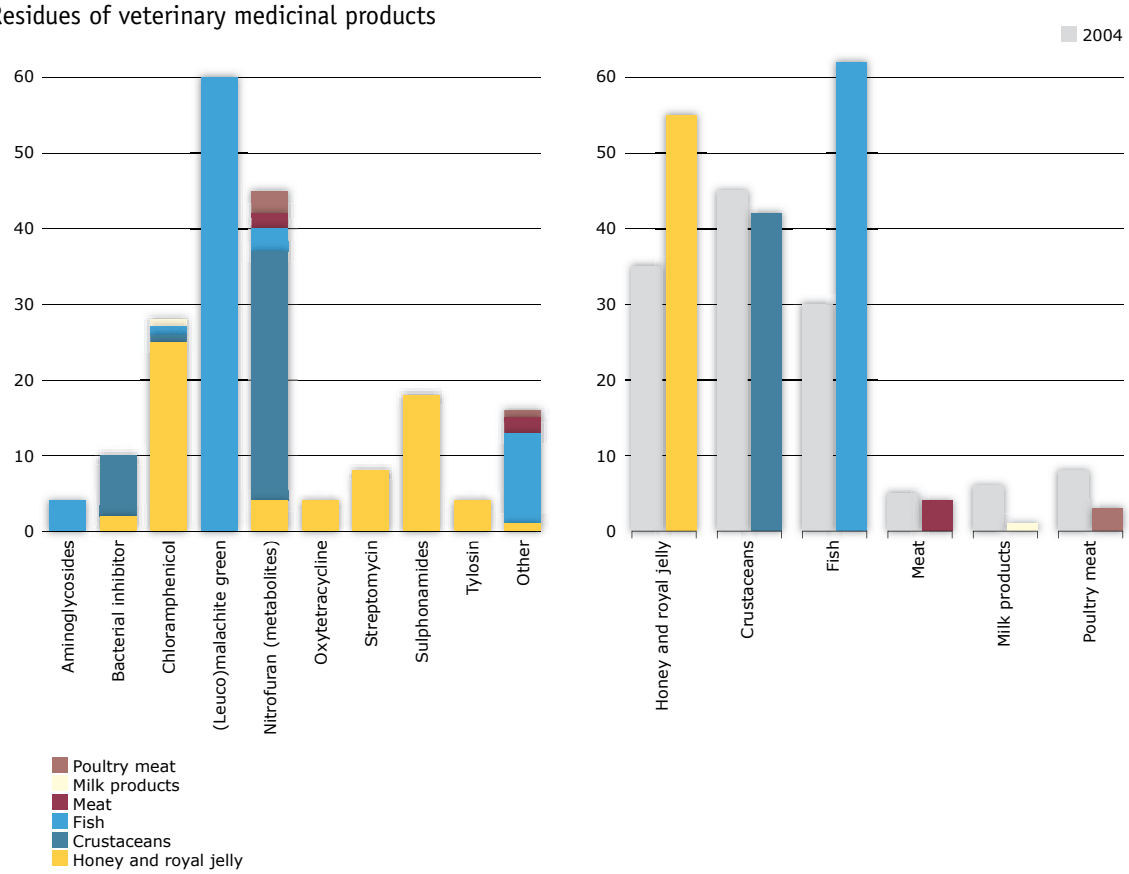
Food additives

Substance	Alcoholic beverages and wine	Non-alcoholic beverages	Cereals and bakery products	Confectionery, honey and royal jelly	Crustaceans and products thereof	Fats and oils	Fruit and vegetables	Herbs and spices	Prepared dishes	Soups, broths and sauces	Meat (other than poultry)	Other
Colour - unidentified												1
Colour E 102 - tartrazine			16	1			3		4			2
Colour E 104 - quinoline yellow			2									
Colour E 110 - Sunset Yellow FCF	1	1	3	2				1	2	1		
Colour E 122 - azorubine	1	2		3								1
Colour E 123 - amaranth				7								
Colour E 124 - Ponceau 4R / cochineal red A				3			1			2		
Colour E 127 - erythrosine			2	8			3	1				1
Colour E 129 - Allura Red AC				1								1
Colour E 133 - Brilliant Blue FCF			2									1
Colour E 141i - copper complexes of chlorophylls			1									
Colour E 142 - Green S				1								
Colour E 160b - annato/bixin/norbixin			1			6		13		2		
Colour E 171 - titanium dioxide							7					
E 200 - sorbic acid		2		5	1		4					2
E 202 - potassium sorbate												1
E 210 - benzoic acid		6		10								
E 211 - sodium benzoate		1		1								1
E 217 - sodium propyl p-hydroxybenzoate		1										1
E 219 - sodium methyl p-hydroxybenzoate		1										
E 300 - ascorbic acid											1	
E 316 - sodium erythorbate									1			
E 320 - butylated hydroxyanisole (BHA)				1								
E 330 - citric acid											1	
E 451 - pentapotassium triphosphate												1
E 452 - polyphosphates					1						3	
E 579 - ferrous glucomate							1					
Total phosphates										1		
Sulphites	2			2	64		36	4				1
Sweetener E 954 - saccharin							1					

Heavy metals



Residues of veterinary medicinal products



Notifications by product category

	2003 Total	2003 Alert	2003 Information	2004 Total	2004 Alert	2004 Information	2005 Total	2005 Alert	2005 Information
Additives	**4**	1	3	**0**	0	0	**1**	0	1
Alcoholic beverages (other than wine)	**5**	2	3	**2**	0	2	**5**	2	3
Non-alcoholic beverages	**27**	5	22	**23**	8	15	**39**	13	26
Wine	**2**	2	0	**3**	0	3	**5**	3	2
Animal nutrition	**69**	16	53	**63**	24	39	**86**	22	64
Cereals and bakery products	**44**	25	19	**51**	30	21	**62**	40	22
Cocoa and cocoa preparations, coffee and tea	**34**	2	32	**19**	5	14	**18**	09	9
Confectionery, Honey and royal jelly	**72**	16	56	**68**	18	50	**114**	44	70
Dietetic foods, food supplements and fortified foods	**25**	9	16	**20**	11	9	**54**	35	19
Eggs and egg products	**35**	13	22	**11**	4	7	**10**	7	3
Fish, crustaceans and molluscs	**(545)**	(97)	(448)	**(541)**	(168)	(373)	**(559)**	(196)	(363)
• *Crustaceans and products thereof*	**110**	11	99	**89**	27	62	**113**	20	93
• *Farmed crustaceans and products thereof*	**56**	10	46	**48**	7	41	**42**	20	22
• *Wild caught crustaceans and products thereof*	**52**	10	42	**24**	2	22	**13**	3	10
• *Fish and products thereof (other than crustaceans and molluscs)*	**193**	54	139	**185**	78	107	**180**	78	102
• *Farmed fish and products thereof (other than crustaceans and molluscs)*	**44**	5	39	**28**	12	16	**47**	21	26
• *Wild caught fish and products thereof (other than crustaceans and molluscs)*	**25**	3	22	**84**	23	61	**85**	44	41
• *Molluscs and products thereof*	**65**	4	61	**83**	19	64	**79**	10	69
Fats and oils	**3**	1	2	**79**	36	43	**65**	31	34
Fruit and vegetables	**211**	38	173	**242**	49	193	**332**	74	258
Herbs and spices	**113**	44	69	**228**	103	130	**308**	109	199
Ices and desserts	**1**	1	0	**5**	3	2	**1**	1	0
Materials and articles intended to come into contact with foodstuffs	**9**	1	8	**36**	11	25	**186**	58	128
Meat and meat products, game and poultry	**(249)**	(98)	(151)	**(279)**	(123)	(156)	**(318)**	(171)	(147)
• *Meat and meat products (other than poultry)*	**153**	69	84	**153**	73	80	**210**	126	84
• *Poultry meat and poultry meat products*	**96**	29	67	**126**	50	76	**108**	45	63
Milk and milk products	**42**	24	18	**48**	32	16	**56**	38	18
Nut and nut products, snacks	**744**	16	728	**778**	19	759	**847**	47	800
Prepared dishes	**13**	7	6	**22**	13	9	**32**	22	10
Soups, broths and sauces	**55**	35	20	**65**	33	32	**49**	31	18
Other food products / mixed	**8**	1	7	**5**	1	4	**11**	3	8
Total	**2310**	454	1856	**2588**	691	1897	**3158**	956	2202

Notifications by hazard category

Hazard category	Total	Alert	Information	Border control - import rejected	Border control - screening sample	Company's own check	Consumer complaint	Market control
Mycotoxins	**993**	87	906	843	23	5	1	121
(Potentially) Pathogenic micro-organisms	**584**	264	320	121	38	22	20	383
Composition	**350**	185	165	44	6	8	1	291
Food additives	**240**	101	139	77	6	4		153
Heavy metals	**202**	44	158	114	19	3	1	65
Residues of veterinary medicinal products	**167**	43	124	65	20	3	2	77
Microbiological contamination	**120**	23	97	69	11	2	6	32
Migration	**118**	47	71	15		17		86
Foreign bodies	**77**	32	45	22	8	2	15	30
Pesticide residues	**72**	9	63	18	7			47
Not determined / other	**67**	19	48	40			1	26
Organoleptic aspects	**32**	11	21	17	2		3	10
Radiation	**32**	24	8	3				29
Industrial contaminants (other)	**25**	16	9		3			22
Bad or insufficient controls	**23**	6	17	13	3		3	4
Biocontaminants (other)	**22**	8	14	4	3		2	13
Parasitic infestation	**22**	15	7	4				18
Chemical contamination (other)	**17**	10	7	3	2		3	9
Packaging defective / incorrect	**17**	5	12	10		2	2	3
Biotoxins (other)	**15**	9	6		1		1	13
Adverse effect / allergic reaction	**14**	7	7			1	3	10
GMO / novel food	**10**	4	6	5				5
Labelling absent/incomplete/incorrect	**6**	3	3		1	2	2	1
Feed additives	**3**	2	1	1	2			
Total	**3228**	**974**	**2254**	**1488**	**155**	**71**	**66**	**1448**

Please note that a notification might be related to more than one hazard category.

Notifications by notifying country

Country	Number of notifications	Alert notifications	Information notifications
Austria	22	13	9
Belgium	77	47	30
Cyprus	60	23	37
Czech Republic	45	28	17
Denmark	48	28	20
Estonia	26	17	9
Finland	75	27	48
France	115	62	53
Germany	527	190	337
Greece	89	7	82
Hungary	42	13	29
Iceland	13	2	11
Ireland	17	14	3
Italy	687	222	465
Latvia	23	9	14
Liechtenstein	0	0	0
Lithuania	58	6	52
Luxembourg	7	3	4
Malta	28	4	24
Netherlands	147	32	115
Norway	101	48	53
Poland	38	6	32
Portugal	17	7	10
Slovakia	40	23	17
Slovenia	83	21	61
Spain	415	9	406
Sweden	45	25	20
United Kingdom	314	70	244
Total	**3159**	**956**	**2202**

Notifications by country of origin of the product

Iran	474
China	249
Turkey	199
India	138
Spain	126
Brazil	125
Vietnam	124
Thailand	117
Germany	115
Italy	114
France	98
The United States	78
The Netherlands	64
Ghana	59
Argentina	57
Indonesia	57
Poland	47
United Kingdom	46
Denmark	46
Greece	44
The Russian Federation	34
China (Hong Kong)	33
Country not mentioned	31
Nigeria	31
Belgium	27
Australia	25
Bangladesh	25
Pakistan	25
Egypt	24
Cyprus	21
Austria	20
Lithuania	20
Ukraine	20
Republic of Korea	19
Croatia	18
Tunisia	17
Hungary	16
Chile	15
Morocco	15
Slovakia	14
The Philippines	14
Norway	13
Switzerland	13
Namibia	12
Azerbijan	11
Bulgaria	11
South Africa	11
Sweden	11
Ireland	10
Portugal	10
Syria	10
Angola	9
Israel	9
Japan	9
Czech Republic	8
Malaysia	8
Mexico	8
Senegal	8
Canada	7
Paraguay	7
Uzbekistan	7

Oman	6
Georgia	5
Latvia	5
Lebanon	5
Malawi	5
Malta	5
Mauritius	5
New Zealand	5
Sri lanka	5
Bosnia and Herzegovina	4
Costa Rica	4
Estonia	4
Peru	4
Sudan	4
Yemen	4
Benin	3
Luxembourg	3
Romania	3
Saudi Arabia	3
Serbia and Montenegro	3
The United Arab Emirates	3
Uganda	3
Albania	2
Bolivia	2
Botswana	2
Dominican Republic	2
Gambia	2
Ivory Coast	2
Kenia	2
Myanmar	2
Panama	2
Singapore	2
Taiwan	2
Tanzania	2
F.Y.R of Macedonia	2
Uruguay	2
Zimbabwe	2
Afghanistan	1
Algeria	1
Belarus	1
Burkino Faso	1
Colombia	1
Congo	1
Ethiopia	1
Finland	1
Guatemala	1
Guinea	1
Guyana	1
Madagascar	1
Nepal	1
Nicaragua	1
Papua New Guinea	1
Republic of Moldova	1
San Marino	1
Sierra Leone	1
Slovenia	1
Suriname	1
The Maldives	1
The Occupied Palestinian Teritory	1
Togo	1
Venezuela	1

Please note that a consignment might originate from more than one country.

Notifications by notifying country and hazard category

Hazard category	AT	BE	CY	CZ	DE	DK	EE	ES	FI	FR	GB	GR	HU	IE	IS	IT	LT	LU	LV	MT	NL	NO	PL	PT	SE	SI	SK
(Potentially) Pathogenic micro-organisms	11	17	6		23	21	12	20	47	37	31	15	8	2	8	173	3	1	8		5	80	8	2	24	16	6
Adverse effect / allergic reaction					2			1			6			1		1					1				2		
Bad or insufficient controls		1			2					4	5					2	3				3		3				
Biocontaminants (other)			1		2			2				1				12					1					1	2
Biotoxins (other)		5						2		1	2					2						3					
Chemical contamination (other)	1	1	1	4	2					1	1	1		1		2					1					1	
Composition	2	10	4	1	122	1	5	13	3	18	60	3	7	2		73		1	1	2	4	6	3		4	1	4
Feed additives		3																									
Food additives		1	24	10	26	1	6	31	6	10	14	9				61	8		3	7	1				1	14	7
Foreign bodies		4		3	7	1		1	3	4	10		3	1	1	11					2		9			11	6
GMO / novel food					2				2					1		2					2		1				
Heavy metals		5	1	5	18	3		27	5	3	13	4	1			81	4			1	11	3	3	1	1	12	
Industrial contaminants (other)		3			8	1	1		1	1	2			1		1			2		1				1		2
Labelling absent / incomplete / incorrect						1		1			3									1							
Microbiological contamination		2	6	1	5			18		3	10	8			6	45	5	2			1	4	2	1		1	
Migration		1			20	7				3		3				69										15	
Mycotoxins	8	7	2	16	227	6	1	265	7	28	104	37	12			112	6	4	6	11	101	2	2	10	7	3	9
Not determined / other		4		1	9	2	1	3		1	3	1	4	1		10	19		1		1					5	1
Organoleptic aspects		2	3	1	2						1	3				8	1			1			4			6	
Packaging defective / incorrect					4			1		1	2					2				5	1				1		
Parasitic infestation					3											19											
Pesticide residues		3	4	1	13	1		2	1	2	5		7	2		3	8		1		7	3		2	4	1	2
Radiation				2	19			1	1		3			5		1											
Residues of veterinary medicinal products		10	10	1	18	4		31			50	6				22	1		1		4	1	5	1			2
Total	**22**	**79**	**62**	**46**	**534**	**49**	**26**	**419**	**76**	**117**	**325**	**91**	**42**	**17**	**15**	**712**	**58**	**8**	**23**	**28**	**147**	**102**	**40**	**17**	**45**	**87**	**41**

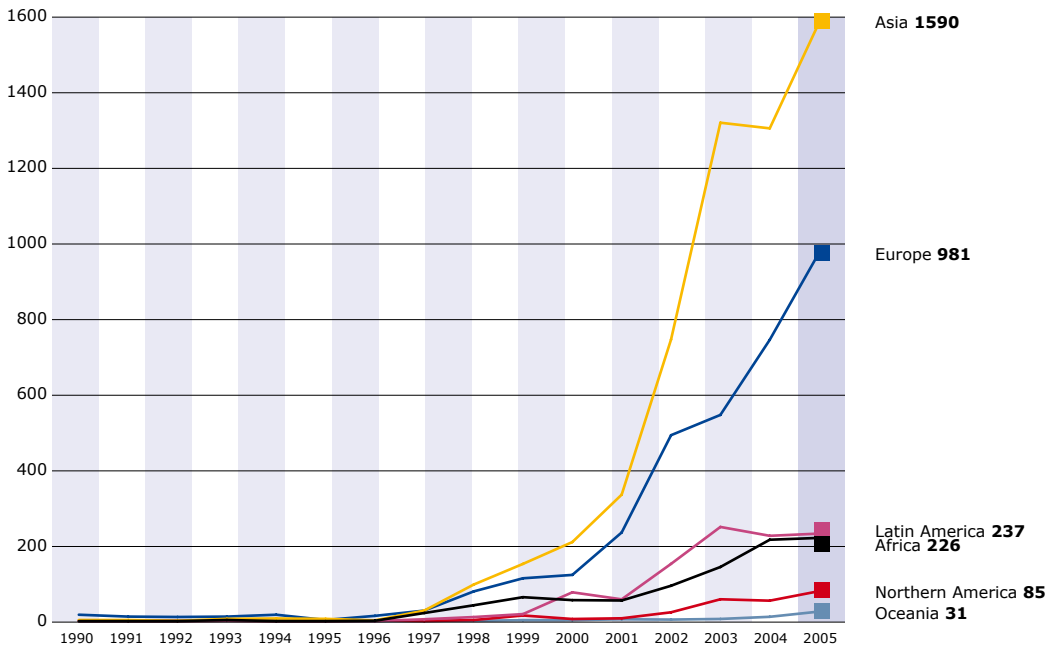
Please note that notifications that reported on more than one hazard category are counted more than once.

Notifications according to origin of the product, classified by world region

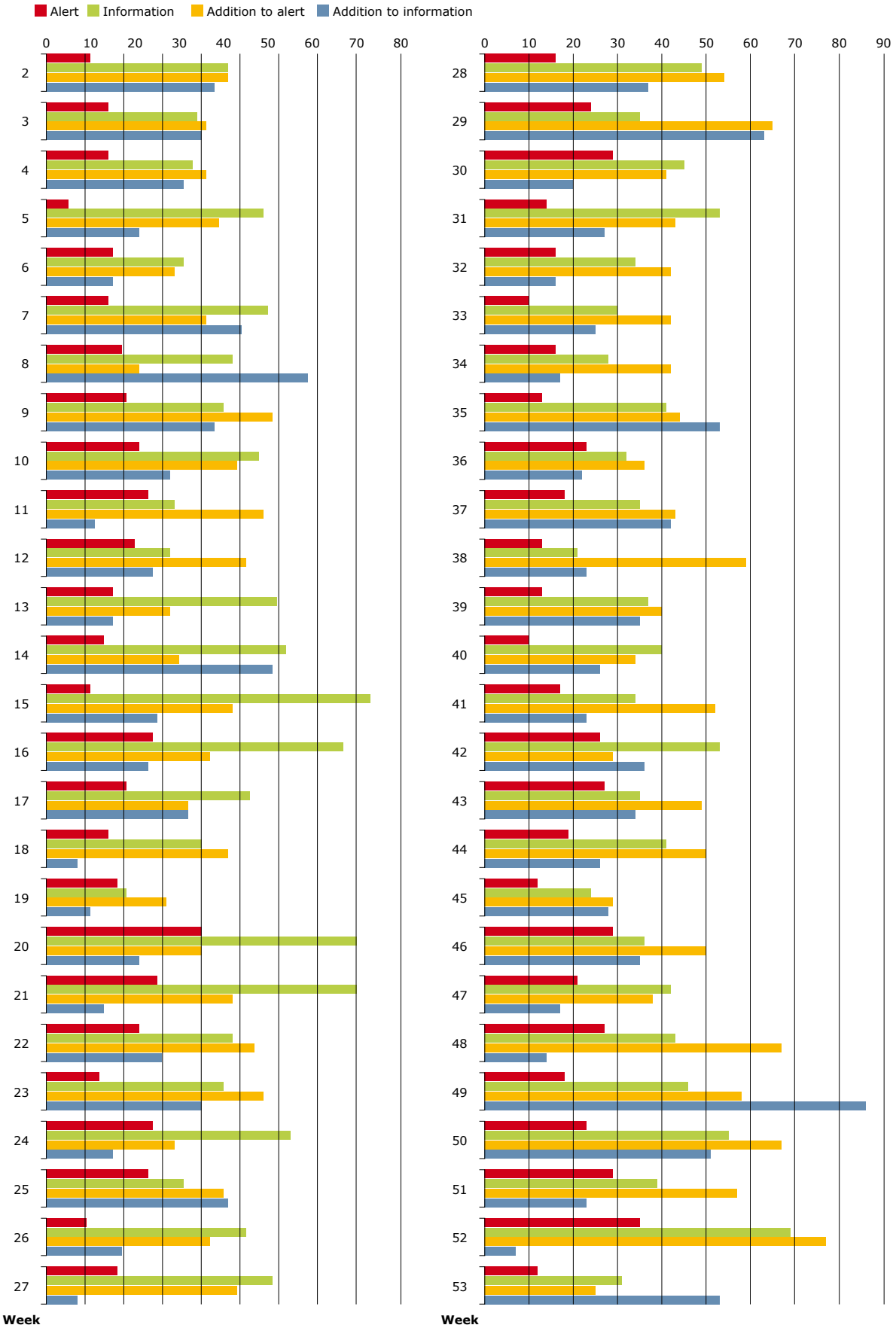
Region	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Total
Eastern Africa				2				5	12	8	8	4	8	15	6	21	**89**
Middle Africa										1	2		4	1	1	10	**19**
Northern Africa				1				5	15	23	18	28	32	73	67	61	**323**
Southern Africa										22	6	7	32	25	33	25	**150**
Western Africa							1	12	16	11	23	17	20	33	114	109	**356**
Eastern Asia	2	1		1	3	2	1	6	22	32	49	82	163	180	205	313	**1063**
South-central Asia	1			2	1	2		12	29	53	73	100	150	649	655	677	**2404**
South-eastern Asia		1	1	2	1		1	7	31	37	53	100	280	270	224	324	**1332**
Western Asia		1		1	2	2		3	15	30	35	54	155	225	225	277	**1025**
Eastern Europe				2	1			2	29	24	11	11	42	57	91	156	**425**
Northern Europe	3	2	2	3	3		4	3	16	13	25	38	85	109	157	155	**619**
Southern Europe	6	3	4	2	7	2	3	9	12	25	28	108	145	162	221	334	**1067**
Western Europe	8	7	5	5	6	1	7	14	22	52	59	79	223	221	280	340	**1327**
Caribbean	1										2			4	2	2	**11**
Central America								1	2	2	8	3	10	10	19	16	**71**
South America	1	2	1	1				4	9	17	68	56	145	241	210	219	**974**
Northern America				1			2		3	16	6	8	25	62	58	85	**266**
Australia and New Zealand				1	1			1		3	3	6	4	7	13	31	**70**
Melanesia													1		1		**2**
Polynesia									1								**1**

A product might originate from more than one country/world region.

Notifications by world regions (1990-2005)



Overview of notifications by week in 2005



Overview of total exchanges of information in 2005

The Commission's RASFF Team members are:

From left to right:
Magdalena Havlikova, Sylvie Coulon, José Luis De Felipe Gardón (Head of Sector), Adrianus ten Velden, Lea Arbeiter, Jan Baele and Teresa Blanco.

European Commission

The Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) Annual Report 2005

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities

2006 — 40 pp. — 21.0 x 29.7 cm

ISBN 92-79-01820-5

ND-AC-06-001-EN-C

The Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF)

Annual Report **2005**

Publications Office
Publications.europa.eu

ISBN 92-79-01820-5
9 789279 018206