

IFS Trend Risk Report January 2024



Dear readers,

It's a new year and we are happy to provide you our IFS Trend Risk Report in its 5th year! The January edition includes 20 food fraud cases from around the world. Many of the fraud incidences originate outside the EU, but some common themes, such as adulteration of olive oil, are a global issue. Refer to page 3 for more details.

We have a special article this month from meyer.science GmbH about a topic with great relevance: Planned Maximum Levels for MOAH in Food. The topic is of timely relevance, as food manufacturers still have time to submit data to the EU Commission regarding anticipated maximum residue levels – but the deadline is approaching fast! Go to page 4 to read the full article.

The guest article by AFC Risk & Crisis Consult entitled "East-west supply chains at risk" explains how political tensions affect the interconnectedness of our world when it comes to supply chains and trading routes.

"Recalls around the world" can be found on page 5.

Our pesticide analysis shows deviations of the following three products: peanuts from USA, strawberries from Spain, Morocco and Greece, as well as dried dates from Tunisia.

In our Noteworthy Publication section, you will find an article titled "FAO Early warning tools and systems for emerging issues in food safety". The report enhances the awareness of the available evidence-based innovative digital tools and provides technical background information to support the use of proactive early warning systems.

In the last section, you can get many interesting news and scientific publications in the field of food safety and packaging.

We hope you enjoy reading our report. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact us.

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1. Update on food fraud cases

In the following table, you find the food fraud cases **detected** in January 2024. Please be aware that cases are not limited to the month and may have occurred over a longer period.

IFS Product Scope	Ingredient	Reason	Country or Region	Detected in	Source
	Various foods	Product tampering	Pakistan	Jan 2024	Link
	Meats	Adulteration	Pakistan	Jan 2024	Link
	Beef, pork	Grey market	Malaysia	Jan 2024	Link
	Canned tuna	Mislabelling	Spain/Italy	Jan 2024	Link
	Fish	Smuggling	Russia	Jan 2024	Link
	Fruit & vegetables	Grey market	France	Jan 2024	Link
	Olives	No traceability documents	Italy	Jan 2024	Link
	Rice	Contraband	Kenya	Jan 2024	Link
	Milk powder	Grey market	Kenya	Jan 2024	Link
	Beer	Grey market	Nigeria	Jan 2024	Link
	Alcoholic beverages	Adulteration	Iran	Jan 2024	Link
	Alcoholic beverages	Adulteration	Tunisia	Jan 2024	Link
	Liquor	Contraband	France	Jan 2024	Link
	Alcoholic beverages	Grey market	Colombia	Jan 2024	Link
	Alcoholic beverages	Grey market	Zambia	Jan 2024	Link

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IFS Product Scope	Ingredient	Reason	Country or Region	Detected in	Source
	Olive oil	Adulteration (in restaurants)	Italy	Jan 2024	Link
	Olive oil	Adulteration / Mislabelling	Czechia	Jan 2024	Link
	Cooking oil	Smuggling	Uganda	Jan 2024	Link
	Cooking oil	Product tampering	Pakistan	Jan 2024	Link
	Spices	Adulteration	Tunisia	Jan 2024	Link

Special article: Planned Maximum Levels for MOAH in Food

As expected, the EU Commission has started discussions with the EU Member States since Q4/2023 on possible statutory maximum levels for MOAH in food for implementation in the EU Contaminant Regulation 2023/915. The first draft Regulation defining maximum levels for MOAH (with 2 options) was already discussed in the responsible EU working group in mid-December 2023 and distributed to all stakeholders at the end of 2023 (SANTE_PLAN_2023-2345).

The maximum levels for MOAH should be based on the analytical limits of quantification (LOQ) (depending on the food matrix: 0.5/1/2 mg/kg), since according to the data available to the EU Commission, MOAH levels below the LOQ are achievable (see recital 8 of the draft Regulation: *“From the occurrence data and investigations towards the sources of the contamination of food with MOAH, it has become clear that in most foods the occurrence of quantifiable concentration of MOAH can be prevented. Therefore, taking into account the ‘As Low As Reasonably Achievable (ALARA) Principle’ maximum levels for MOAH in food should be set at the limit of quantification.”*).

Only the submission of MOAH analytical data demonstrating MOAH concentrations in food above the LOQ, despite the application of the ALARA principle and good manufacturing and agricultural practice, would allow the EU Commission to set maximum levels above the LOQ in Regulation 2023/915 (see also recital 8: *“Only for foods, for which it has been demonstrated that, according to the currently best available practices, no concentrations below the limit of quantification can be achieved, maximum levels above this limit of should be established.”*).

This is also the EU Commission's usual procedure for establishing new maximum levels for contaminants in food. As soon as a sufficiently comprehensive data set is submitted by food business operators, the EU Commission establishes the corresponding legal maximum level on the basis of the 90. percentile of this data.

On January 18, the *Online Forum on Mineral Oil Hydrocarbons (MOHs) in Food* took place with the stakeholders. The EU Commission reiterated the above-mentioned facts several times in the introduction and during the meeting. The EU Commission's demand to wait until 27 February for the data to be submitted is unambiguous as well as the fact that data from food companies is expressly desired, as the EU Commission is also keen to find a practical and pragmatic solution.

If food companies do not submit a comprehensive set of data proving that MOAH levels in food are above the LOQ despite the application of the ALARA principle and good manufacturing and agricultural practice, it is highly likely that maximum levels for MOAH at the level of the LOQ will already be implemented into Reg. 2023/915 in Q4/2024 or Q1/2025.

Every affected food company should therefore ask itself now at the latest whether the LOQ for MOAH currently planned as maximum levels can be complied with (and this also applies to suppliers). If not, we urgently recommend submitting (anonymized) data to the EU Commission, including information on the suspected source of contamination and implemented mitigation measures, in order to enable the EU Commission and the member states to set maximum levels for MOAH far above the LOQ on the basis of this data.

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Issue of the month: East-west supply chains at risk

From mid-November 2023 to the present day, many manufacturers and retailers around the globe have been struggling with severe [disruptions to their supply chains](#). These have been caused by Yemen's Houthi rebel attacks on commercial vessels navigating through the Red Sea on their way to Europe via the Suez Canal. Over the past 2 months, there have been [more than 30 attacks](#), leading major shipping companies to redirect their routes around Africa to avoid the area of conflict. As a result, sailing time between Asian and European ports increased by 7 to 20 days and incurs additional costs. For instance, freight expenses [have surged by 180%](#) since the conflict between Israel and Hamas began in October 2023. All in all, this is the first major supply disruption and increase in transport surcharges since the price spike caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. It also coincides [with problems at the Panama Canal](#), which is restricting ship passage due to drought.

The impact on the global economy is already evident, with the International Monetary Fund reporting a [37% decline in Suez Canal traffic in 2024](#) compared to the previous year. Approximately [15% of the world's trade](#) typically transits through the Suez Canal, including up to [30% of container traffic and over \\$1 trillion worth of goods](#) annually. Logistics experts estimate that a year-long disruption to Red Sea trade could potentially add up to [2% to the cost of goods](#). This would exacerbate the already high prices of food and other commodities, as well as substantial delays in the arrival of some products and components, and escalating insurance costs, particularly affecting industries such as petroleum, electronics, and food.

The implications are therefore varied across sectors, with retailers particularly concerned about the inevitable price increases for consumers. For example, in the first two weeks of January, only 500,000 tonnes of wheat passed through the Suez Canal. This represents a [drop of almost 40%](#) compared to the same period last year. Several food items from Asia, such as spices, tea and coffee, as well as herbs from Egypt and Turkey destined for Europe, are [expected to face delays](#).

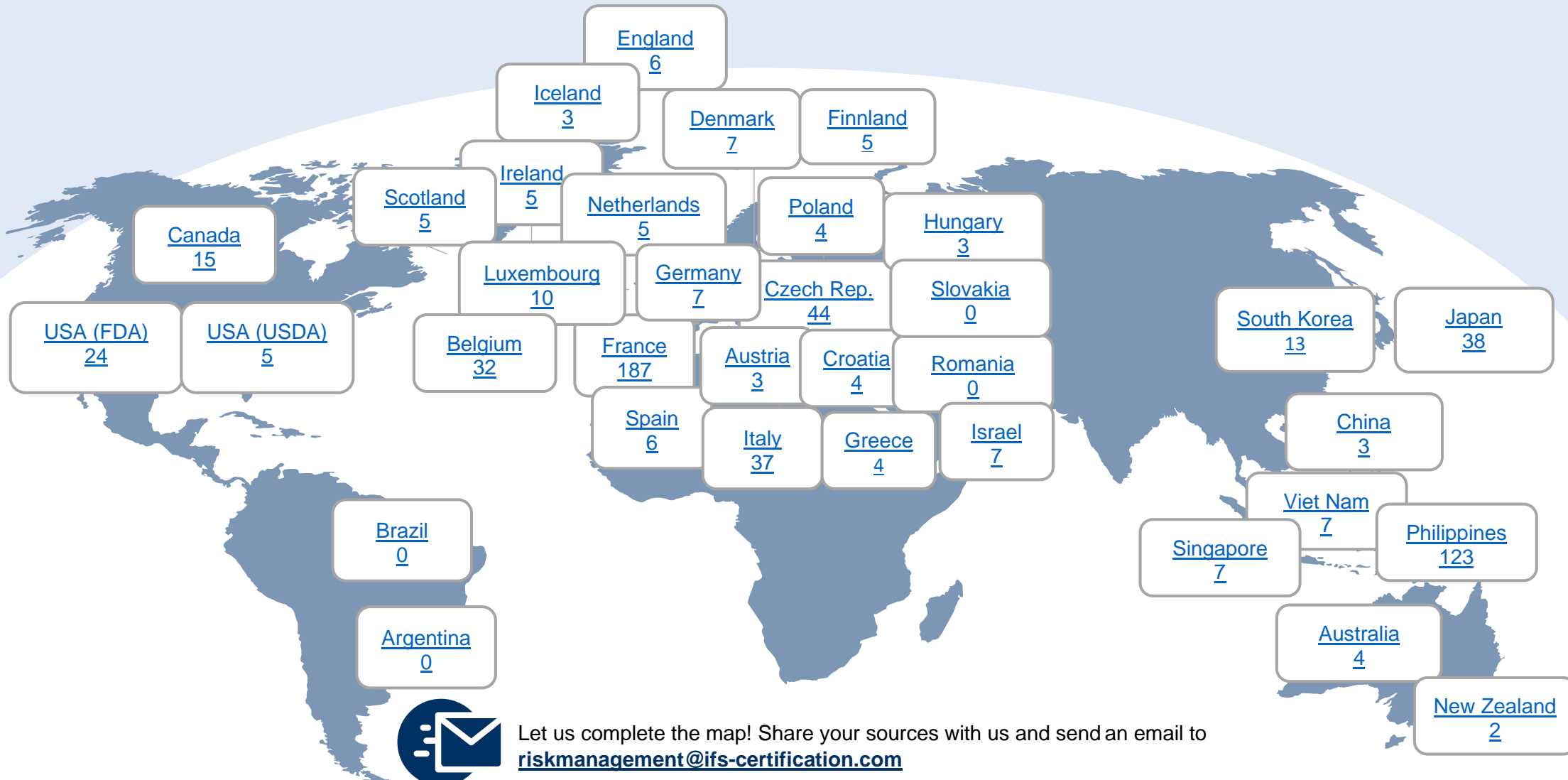
The global community has responded swiftly to the attacks, with an international task force now operating in the region to [safeguard merchant shipping](#). This group consists of military vessels from a coalition of countries, notably the USA, UK, and France. Having already faced challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021 Suez Canal disruption and Somali pirates, the shipping industry has significantly improved its [preparedness and resilience](#). For instance, in the wake of supply chain disruptions, companies have expanded their fleets and diversified their routes, strengthening their ability to withstand unexpected shocks. Consequently, German retailers are anticipating seamless operations due to the enhanced [stability of the supply chains](#), made possible by the experience of past crises.

Nevertheless, the current situation is a clear reminder of the interconnectedness of our world. Companies must therefore adapt by adjusting production schedules and diversifying their supply chains.



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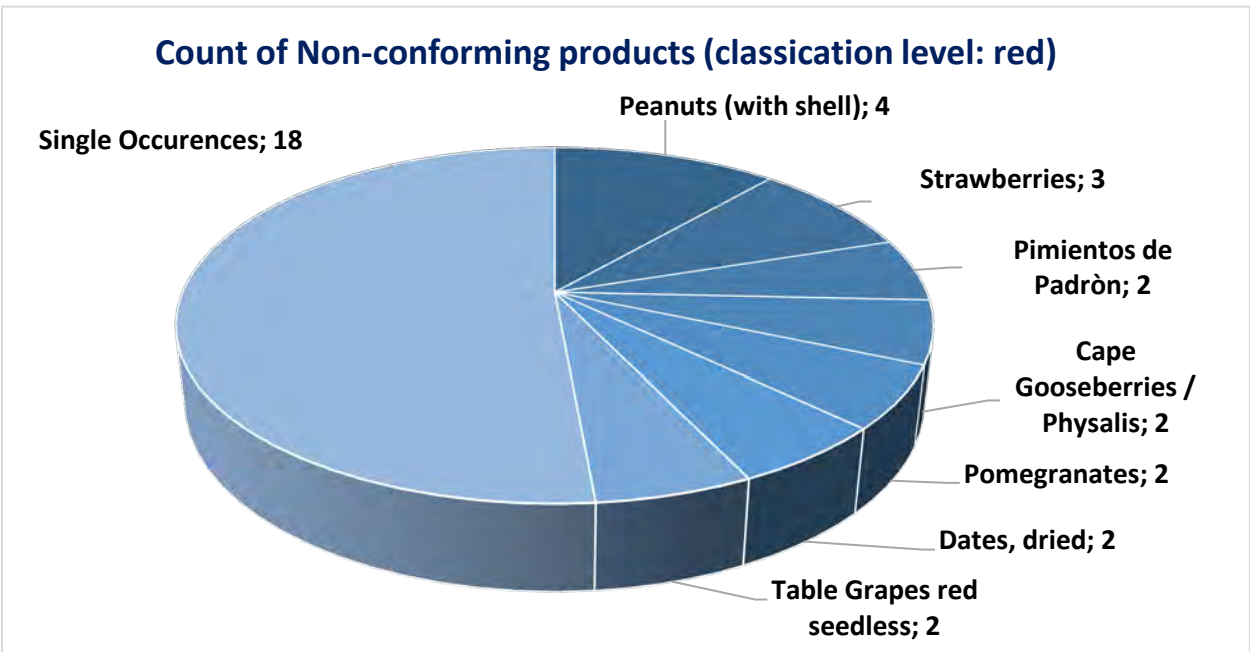
3. Recalls around the world from country/region specific databases (click on the country/region name to visit the source)



Let us complete the map! Share your sources with us and send an email to riskmanagement@ifs-certification.com

4. Evaluation of pesticide analyses

The following analysis was conducted using data from fruitmonitoring.com, which is a joint residue monitoring system for pesticides in fruit and vegetables operated by a group of trading companies in Germany. The data from fruitmonitoring.com is not publicly available. As a service to IFS stakeholders, we provide you with a monthly overview of compliance with maximum residue levels (MRLs) of goods traded in Germany. In the illustration, we show you all samples that have been classified as red because of "Exceeding maximum residue levels".



In January 2024, a total number of 2967 **samples** (Date: 10.02.2024) were monitored.

Product/Country/Parameter	Total number analysed in December 2023	Count of deviation December 2023	Historic count (previous 2 years)
Peanuts (with shell)	17	4	26
USA	16	4	8
4-CPA	-	4	7
Strawberries	85	3	14
Spain	46	1	4
Spirotetramat (sum)	-	1	0
Morocco	1	1	0
Imidacloprid	-	1	0
Greece	32	1	3
Karanjin	-	1	0
Dates, dried	6	2	18
Tunisia	4	2	7
Fenpyroximate	-	2	0

In the table above, you can see the countries and parameters of the first 3 products which had MRLs >100% for January 2024 and next to it the "historic count" to show how many times the product/country/substance combination were non-conforming (classification level: red) in the last 2 years (01.01.22 -31.12.2023) prior to the current month.

5. RASFF Data evaluation

In the following section you can see an analysis of the RASFF data from January 2024. The notifications from the food category are analysed here, which, this month, amount to 364 and thus count 13 notifications more than in December 2023.

The first diagram shows the breakdown by IFS Product scope. Please do not forget that an IFS Product scope can contain several RASFF categories.

The IFS Product scopes with the most notifications are as follows: Fruit and vegetables (144;124); Dry goods, other ingredients and supplements (58;77), Red and white meat, poultry and meat products (62;44); In the brackets above, the December 2023 figures are given in second place.

The IFS Product scope fruit and vegetables includes notifications from the RASFF category: fruit and vegetables (79), nuts and nut products and seeds (61) and soups, broths, sauces and condiments (4).

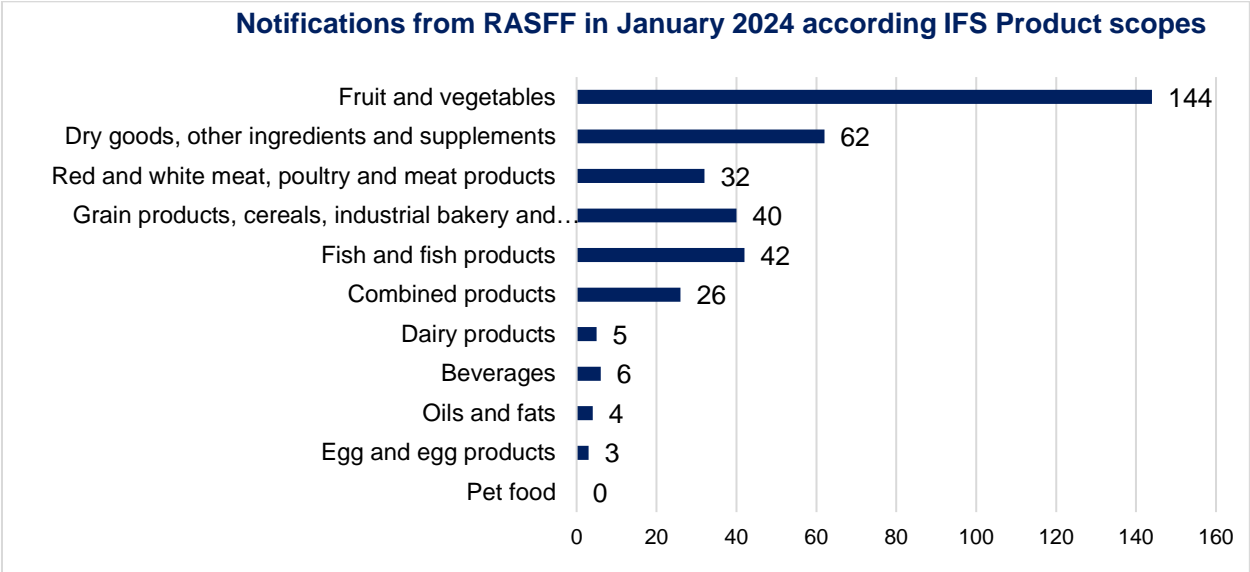
In Fruits and vegetables, Pesticides were mentioned 38 times and Mycotoxins 19 times. No large cluster could be seen for the remaining areas.

In nuts and nut products and seeds, mycotoxins (44) are the main cause of the notifications. Pathogens, namely salmonella, are named as the last cluster, accounting for 4 notifications.

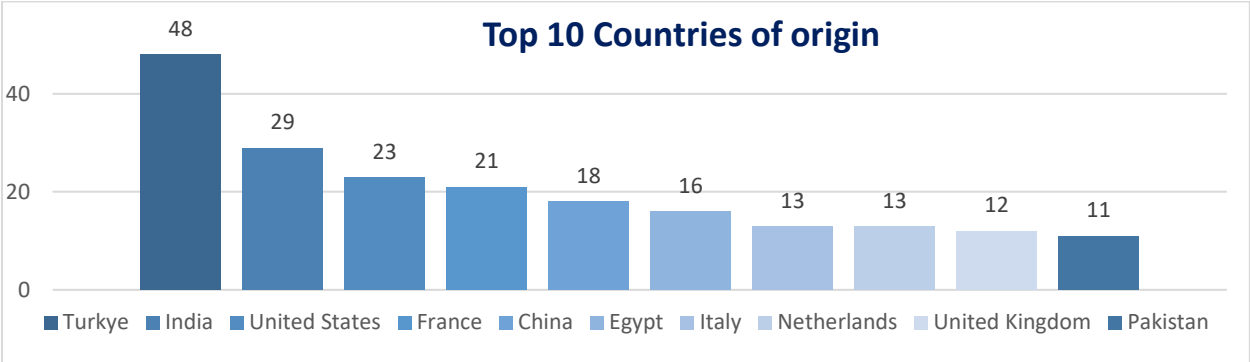
The IFS Product scope dry goods, other ingredients and supplements includes notifications from the RASFF category: dietetic foods, food supplements and fortified foods (40), herbs and spices (14), for cocoa and cocoa preparations, coffee and tea 8 notifications were given.

The IFS scope red and white meat, poultry and meat products includes notifications from poultry meat and poultry meat products (24) and meat and meat products (other than poultry) (9). In poultry meat, there is a main cluster, namely salmonella, which is mentioned 15 times as the reason for rejection.

In meat and meat products (other than poultry) pathogenes are mentioned 5 times, which are divided into Salmonella (2), Escherichia coli spp. (1), Listeria (1) and Staphylococcus (1).



In the following chart, we have listed the Top 10 countries of origin. These represent 204 of the 364 notifications and are thus responsible for ~56,0% of all notifications.



6. European Market Observatory

The European Commission assembles information related to food products on a regular basis. Here you can find the current official market observation dashboards.

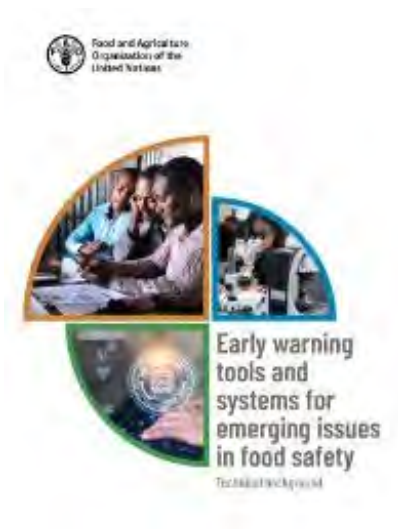


7. Noteworthy publications











Early warning (EW) systems have a critical role in the reduction of risks from various hazards. The capability and capacity to identify early signals and emerging food safety risks, and to provide on-time EW that would allow for the mitigation of related upcoming risks have therefore become vital for national and international authorities and organizations dealing with food safety.

This technical background report enhances the awareness of the available evidence-based innovative digital tools and provides technical background information to support their use for proactive food safety early warning.

[Click here for the “FAO Early warning tools and systems for emerging issues in food safety” article](#)



8. Media articles on food safety

	Topic and Link	Source
	Scientists compare Campylobacter surveillance plans in Europe	FoodSafetyNews
	Method developed to detect PFAS in “under three minutes”	NewFoodMagazine
	Inorganic arsenic in food – health concerns confirmed	EFSA
	Bottled water can contain hundreds of thousands of previously uncounted tiny plastic bits	Yumda
	Recall Roundup: Spotlight on pathogens	NewFoodMagazine
	Scientists uncover Salmonella outbreak linked to horse meat	FoodSafetyNews
	Additional products recalled concerning a decade-long outbreak of Listeria infections	FoodSafetyNews
	FSA and FSS assess Listeria risk from blue cheese	FoodSafetyNews
	Inorganic arsenic in food – health concerns confirmed	EFSA
	European Council adopts position on Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation	Food Packaging Forum

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