

# EU RASFF – Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed

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# Structure of the talk

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# Origins of RASFF

A rapid alert system for food has been operating within the European Commission since 1979.

It was included in the EU Food Legislation (regulation 178/2002, Chap. IV) in 2002 as the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF).



# What is RASFF

The RASFF is a tool for exchanging information between food and feed control authorities in member states in cases where a risk to human health has been identified and measures have been taken, such as withholding, recalling, seizing or rejecting products.

When food and feed not complying with the EU food safety standards are detected on the EU market or at the border, all authorities throughout Europe are informed.

They can take action accordingly to ensure the highest level of protection for the European consumer.



# What is RASFF

It is necessary to strike the balance between openness and protection of commercial Information

Therefore trade names and the identity of individual companies are not published

This way of proceeding is not detrimental to consumer protection as a RASFF notification implies that measures have been or are in the process of being taken.

However, in circumstances where the protection of human health requires greater transparency, the Commission takes the necessary actions through its usual communication channels.



# Types of RASFF alerts

[http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/rapidalert/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/rapidalert/index_en.htm)

ALERT NOTIFICATIONS

INFORMATION NOTIFICATIONS

BORDER REJECTIONS

NEWS



# Types of RASFF alerts

## **ALERT NOTIFICATIONS**

Alert notifications are sent when a food or feed presenting a serious risk is on the market and when immediate action is required.

Alerts are triggered by the Member State that detects the problem and 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.

Consumers can be reassured that products subject to an alert notification have been withdrawn or are in the process of being withdrawn from the market.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.



# Types of RASFF alerts

## INFORMATION NOTIFICATIONS

Information notifications concern a food or feed that was placed on the market 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, or
- is no longer present on their market, or
- the nature of the risk does not require any immediate action.

# Types of RASFF alerts

## **BORDER REJECTIONS (new in 2008)**

These notifications concern food and feed consignments that have been tested and rejected at the external borders of the EU (and the EEA) when a health risk was found.

The notifications are transmitted to all EEA border posts in order to reinforce controls and to ensure that the rejected product does not re-enter the Community through another border post.

# Types of RASFF alerts

## **NEWS**

Any information related to the safety of food and feed products which has not been communicated as an alert or an information notification, but which is judged interesting for the control authorities, is made available by the Commission to the members of the network under the heading "News".

# Information in each weekly summary

TABLE 1: ALERT NOTIFICATIONS

TABLE 2: INFORMATION NOTIFICATIONS

TABLE 3: BORDER REJECTIONS (new in 2008)

## Common format

DATE:

NOTIFIED BY:

REF no.:

REASON FOR NOTIFYING:

NOTIFICATION BASIS:

STATUS:



# Information in each weekly summary

(taken from week 2008:21)

## TABLE 1: ALERT NOTIFICATIONS

DATE:	20/05/2008
NOTIFIED BY:	Estonia
REF no:	2008.0584
REASON:	Salmonella spp. in frozen whole hens from Lithuania
BASIS:	food poisoning outbreak
STATUS:	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) recalled from consumer

**Table 1: Alert notifications. EU RASFF: Week 2008:21**  
(text in blue indicates feed, others = food)

DATE	NOTIFIED BY	REF.	REASON FOR NOTIFYING	NOTIFICATION BASIS	STATUS
19/05/2008	Cyprus	2008.0576	undeclared milk ingredient (casein 2228 mg/kg - ppm) in coffee drink from the Netherlands, via Cyprus	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) relabelled
20/05/2008	Estonia	2008.0584	Salmonella spp. in frozen whole hens from Lithuania	food poisoning outbreak	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) recalled from consumer
20/05/2008	Italy	2008.0585	Escherichia coli (1300 MPN/100g) in live clams (Venus gallina) from Italy	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from sale
20/05/2008	the Netherlands	2008.0586	Salmonella spp. (presence /25g) in white imitation chocolate with yoghurt flavour from the Netherlands	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / informing recipients
22/05/2008	the United Kingdom	2008.0591	glass fragments in pickled dill cucumbers from Poland	consumer complaint	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from sale
23/05/2008	Finland	2008.0595	Listeria monocytogenes (5000; 3300; 580 CFU/g) in vacuum packed raw pickled sliced rainbow trout fillet from Estonia	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) recalled from consumer
23/05/2008	Italy	2008.0597	Listeria monocytogenes (420 CFU/g) in smoked sliced salmon from Denmark	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / prohibition to trade - sales ban
23/05/2008	France	2008.0600	Diarrhoeic Shellfish Poisoning (DSP) toxins (positive mouse test) in live mussels from Greece	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from sale
23/05/2008	France	2008.0601	bulging packaging of canned lettuce hearts from Spain	official control on the market	distribution on the market (possible) / product (to be) withdrawn from sale



## Table 2: Information notifications . EU RASFF: Week 2008:21 (text in blue indicates feed, others = food)

### Microbiological

- altered organoleptic characteristics of curd snack with raisins from Lithuania infested with moulds (9.0 x 10000 CFU/g)
- badly cooked (undercooked) sliced steam-cooked chicken fillets from Belgium
- *Listeria monocytogenes* (480; 420 CFU/g) in sliced vacuum packed salmon from Sweden
- *Salmonella* (presence /25g) in dog chews from Thailand
- *Salmonella paratyphi b* (var. Java - multiresistant in 3 out of 12 samples /25g) in fresh poultry thighs from Belgium
- organic strawberry flavour water ice from Italy probably infested with moulds
- ***Vibrio vulnificus* and high number of aerobic plate counts (*Pseudomonas* dominated) in chilled shrimps (*Metapenaeus spp*) from India**
- *Yersinia enterocolitica* (presence /25g) in chilled beef from the United Kingdom



## Table 2: Information notifications . EU RASFF: Week 2008:21 (text in blue indicates feed, others = food)

### Metals

- arsenic (6.48 mg/kg - ppm) in frozen haddock loins from China
- cadmium (1.5 mg/kg - ppm) in crabs (*Maja squinado*) from France
- cadmium (3.0 mg/kg - ppm) in crabs (*Cancer pagurus*) from France

## Table 2: Information notifications . EU RASFF: Week 2008:21 (text in blue indicates feed, others = food)

### Pesticide residues

- dimethoate (0.19 mg/kg - ppm) in peaches from Israel
- **methamidophos (0.021 mg/kg - ppm), acephate (0.11 mg/kg - ppm) and triazophos (0.087 mg/kg - ppm) in okra from India**
- thiabendazole (0.81 mg/kg - ppm), imazalil (0.25 mg/kg - ppm) and dimethoate (0.12 mg/kg - ppm) in green beans from Kenya, via Belgium

## Table 2: Information notifications . EU RASFF: Week 2008:21 (text in blue indicates feed, others = food)

### Additives

- too high content of E 452 - polyphosphates (6.107 g/kg) in blue whiting fillets from the Slovak Republic
- too high content of sulphite (2528 mg/kg - ppm) in dried apricots packaged in Greece and repackaged in Cyprus
- too high content of sulphite (2538 mg/kg - ppm) in dried apricots packaged in Greece and repackaged in Cyprus, raw material from Turkey
- **too high content of unlabelled E 210 - benzoic acid (928 mg/kg - ppm) in chyawanprash jam with honey from India**
- unauthorised establishment for food colouring agents from Spain

## Table 2: Information notifications . EU RASFF: Week 2008:21 (text in blue indicates feed, others = food)

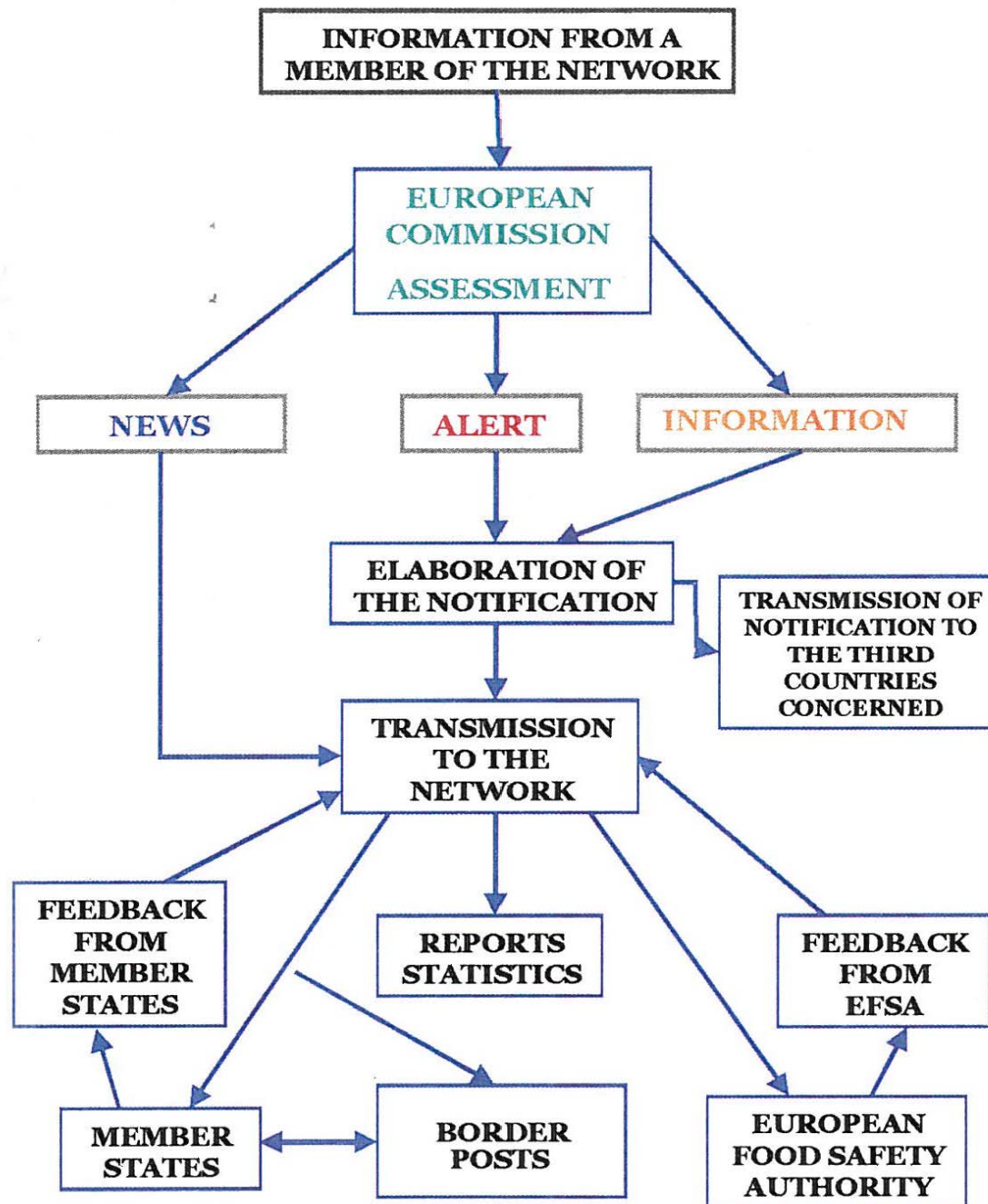
### Physical hazard

- foreign body (piece of metal wire) in ice-cream from the United Kingdom, via Ireland

## Table 3: Border rejections . EU RASFF: Week 2008:21 (text in blue indicates feed, others = food)

### Products to be re-dispatched / detained / destroyed

- aflatoxins (n=11)
- additives (too high or illegal use) ( n=2)
- PAHs (n=2)
- GM (rice protein concentrate)
- migration from food contact article
- parasitic infection
- rodent excrement
- Salmonella
- spoilage and labelling of animal casings



# Involvement of third countries

The Commission must inform a third country in the following circumstances:

- if it is known that a product subject to an alert notification has been exported to that country
- or
- when a product originating from that country has been the subject of a notification, so as to allow it to take corrective measures and thus avoid repetition of the problem.

Note: The country of origin of the product is not always where the hazard originated

# RASFF Annual report

Annual report: latest available is 2006 (in pdf format)

## Includes

- a commentary on a selection of topics
- new food and feed legislation affecting the RASFF
- changes to RASFF in future
- detailed statistical breakdown by by hazard, product category, country, region, etc.

# Some recurring incidents

Mycotoxins

Dioxins

PAH and mercury in fishery products

Veterinary residues

Illegal dyes

Food additives

Food supplements

Microbiological contamination

Food contact materials

# RASFF summary for 2006

India is 10<sup>th</sup> on the list of 129 countries.

n = 86 alerts

# RASFF Annual report - 2006

search "INDIA"

- aflatoxins in peanuts (n=6 notifications)
- aflatoxins in spices (n=15)
- nitrofurans metabolites in shrimps (n=20)

## Illegal use of dyes in spices

a sharp decrease in notifications since 2003 (390 → 213 → 60)

in 2003-2004 most samples were from India followed by Turkey.

in 2005 notification levels dropped considerably for these countries, while the Russian Federation emerged as another source of adulterated spices. This trend continued in 2006.

- 4 of the 60 reports in 2006 came from India
- 2 were for Sudan 1, 2 were for Sudan 4



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### Search the RASFF Database

Food type:  Food  Feed

RASFF Wildcard Search:

e.g. porbeagle, fumonisin, tetracycline AND chicken etc.  
Search keywords AND / OR / AND NOT must be upper case

Commodity (ordered A - Z):

Contaminant:

Country of Origin:

Reporting Country:

RASFF Notification Type:

Alert Notifications  Information Notifications  Border Rejections  All Notifications

Search:

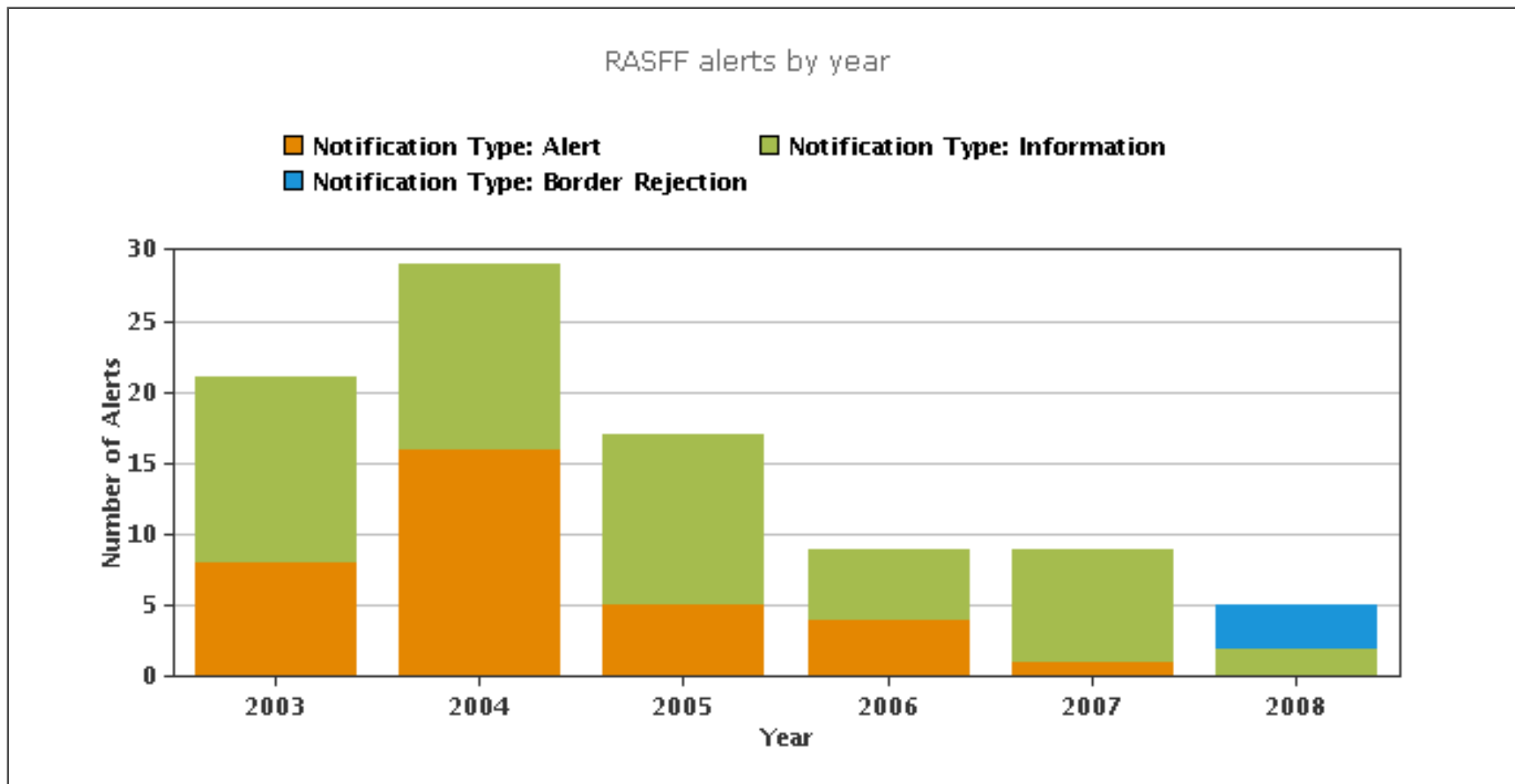
Previous 52 weeks  All weeks (to 19/05/2003)

# RASFF summary for last 52 weeks for country of origin India (FC24 run on 29-5-2008)

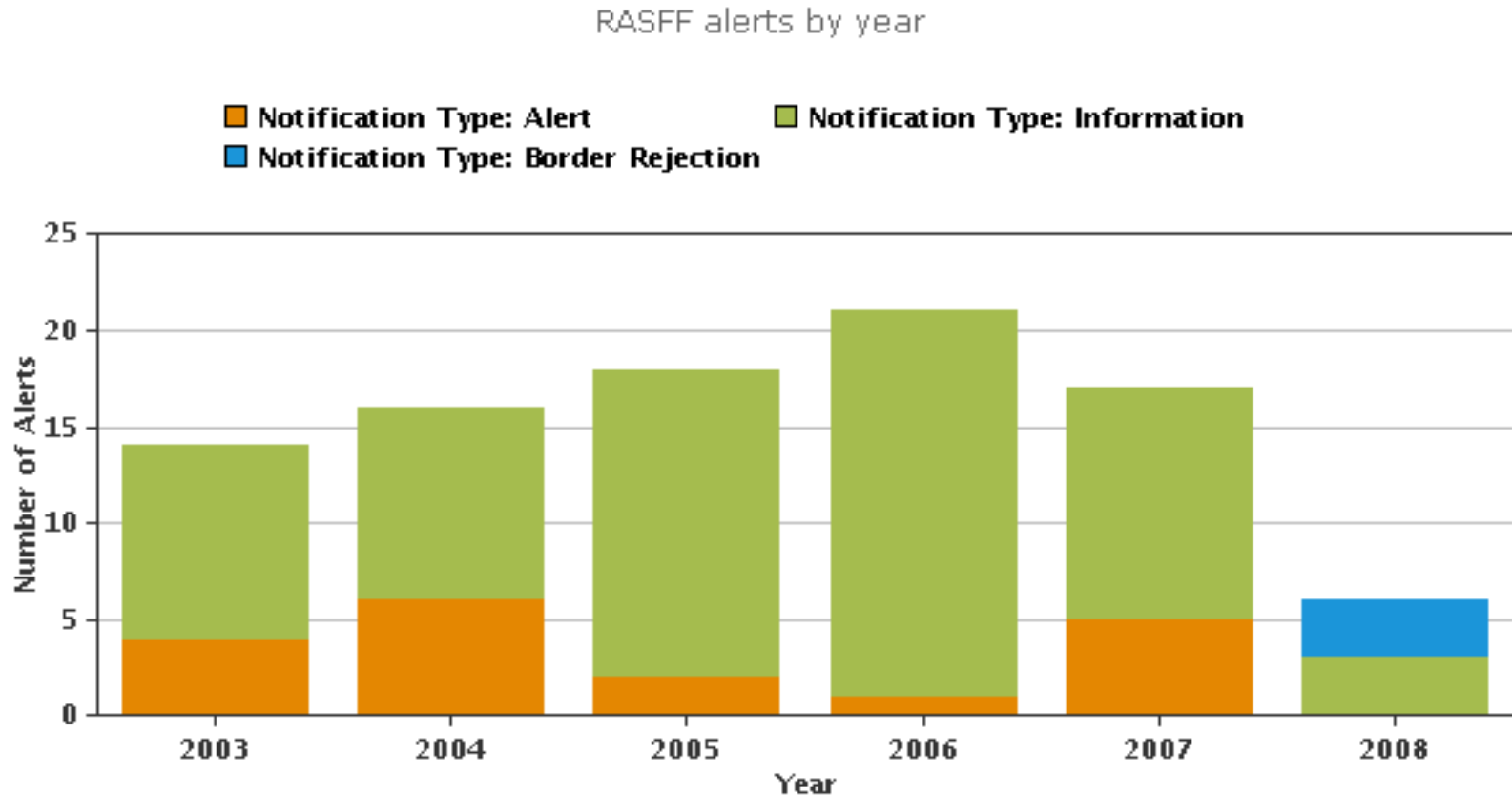
Contaminant	Alert	Information	Border rejection	Total
Arsenic		1		1
Bacterial / viral contaminants	6	12	2	20
Dioxins	1			1
Dyes and colours	1	5	3	9
Food additives other than colours and sweeteners	1	5		6
Food contact material	2	2		4
Histamine		1		1
Irradiation		1		1
Lead		1		1
Mercury		2		2
Mycotoxins	1	16	2	19
Pesticides	1	6	2	9
Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons	1			1
Veterinary drugs	5	8	3	16
Other organic contaminants		4		4
Other inorganic contaminants		1	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>97</b>



# Summary of RASFF for Dyes and Colours in produce from India



# Summary of RASFF for Veterinary Drugs in produce from India



[New Search](#)

## Further information

[http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/rapidalert/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/rapidalert/index_en.htm)

