



**EU RASFF**  
the EU Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed

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**Scope of presentation**



- Origins of RASFF
- Description of RASFF
- Flow of information
- Types of RASFF alerts
- Summary/annual reports
- Portal Database
- Further information + online demo

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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](#)) as the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF)

<http://ec.europa.eu/rasff>

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## Membership of RASFF



- European Commission
- All 27 EU Member States
- Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland
- European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)
  - Assess and communicate risks associated with the food chain
  - Issue scientific opinions and advice to support RASFF decisions/actions

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## RASFF – purpose and scope



- Facilitates rapid sharing of information between the EC, food and feed control authorities in member states and other organisations in cases where a health risk has been identified; to avert food safety risks before they harm consumers
- Covers all types of chemical and microbiological contamination and the presence of 'foreign bodies'  
*Mycotoxins, dioxins, PAHs and mercury in fishery products veterinary/pesticide residues, Illegal dyes, food additives, food supplements, microbiological contamination, food contact materials*

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## RASFF - Actions



- Countries can act quickly in a co-ordinated manner in order to ensure the highest level of protection for the European consumer
- Measures include withholding, recalling, seizing or rejecting products
- Rejections transmitted to all member states to prevent re-entry

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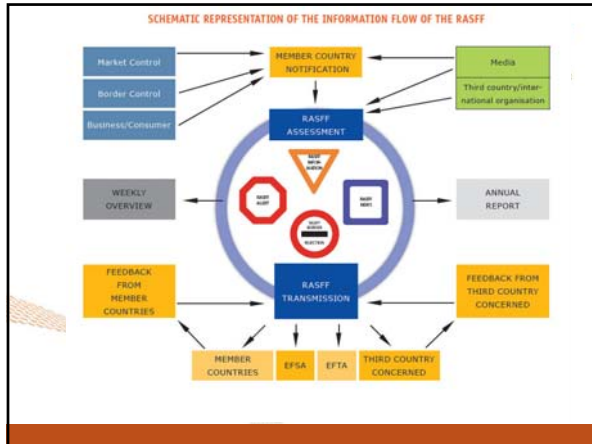
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### Types of RASFF notifications

[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

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### RASFF Alert Notifications

- **Alert notifications** are sent when a food or feed presenting a serious risk is available 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 e.g. withdrawal/recall
- The notification provides all the members of the network with 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

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## RASFF 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
- the nature of the risk is not considered serious

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## RASFF – Border Rejections



- 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

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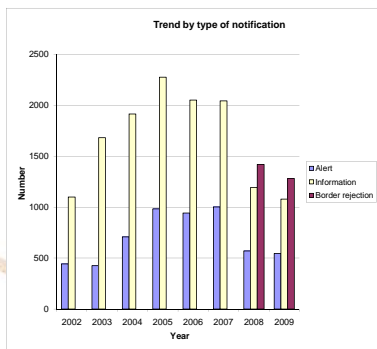
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## Notification trends



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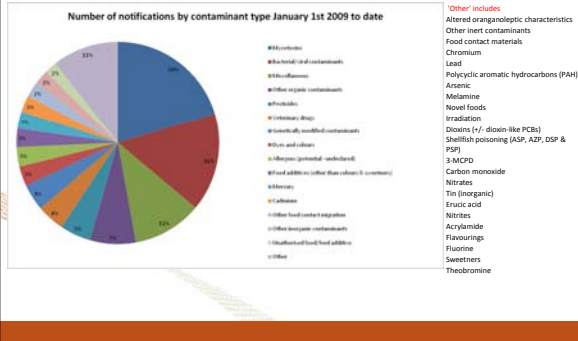
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## Notifications by contaminant type




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## RASFF News Items



- 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"

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## RASFF - Non Member Countries



If a risk is identified in a food or feed product that originated from, or was imported from a third country, then;

- The country in question is informed to facilitate corrective action(s)
- In cases where Guarantees received by the EC are not sufficient or immediate action is required then a decision can be made to prohibit imports or introduce systematic controls at EU borders

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

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## RASFF in Action



- Ireland 2008 – dioxins at concentrations 100 x MRL detected in pork
- December 5<sup>th</sup> – EC informed and RASFF Alert Notification issued
- Investigation identified contaminated bread crumbs as source of contamination – possibly since September 2008
- Irish Government recalled all pork products dating from Sept 1st
- Within 2 weeks products were traced in 54 countries



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## International Collaboration



INFOSCAN – (International Food Safety Authorities Network)

- Operated by WHO
- Contacts in 160 countries
- Exchange of information on a case by case basis



[http://www.who.int/foodsafety/fs\\_management/infosan/en/](http://www.who.int/foodsafety/fs_management/infosan/en/)

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## RASFF Annual report



[http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/rapidalert/report2008\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/rapidalert/report2008_en.pdf)

Includes

- a commentary on a selection of topics
- Legal basis of RASFF
- Details of 3099 notifications
- detailed statistical breakdown by hazard, product category, country, region, etc.
- 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



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## RASFF Portal Data Base



- Contains all data from 1979
- More than 23,000 notifications
- Search function added in 2009
- Weekly summaries no longer issued
- Excel formats

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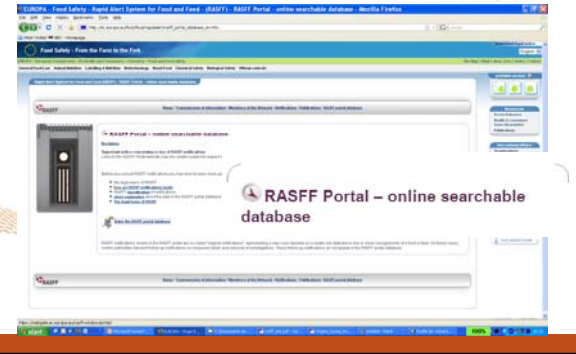
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[http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/rapid/alert/rasff\\_portal\\_database\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/rapid/alert/rasff_portal_database_en.htm)



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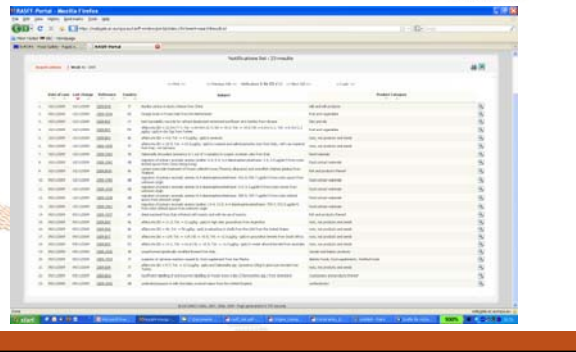
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## RASFF – Retrieval of Notification



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## Notification – detail output



The Food and Environment  
Research Agency

**Notification detail - 2009.1263**

High content of iodine (13.7 mg/kg - ppm) in dried seaweed from the Republic of Korea

**Reference :** 2009.1263  
**Notification date :** 26/09/2009  
**Last update :** 19/10/2009

**Notification type :** Food - information - official control on the market

**Action taken :**  
**Notification from :** AUSTRIA (AT)

**Distribution status :** information on distribution not (yet) available

**Product :** dried seaweed  
**Product category :** fruit and vegetables

**Hazards :**

Substance / Hazard	Category	Analytical result	Units	Sampling date
High content of iodine	composition	13.7	mg/kg* ppm	16/07/2009

**Distributed to :**

AUSTRIA |  CZECH REPUBLIC |  GERMANY |  HUNGARY |  ITALY |  POLAND |  SLOVAKIA |  SLOVENIA

**Origin :**

KOREA, REPUBLIC OF |

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## Navigation of RASFF Portal



The Food and Environment  
Research Agency

[http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/rapidalert/rasff\\_portal\\_database\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/rapidalert/rasff_portal_database_en.htm)

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