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Directorate D - Food Safety: production and distribution chain
D5 – Relations with the European Food safety Authority; Rapid Alert System



RAPID ALERT SYSTEM FOR FOOD AND FEED (RASFF) ANNUAL REPORT ON THE FUNCTIONING OF THE RASFF 2004

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The Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF)

The RASFF was established to provide the control authorities with an effective tool for exchange of information on measures taken to ensure food safety.

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).

On 1 May 2004 the number of countries of the RASFF network increased to 28. (The 25 Member States and the three EFTA countries: Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein). All new members received training in advance and were fully operational from the start.

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 2004 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 network¹, information is classified under two 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.

- **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.

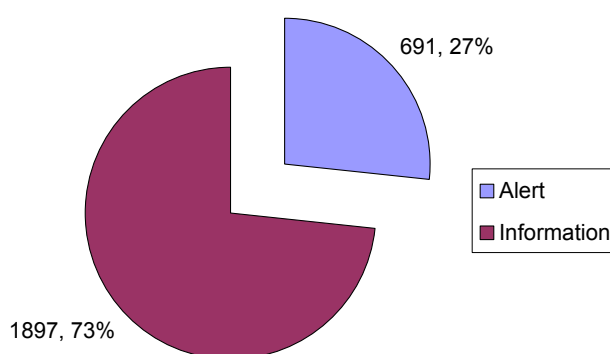
Products subject to an information notification have not reached the market or all necessary measures have already been taken.

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”.

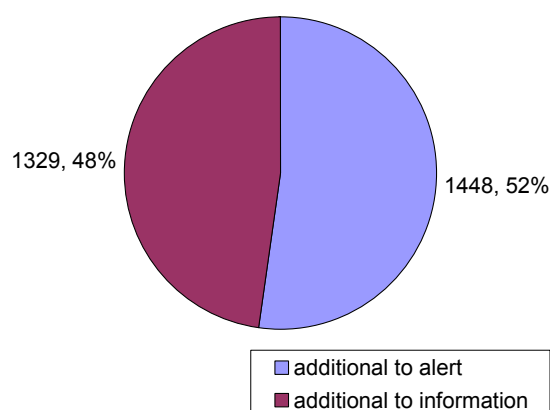
- **news notifications**

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.

Alert and Information notifications in 2004



Additional information notifications in 2004



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

Notifications with increased occurrence and/or of particular interest in 2004

Aflatoxins in nuts

In 2004, the RASFF received a total of 844 notifications on aflatoxins. This is somewhat more than compared to 2003 (763) and nearly three times as much as compared to 2002 (288). Most of the notifications concerned pistachios (538), primarily originating from Iran (487). Aflatoxins are also regularly reported in peanuts and derived products from China (62), Argentina (27) and India (24), in hazelnuts (24) and in dried figs (35) from Turkey and in paprika powder (16).

The situation with regard to the high number of notifications of pistachios originating from Iran continues to be worrying. Comprehensive measures are in place: all consignments are analysed twice, first time prior to export by the competent authorities of Iran who issue the health certificate and the second time prior to import by the competent authorities of the importing Member State.

The Commission is also following up the notifications on aflatoxin contamination of nuts and peanuts originating from other third countries.

New measures taken in 2004:

- Points of entry in the new Member States

Five specific Commission Decisions were already in place in 2004 containing measures regarding the import of pistachios from Iran, peanuts from Egypt, hazelnuts, peanuts and pistachios from Turkey, peanuts from China and Brazil nuts in shell from Brazil.¹

These specific safeguard measures have been amended in order to ensure that the products can also be imported through entry points in the ten new Member States

- Commission Decision 2004/429/EC of 29 April 2004 amending Decisions 97/830/EC, 2000/49/EC, 2002/79/EC and 2002/80/EC as regards the points of entry through which the products concerned may only be imported into the Community (OJ L 154, 30.04.2004, p. 20 - Corrigendum published in OJ L 189, 27.5.2004, p. 13)
- Commission Decision 2004/428/EC of 29 April 2004 amending Decision 2003/493/EC as regards the points of entry through which Brazil nuts in shell originating in or consigned from Brazil may only be imported into the Community (OJ L154, 30.04.2004, p. 14 - Corrigendum published in OJ L 189, 27.5.2004, p. 8)

- Strengthening of the measures as regards pistachios from Iran

Because a high frequency of non-compliance as regards the maximum levels of aflatoxins in pistachios originating in or consigned from Iran has been observed in 2003 and 2004, the Commission has decided to strengthen the measures concerning the import of pistachios originating in or consigned from Iran. In addition to the existing measures the following two new measures have been established²:

- limiting the validity of the health certificate to four months;

¹ See RASFF annual report 2003

² 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 (OJ L30/12, 3.2.2005)

- requiring that all costs resulting from sampling, analysis, storage and all costs resulting from official measures taken regarding non compliant consignments are borne by the importers or food business operators concerned, as the measures applicable to the pistachios from Iran have a significant impact on the control resources of the Member States.

Dioxins

In 2004, only 5 notifications reported contamination with dioxins from different sources. To be noted is the finding of elevated levels of dioxins in fatty acid used for the production of animal feed and the finding of levels above the legal maximum levels in dried shrimp shells and in sugar yeast on molasses, both intended to be used for the production of animal feed.

One news notification of elevated levels of dioxins in farm milk from the Netherlands resulted in the discovery of a serious contamination of feed with dioxins coming from kaolinitic clay.

The contamination incident

A serious dioxin contamination incident occurred in the autumn of 2004. On the occasion of a random monitoring of dioxin levels in milk in the Netherlands, an increased level of dioxin was found in a mixed milk sample on 18 October 2004. After investigation, it was found that milk from one farm had dioxin levels above the EU maximum level of 3 pg dioxins/g fat. This farm was immediately barred from trade.

Investigations on the source of contamination revealed that potato by-products from a potato processing company had levels of dioxins above the EU maximum level of 0.75 ng dioxins per kg feed and this was identified as the source of contamination. The RASFF was informed of the contamination incident on 2 November 2004

Before potatoes are peeled and further processed, they are sorted to separate the good quality from the bad quality potatoes. This sorting is carried out in a water bath, whereby the density of the water is increased by using the so-called “potato separator clay”, which is, in fact, a kaolinitic clay. This procedure for increasing the water density by means of clay was introduced to replace the use of salt to increase the density of water. The latter procedure is still used by most potato processing companies.

The kaolinitic clay used for the separation of the potatoes was contaminated with very high levels of dioxins. The dioxins in these clays were formed through a natural process over a period of millions of years. Particles of the contaminated clay stuck to the potatoes and to the potato peels and therefore caused an increased level of dioxins in the peels used for animal feeding.

Immediately, all farms which had received the potentially contaminated potato by-product were identified and barred from trade by the competent authorities of the concerned Member States. Samples were taken of food of animal origin from the affected farms for analysis.

Investigations were also started to verify if the contaminated clay was used in other food processing companies. A limited number of food processing companies in the Netherlands, Belgium, France and Germany using the contaminated clay in their process were identified. Samples were immediately taken for analysis from the by-products intended for animal feed and the products intended for human consumption. Farms which had received the potentially contaminated by product were also traced and barred from trade if the feed was shown to be contaminated.

In total more than 200 farms were barred: 197 in the Netherlands (mainly dairy cattle and pig farms), 9 in Belgium (mainly pig farms) and 32 in Germany (mainly pig and fattening bovine farms).

With the exception of milk samples from three farms in the Netherlands, all samples of food of animal origin taken from affected farms (milk, pig fat and bovine fat) and of potato and vegetable products intended for human consumption gave favourable results (more than 200 samples analysed). Following these favourable results all restrictive measures on the farms were lifted by the end of November with the exception of two contaminated dairy farms in the Netherlands. The restrictive measures on these two dairy farms were eventually lifted.

Role of RASFF and lessons to be drawn from this contamination incident

This contamination incident resulted in an intensive exchange of information through the RASFF during the month of November. A lesson which can be drawn from this incident is the need to immediately provide as complete and clear information as possible to the RASFF on new developments in order to enable the RASFF to fast and accurately inform competent authorities in other Member States.

Cadmium and mercury in swordfish and cephalopods

Cadmium above the maximum level in fishery products was 43 times reported to the RASFF. This is less than half the number of notifications received in 2003 (103). The majority of these notifications concerned swordfish (24); others concerned cephalopods like squid, cuttlefish and octopus (11). Also the problem of mercury was reported in swordfish in 30 notifications, which means a slight increase compared to 2003.

Since April 2002, the maximum level of cadmium applicable to swordfish has been 0.05 mg/kg and for cephalopods, it is 1.0 mg/kg. The maximum level for mercury in swordfish is 1.0 mg/kg (Regulation (EC) 466/2001 as amended by Regulation (EC) N° 221/2002). For cadmium in swordfish, in view of new data, Regulation (EC) N° 78/2005 amending Regulation (EC) N° 466/2001 sets a revised maximum level of 0.30 mg/kg. This level entered into force on 9 February 2005.

Residues of veterinary medicinal products

The number of notifications on residues of veterinary medicinal products has decreased significantly in 2004 compared to 2003, in particular in products that originated from third countries. This reduction may be explained by the enforcing measures taken by these countries e.g. concerning the use of the illegal antibiotics nitrofurans and chloramphenicol, and also because of an improvement in the analytical methods used to detect the presence of residues in food before being dispatched to the EU.

All imports originated from South East Asia and concerned aquaculture products. Eight notifications were reported on malachite green in catfish and tilapia from Vietnam. Thirty notifications concerned nitrofurans metabolites in crustaceans and products thereof (11 from India, 7 from Indonesia and 5 from Bangladesh).

As concerns the EU Member States, the number of notifications has increased compared to 2003, mainly due to the presence of antibiotics in honey and the accession of 10 new Member States. Residues of antibiotics in honey have been detected in Slovakia (7 notifications on tylosin and 3 on sulphonamides), Spain (4) and Italy (2).

Council Regulation (EEC) No 2377/90 laid down a Community procedure for the establishment of maximum residue limits (MRLs) for veterinary medicinal products in foodstuffs of animal origin. However, honey it is not included in the “tissues” (foods) mentioned in Annex I of Regulation (EEC) No 2377/90 listing pharmacologically active substances for which maximum residue levels have been fixed. Therefore, according to Article 14 of the same Regulation, the use of antibiotics in honey bees is not permitted and cannot be authorised¹. Likewise imports of honey containing antibiotics are not permitted². Antibiotics in honey are therefore considered “unauthorised substances”.

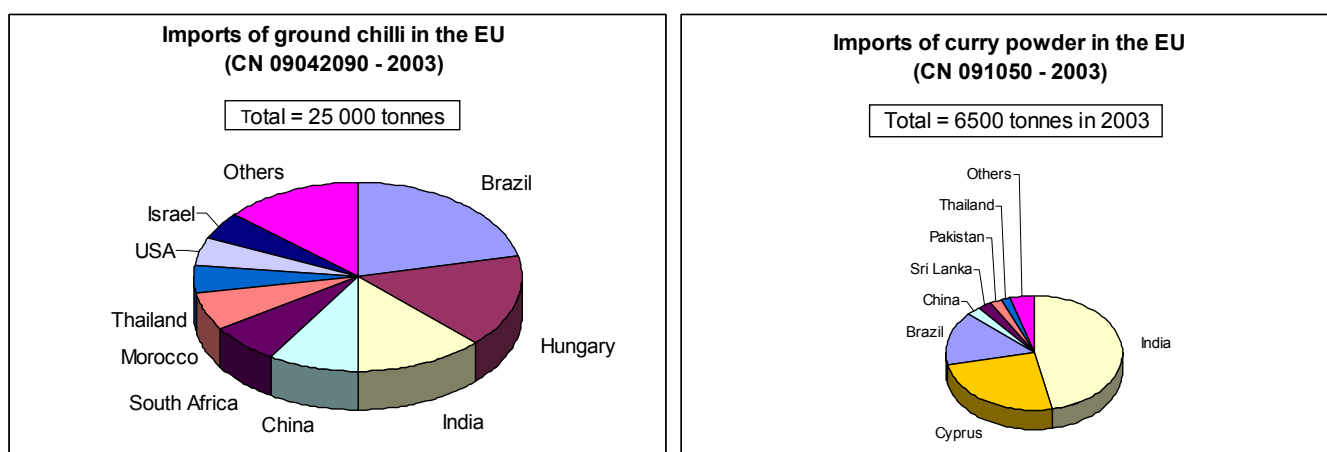
Residues of lasalocid have been reported 4 times in eggs and egg products from Lithuania. Coccidiostats like lasalocid are not authorised in laying hens; residues of these substances can be found in eggs and egg products mainly due to a cross contamination of the feed with feed destined for fattening chicks.

Unauthorised colouring substances Sudan I and Sudan IV

In 2003 with Decision 2003/460/EC, a first community measure was taken to control the unlawful use of the colouring substance Sudan I in chilli and chilli products. A second Decision extending the scope of the measures was adopted on 21 January 2004 (Dec. 2004/92/EC) and is still in force after Member States decided to maintain the measures after 31 December 2004.

Imports of chilli and chilli products in the EU (15)

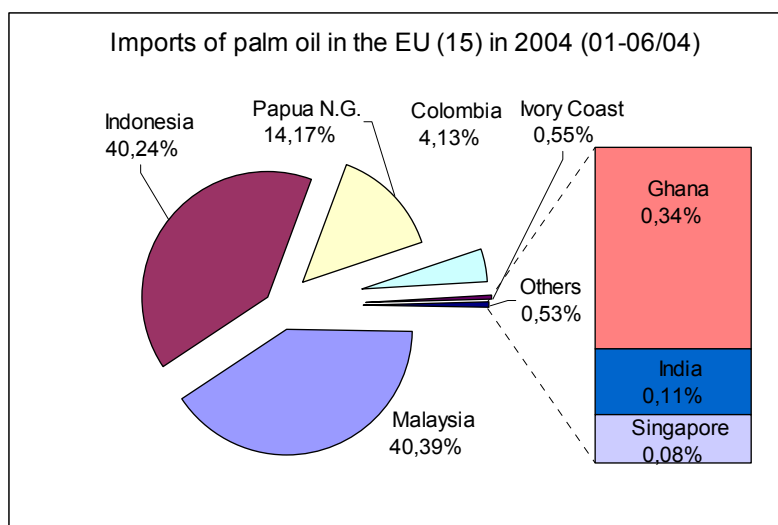
In 2003, almost 50% of the EU imports of ground chilli were from Brazil, Hungary and India. India alone covered 46% of the EU imports of curry powder in 2003. This demonstrates that the EU is dependent on only a few third countries for its imports of chilli and curry powders.



¹ See Article 6 Directive 2001/82/EC of 6 November 2001 on the Community code relating to veterinary medicinal products as amended by Directive 2004/28/EC (Veterinary Medicinal Products Directive).

² See Article 29 of Council Directive 96/23/EC on measures to monitor certain substances and residues thereof in live animals and animal products.

Imports of palm oil

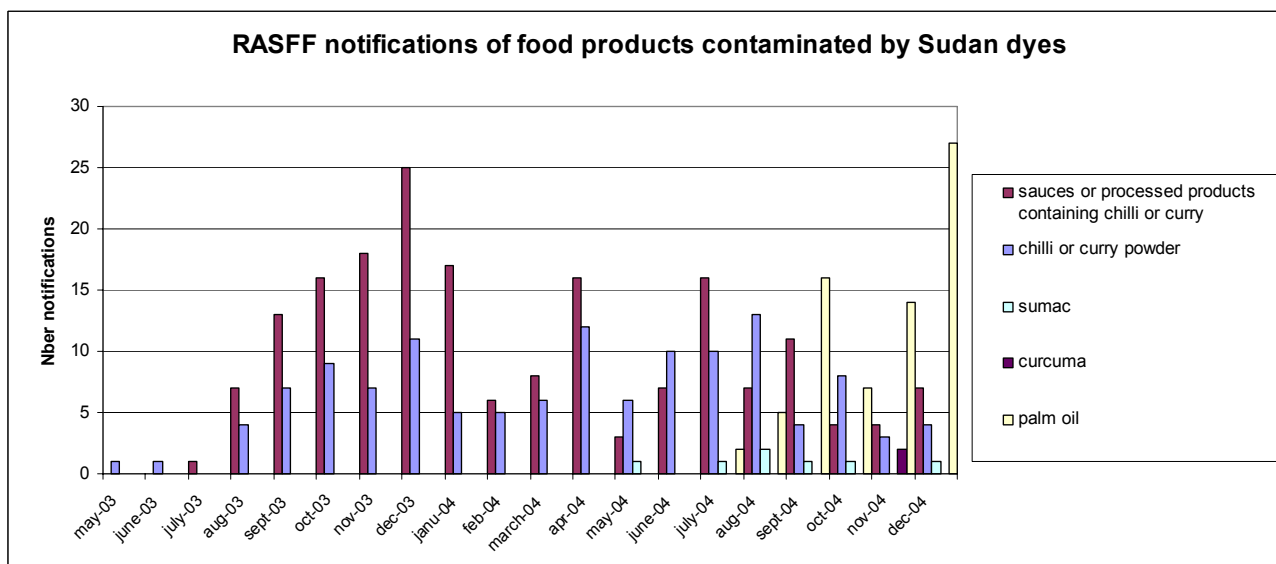


The EU imported 1,5 million tonnes of palm oil in the first half of 2004 (2,5 million tonnes in 2003). The main exporting countries of palm oil are Indonesia and Malaysia. The main African exporting country to the EU is Ghana with 0,34% of total exports to the EU but this country only exports “virgin” palm oil, also called pure red or “zomi” palm oil.

RASFF notifications on food products containing Sudan dyes

The first contamination cases were identified in chilli powder, but many processed products, prepared dishes and sauces were finally found to be positive. Therefore the scope of the Decision for imported products -initially limited to ground and powdered chilli- was extended to curry powders in Decision 2004/92/EC.

In May 2004, sumac, a spice totally distinct from chilli, was found to be contaminated by Sudan I and IV. In July 2004, red palm oil was found to be contaminated with Sudan IV and the number of notifications concerning this product increased strongly in the second half of 2004. In November 2004, samples of curcuma were found to be contaminated by Sudan dyes.



RASFF notifications per origin identified

Third countries

Third countries	India	Ghana	Turkey	Pakistan	Egypt	Nigeria	West Africa
Raw products (chilli, curry)	36		31	4	6		
Processed products (chilli, curry)	31		5	9	1		
Sumac			7				
Curcuma	1						
Palm oil		53				6	5
Total number of notifications (origin)	68	53	43	12	7	6	5

The figures in the table to the left represent the number of notifications received per third country of origin and type of product until the end of 2004.

India is most referred to as the origin of chilli and chilli products containing Sudan red. This country is an important producer of chilli and curry powder. India is also one of the most important chilli and curry exporting countries to the EU.

Since tests on palm oil revealed the presence of Sudan IV, Ghana has become the second most frequently

mentioned third country as the origin of Sudan-contaminated products. It should be noted that Ghana is not the main exporter of palm oil to the EU but the main exporter of “virgin palm oil”.

After India, Turkey is most frequently mentioned as the origin of chilli products but is not listed as an important chilli or curry exporting country for the EU. Turkey is the main origin for sumac found to be contaminated. It is however often difficult to establish the precise origin for consignments imported from third countries as intensive trading is a common practice for spice commodities.

Member States

Member States	Italy	United Kingdom	Germany	France	The Netherlands	Spain	Poland	Lithuania
Raw products (chilli and curry)	7	7	7	5	9	6	3	1
Processed products (chilli and curry)	61	14	10	11	1	2	2	4
Total number of notification (origin)	68	21	17	16	10	8	5	5

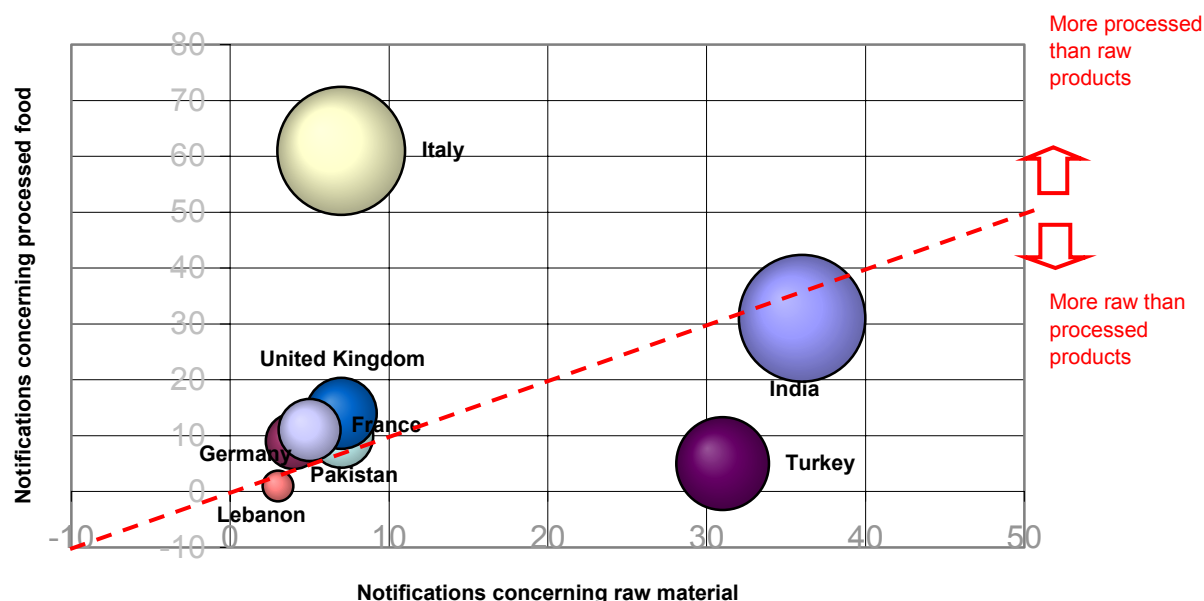
The figures in the table to the left represent the number of notifications received per Member State of origin and type of product until the end of 2004.

Italy is the Member State most mentioned as the origin of contaminated products.

However, these notifications concern mainly processed products. This seems to indicate that probably at the origin of the contamination are imported raw products. With a more limited number of cases, the United Kingdom is in a similar situation.

The chart below demonstrates that notifications mentioning Member States as the origin of the products refer mostly to processed products using contaminated raw material, whereas notifications mentioning third countries as the origin refer mainly to raw products (ground chilli and curry powders).

RASFF notifications for chilli and chilli products: origin of the products

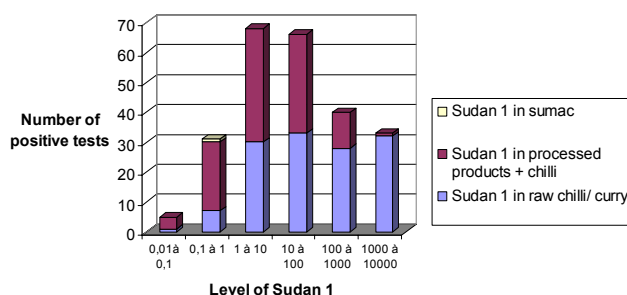


Notifications per type of dye involved

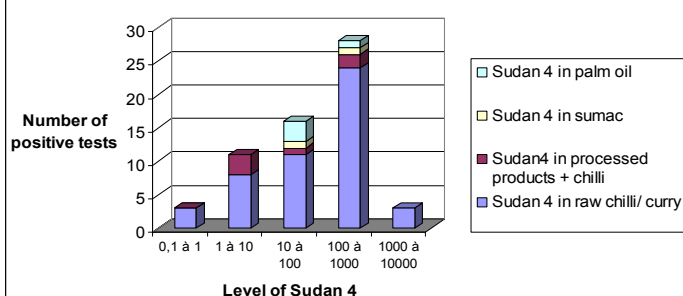
Notifications RASFF	Sudan I	Sudan II	Sudan III	Sudan IV (Scarlet Red)
Chilli and chilli products	282	1	1	78
Sumac	3			6
Palm oil	1	1	1	50

The scope of the Community measures, initially limited to Sudan I (Dec. 2003/460/EC), was extended to other Sudan dyes by Decision 2004/92/EC. Sudan I is the dye notified in most of the cases. This substance is found alone or in association with other Sudan dyes primarily in chilli, curry and derived products. Scarlet Red (Sudan IV) is the second most notified of the Sudan dyes. In chilli and chilli containing products, this dye is found together with Sudan I. However, palm oil has been found to be contaminated almost exclusively with Sudan IV. For products containing Sudan I and Sudan II, the level of contamination decreases as the processing of products increases (see charts below).

Level of Sudan 1 found in chilli and chilli products



Level of Sudan 4 found in chilli and chilli products



Listeria monocytogenes in fishery products

Forty-one notifications were received in 2004 on *Listeria monocytogenes* in fish, of which 29 concerned smoked salmon, primarily from Denmark (19) and from Germany (10).

Most of the notifications were based on the detection of *L. monocytogenes* in 25 g of sample. Enumeration of *L. monocytogenes* has seldom been carried out and therefore the level of contamination in the products has remained largely unknown. According to a scientific opinion (1999) the presence of *Listeria* in food represents a very low risk for all populations when *L. monocytogenes* concentration is below 100 cfu/g.

In the existing Community legislation *L. monocytogenes* criteria have only been set for milk products. At the moment the Community criteria are under revision. In the draft Regulation the scope of the food categories has been extended from milk products to all ready-to-eat foods. It is expected that the Commission Regulation on microbiological criteria for foodstuffs will be adopted in 2005, so that it would be applicable from 1 January 2006.

Sulphites in shrimps

A total of 53 notifications were reported on too high levels of sulphites in shrimps. Thirty-one of these notifications concerned cooked shrimps, for which the authorised limit is the strictest: 50 mg/kg.

The health risk related to sulphites is that, due to its low acceptable daily intake (0.7 mg/kg body weight) and due to wide use of sulphites, the intake may potentially be exceeded. Furthermore, sulphites are allergenic, therefore their presence must be labelled in accordance with Directive 2003/89/EC, amending Directive 2000/13/EC as regards indication of the ingredients present in foodstuffs.

Directive 95/2/EC on food additives other than colours and sweeteners permits the use of sulphites (E 220 - 228) in raw and cooked shrimps to prevent undesirable browning. The high number of notifications on too high levels of sulphites in cooked shrimps has raised the question whether the authorised limits are technically correct. It seems that even if a food operator complies with the legal limits for raw shrimps, after cooking, the legal limit for cooked shrimps could be exceeded. In the context of the 6th amendment of Directive 95/2/EC, the issue is currently under discussion in the Council.

Histamine in tuna

In 2004, 39 notifications were received on histamine in fish, of which 31 concerned tuna. In many cases the notifications concerned chilled tuna that was subsequently vacuum packed in the Netherlands. Twenty-one notifications mention Indonesia as the country of origin of the tuna. Levels found of several thousand ppm are no exception, with one notification reporting a finding of more than 7000 ppm. For some particular fish species EU levels were set in Directive 91/493/EEG which requires 9 samples to be taken. The average level of histamine should be lower than 100 ppm, only two samples may have levels between 100 and 200 and none above 200 ppm.

Some Member States have reported that chilled tuna fish imported from the Far East has, during recent years, become a common vehicle of histamine poisoning. Histamine criteria for fishery products will be included in the Commission Regulation on microbiological criteria for foodstuffs, which is expected to be adopted in 2005 and to become applicable from 1 January 2006.

Anisakis in fresh fish

Italy notified 41 times on the presence of larvae of the nematode parasite *Anisakis* in fish, mainly in fresh mackerel from Norway and Denmark and anglerfish from the United Kingdom.

Council Directive 91/493/EEC (Chapter IV point V of the annex) foresees that “during production and before they are released for human consumption, fish and fish products must be subject to a visual inspection for the purpose of detecting and removing any parasites that are visible. Fish or parts of fish which are obviously infested with parasites, and which are removed, must not be placed on the market for human consumption.” Moreover, with Decision 93/140 detailed rules for the examination of parasites are foreseen. The food business operators are responsible for the application of this Decision.

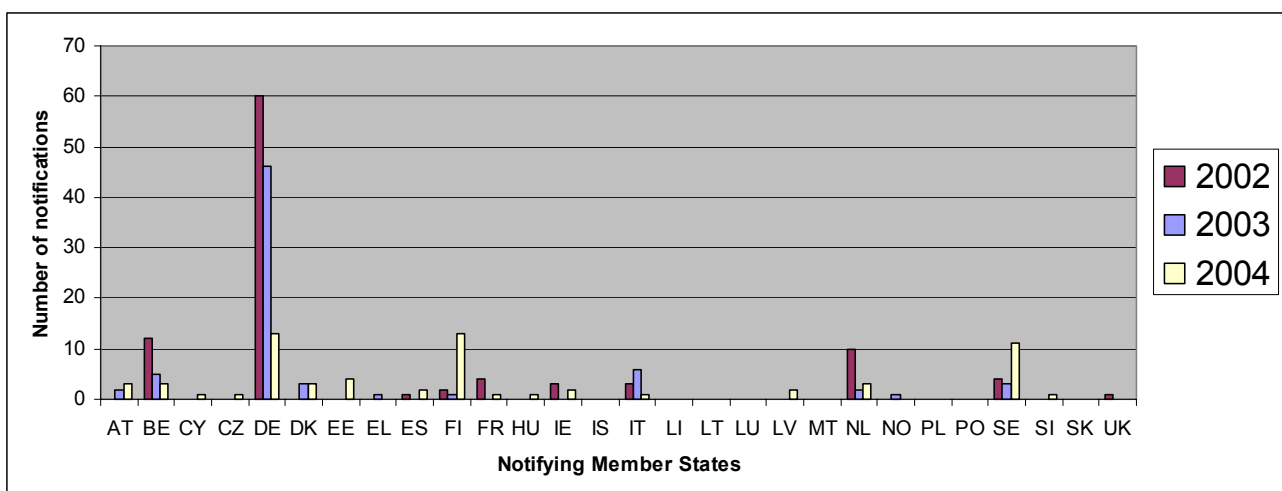
Certain fish species, which are processed with a treatment that might not be sufficient to kill the larvae, must be frozen to a temperature of at least -20°C for at least 24 hours.

Consumption of underprocessed fish may lead to Anisakiasis, a serious disease where the *Anisakis* parasite may damage the digestive tract of the patient. Allergic reactions -even to dead larvae- are also reported.

Notifications concerning feed

The total number of notifications for feed in 2004 was 65, making 2.5 % of all RASFF notifications. This figure represents a continuous decrease compared to previous years: 71 notifications (3.1% of the total) in 2003 and 100 notifications (6.6% of the total) in 2002.

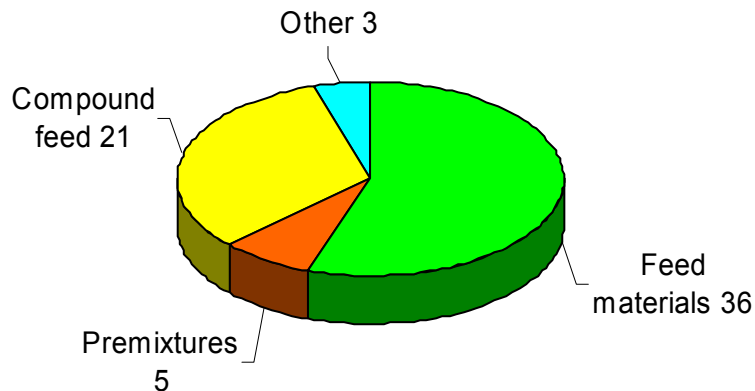
These 65 notifications comprised 24 alert, 39 information and 2 news notifications. Seventeen Member States sent notifications about feed, but 57% of the total was transmitted by Finland, Germany and Sweden. About 62% of the total number of notifications concerned feed originating from three Member States: Germany (19 notifications), the Netherlands (14) and Belgium (7); while 15 % (10 notifications) related to feed from third countries.



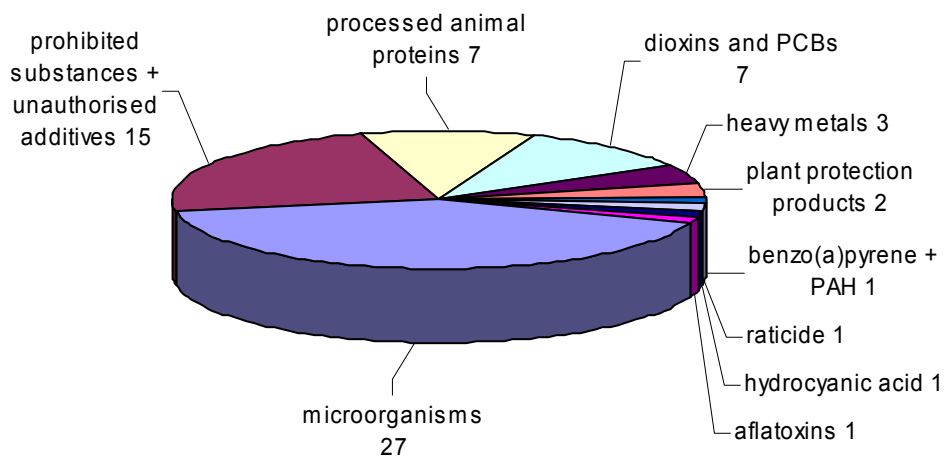
The main problems related to microbiological contamination (27 notifications), mostly *Salmonella* in rape seed and soy bean meals, followed by prohibited substances (chloramphenicol) and

unauthorised additives in premixtures and compound feedingstuffs (15), processed animal proteins (7) and dioxins and PCBs (7).

Feed notifications 2004: products



Feed notifications 2004: hazards



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 2004, third countries were informed 1884 times of a problem with a product originating from their country and they were informed 128 times of a distribution of a contaminated product to their country.

Moreover, when a problem has been detected on several occasions, a letter is sent to the competent authority of the country concerned. In 2004, 10 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
TAIWAN	mercury	fishery products
BRAZIL	Salmonella and other micro organisms	bovine meat
INDIA	residues of veterinary drugs	fishery products
INDONESIA	cadmium and mercury	fishery products
CHINA	aflatoxins	nuts, nut products and snacks
MALAYSIA	Salmonella spp, Vibrio parahaemolyticus	crustaceans
IRAN	aflatoxins	pistachio nuts
UNITED KINGDOM	parasites	fishery products
U.S.A.	aflatoxins	nuts, nut products and snacks
GHANA	colour Sudan IV	pure palm oil

Summary of statistics

The number of information exchanges rose from 698 in 1999, 823 in 2000, 1567 in 2001, 3024 in 2002 and 4414 in 2003 to 5562 in the year 2004.¹

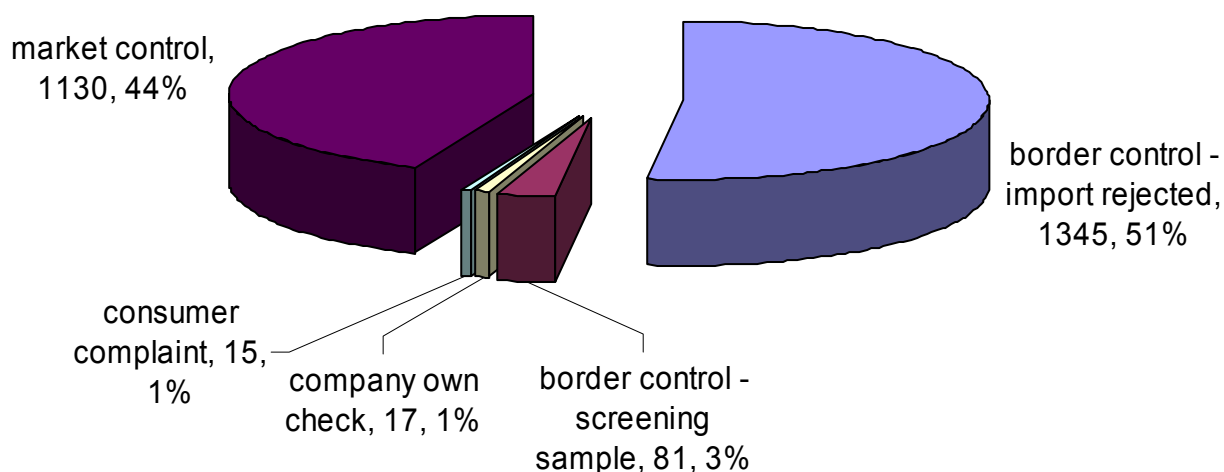
During 2004, the Commission sent 89 [news notifications](#) through the system. After the receipt of additional information, 2 information notifications were upgraded to an alert notification. Also after the receipt of additional information, 15 [alert notifications](#) and 20 [information notifications](#) were withdrawn. Notifications that were withdrawn are excluded from the statistics on the following pages.

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

A total of 2588 alert and information notifications were received through the RASFF, which led to 2777 follow-up notifications, so on average roughly 1 follow-up notification per original notification.

When notifications are classified according to the type of control carried out, the chart below is obtained. The majority of notifications concern 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.

2004 notifications according to type of control

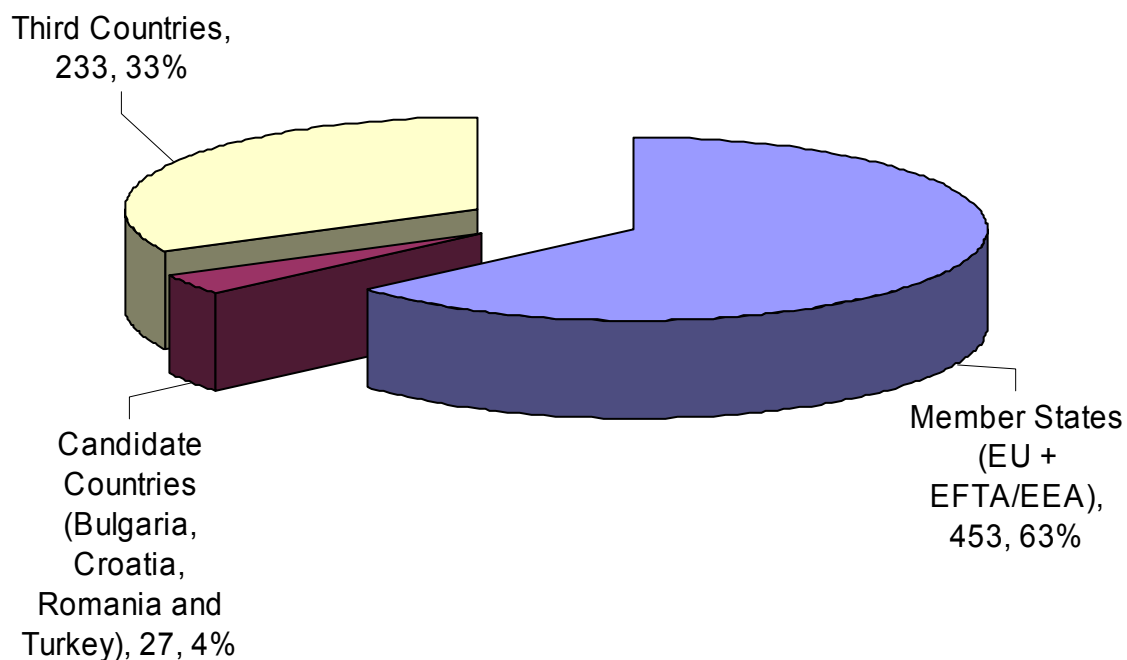


A detailed statistical breakdown of the information is available in Annex 1. This statistical breakdown only refers to products which have been subject to a notification within the RASFF in 2004.

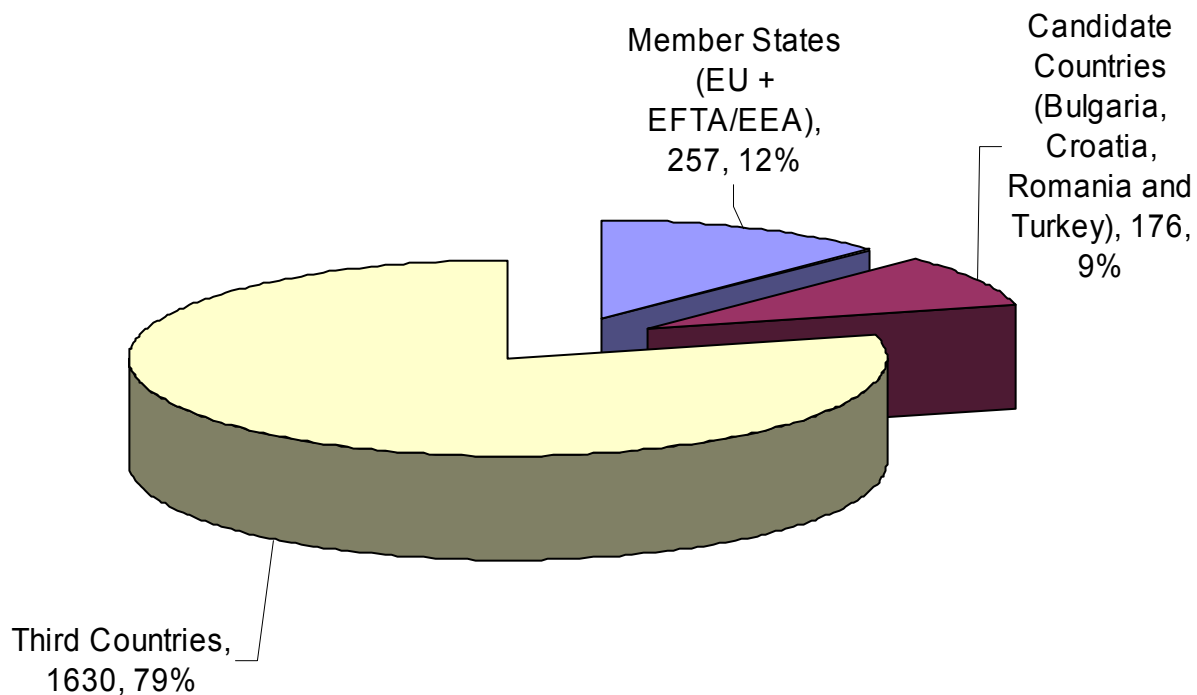
¹ From 2003 on, this figure includes all notifications (alert, information, news and additional information) but not the rejected notifications.

Product origin

2004 - Alert notifications according to product origin

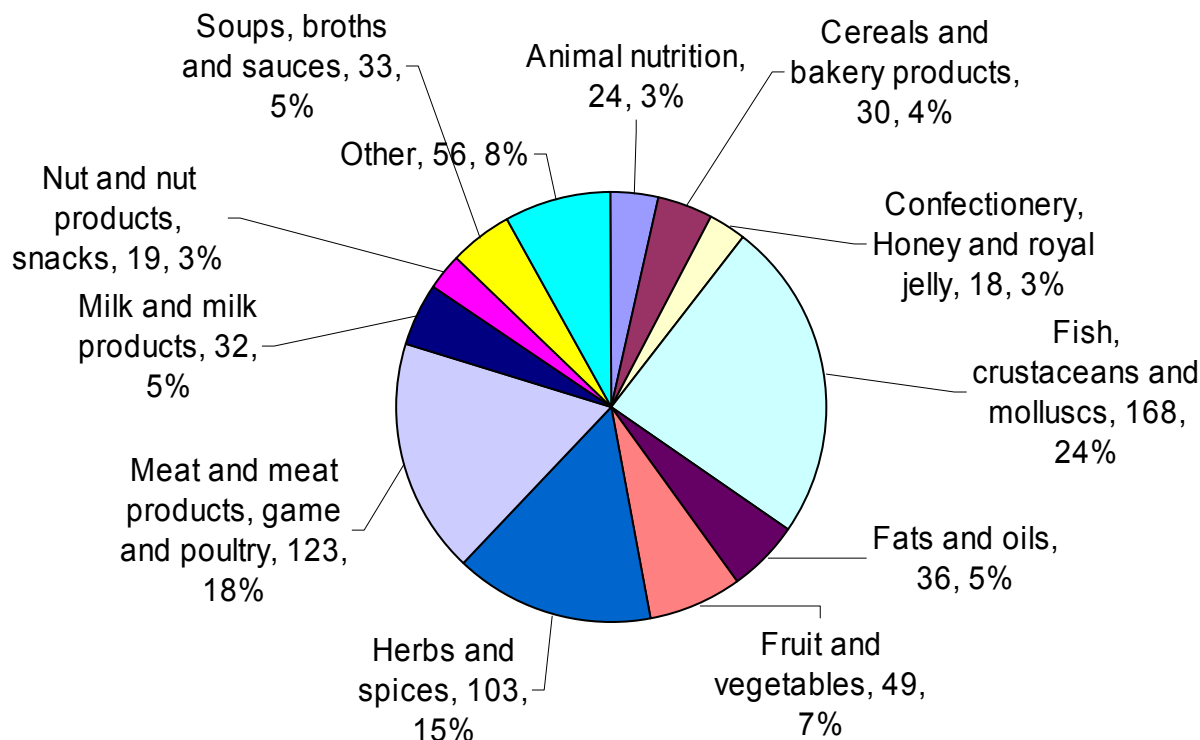


2004 - Information notifications according to product origin

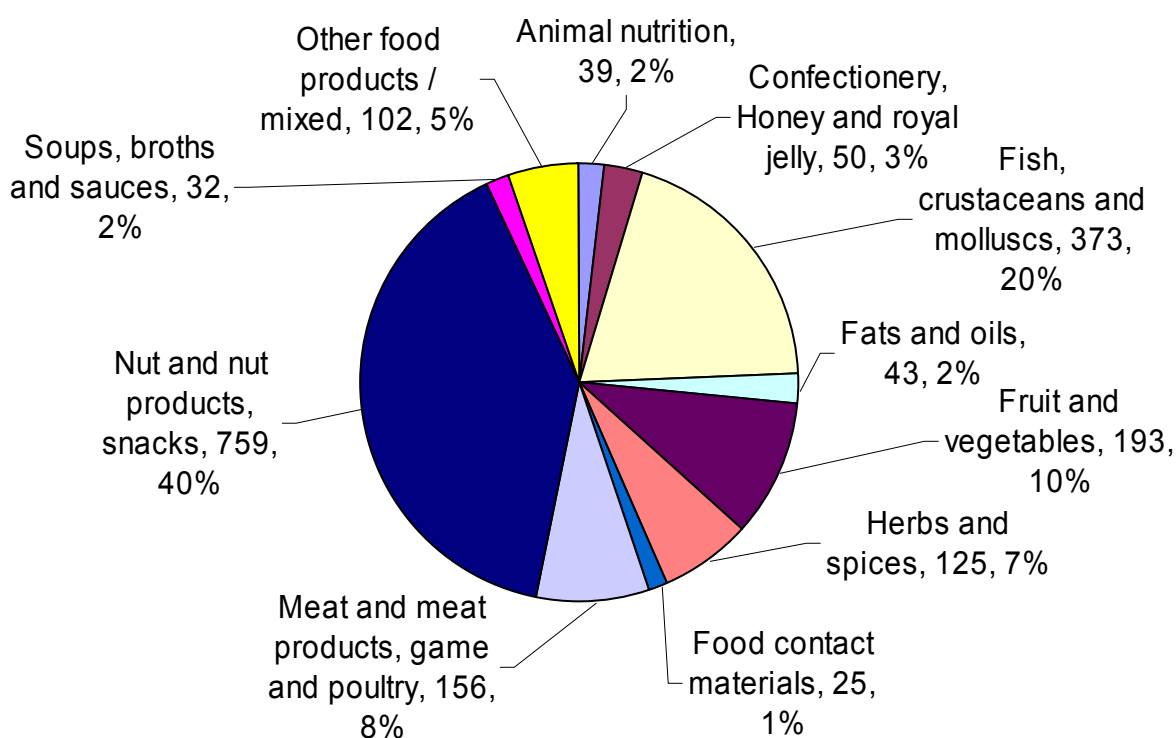


Products involved

2004 Alert notifications according to product category

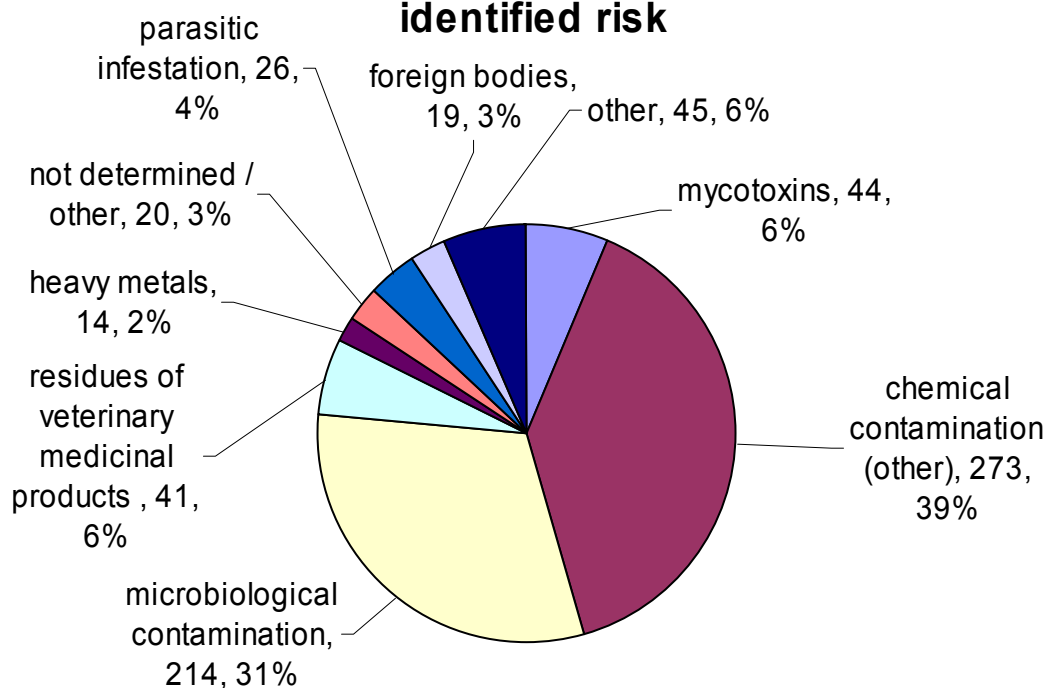


2004 Information notifications according to product category

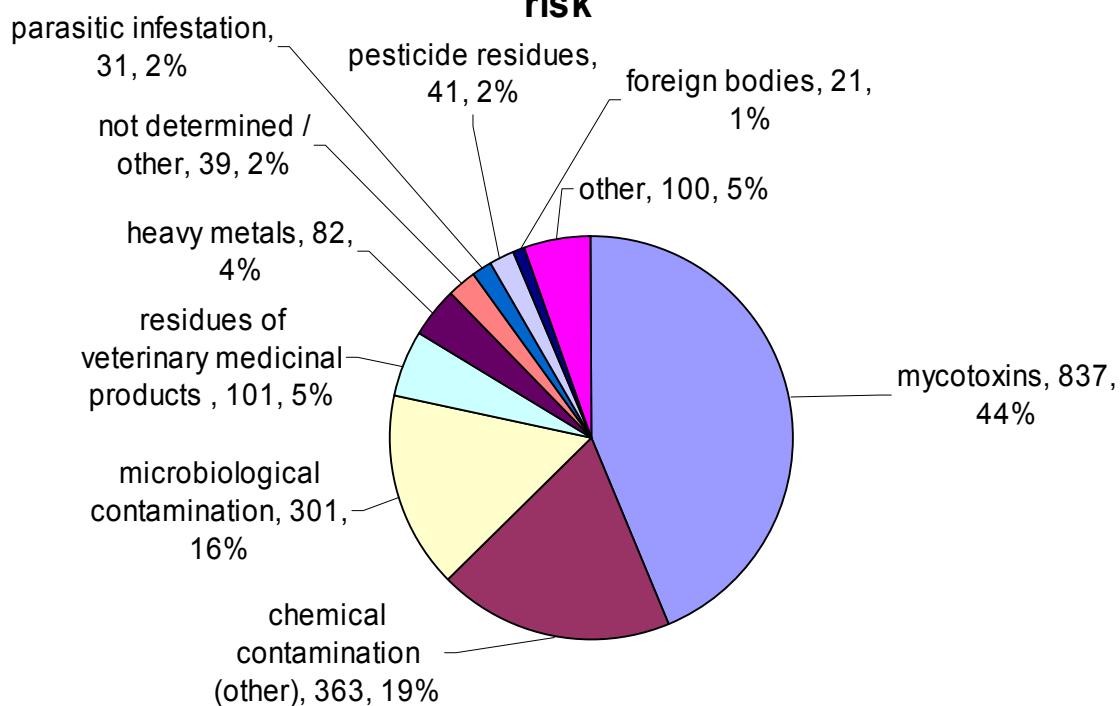


Identified risk

2004 Alert notifications according to the identified risk



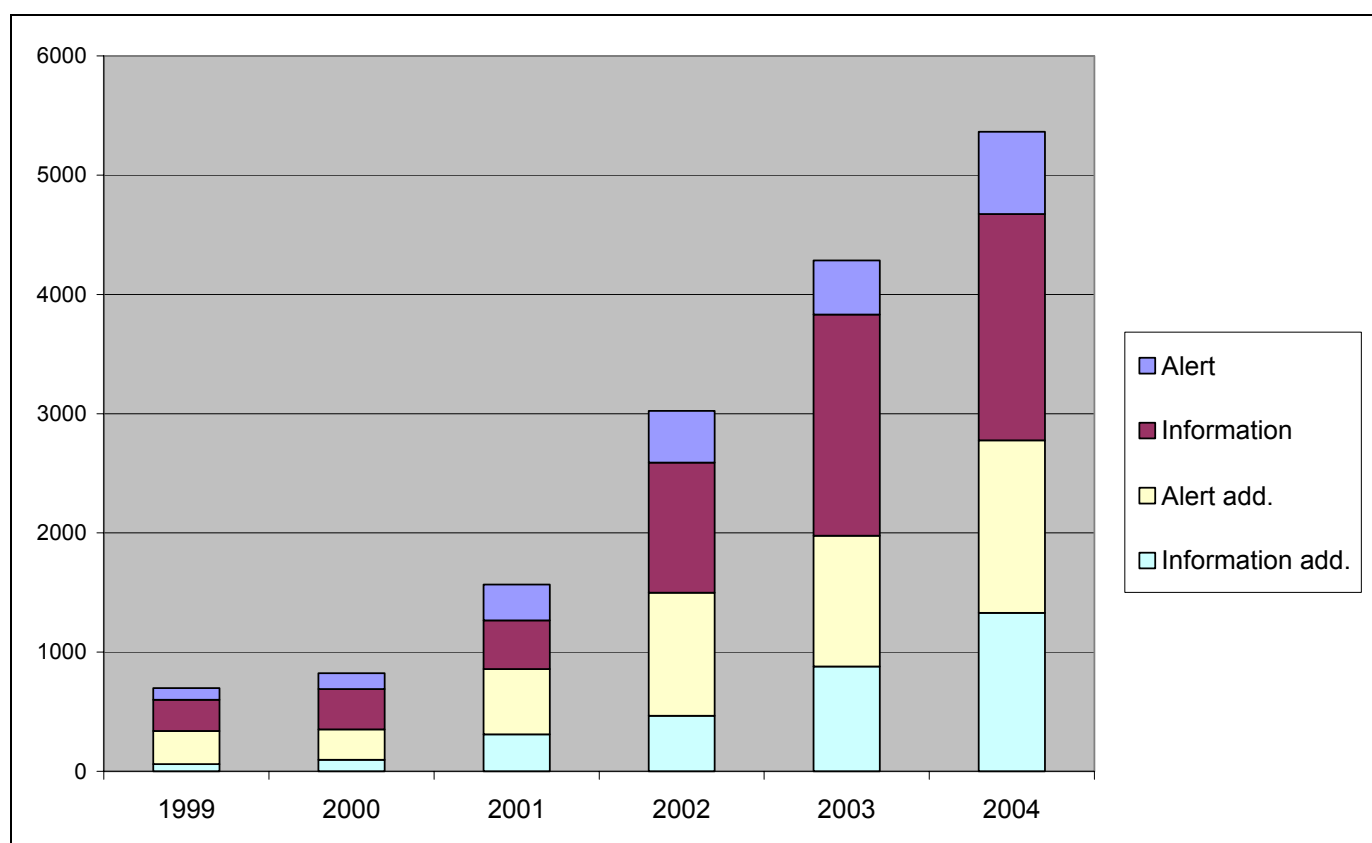
2004 Information notifications according to the identified risk



Detailed statistical breakdown

Evolution of the number of notifications since 1999

YEAR	ALERT	INFORMATION	ADDITION TO ALERT	ADDITION TO INFORMATION	TOTAL
1999	97	263	279	59	698
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	691	1897	1448	1329	5365
2004 increase (%)	+ 52.2 %	+ 2.2 %	+ 32.0 %	+ 51.4 %	+ 25.2 %



Rejected notifications in 2004

Notifications rejected for the following reasons:

The notification contains inaccurate information	3
The notification contains no evidence of a direct or indirect risk to consumer health	66
Levels found are below the legal limits	3
Levels found do not pose a risk to the health of the consumer	12
The notification does not contain sufficient information to perform a proper evaluation	10
The notification is outdated	7
The problem indicated falls outside the scope of the regulation	19
Total	120

Type of hazards identified in the rejected notifications:

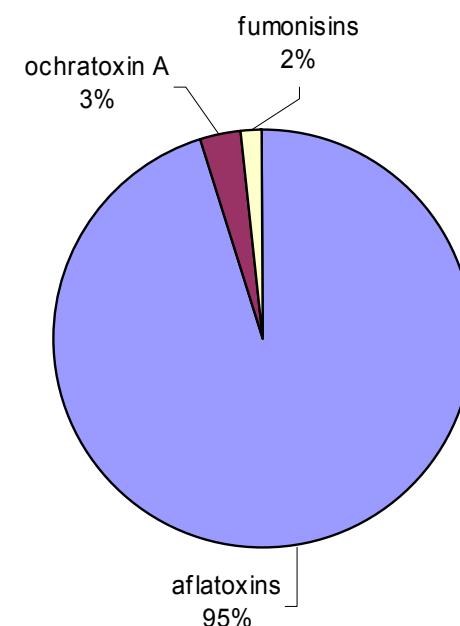
biotoxins (other)	1
chemical contamination (other)	6
GMO / novel food	1
labelling absent/incomplete/incorrect	35
microbiological contamination	7
not determined / other	46
organoleptic changes	1
pesticide residues	16
residues of veterinary medicinal products	7
Total	120

Breakdown of 2004 notifications by hazard type, origin and product category

For each of the categories of contaminations, a “top ten” (number of notifications) is calculated of combinations of country of origin and product category, grouped by third countries and Member States. Footnotes are made for recurring hazards or to specify a food product in which the hazard mainly occurred.

MYCOTOXINS

Third countries	product category	# not.	Member States	product category	# not.
IRAN	nuts, nut products and snacks ¹	487	ITALY	cereals and bakery products ²	12
CHINA	nuts, nut products and snacks ³	62	SPAIN	herbs and spices	3
TURKEY	nuts, nut products and snacks ⁴	47	GERMANY	nuts, nut products and snacks	2
TURKEY	fruit and vegetables ⁵	40	UNITED KINGDOM	herbs and spices	2
THE UNITED STATES	nuts, nut products and snacks	32	ITALY	nuts, nut products and snacks	2
ARGENTINA	nuts, nut products and snacks	27	HUNGARY	herbs and spices	2
INDIA	nuts, nut products and snacks	25	GREECE	fruit and vegetables	2
EGYPT	nuts, nut products and snacks ³	16			
BRAZIL	nuts, nut products and snacks	13			
SUDAN	nuts, nut products and snacks	13			



¹ aflatoxins in pistachio nuts

² fumonisins in maize meal

³ mainly aflatoxins in peanuts

⁴ mainly aflatoxins in hazelnuts and pistachio nuts

⁵ mainly aflatoxins in dried figs

MICROBIOLOGICAL CONTAMINATION

Third countries	product category	# not	Member States	product category	# not
BRAZIL	poultry meat and poultry meat products ¹	40	FRANCE	poultry meat and poultry meat products	25
BRAZIL	meat and meat products (other than poultry) ²	16	DENMARK	fish and fishery products (other than crustaceans and molluscs) ³	19
MALAY-SIA	crustaceans and products thereof ⁴	13	SPAIN	meat and meat products (other than poultry)	16
BOT-SWANA	meat and meat products (other than poultry) ⁵	12	GERMANY	meat and meat products (other than poultry)	14
CHILE	molluscs and products thereof	10	FRANCE	milk and milk products	13
TURKEY	herbs and spices	7	GERMANY	fish and fishery products (other than crustaceans and molluscs) ⁶	11
VIETNAM	crustaceans and products thereof	7	GREECE	molluscs and products thereof	11
BANGLA-DESH	crustaceans and products thereof	7	THE NETHERLANDS	animal nutrition ⁷	9
			DENMARK	meat and meat products (other than poultry) ⁸	9

¹ mainly Salmonella spp. and Listeria monocytogenes

² mainly Salmonella spp. and Listeria monocytogenes in beef

³ Listeria monocytogenes in smoked salmon

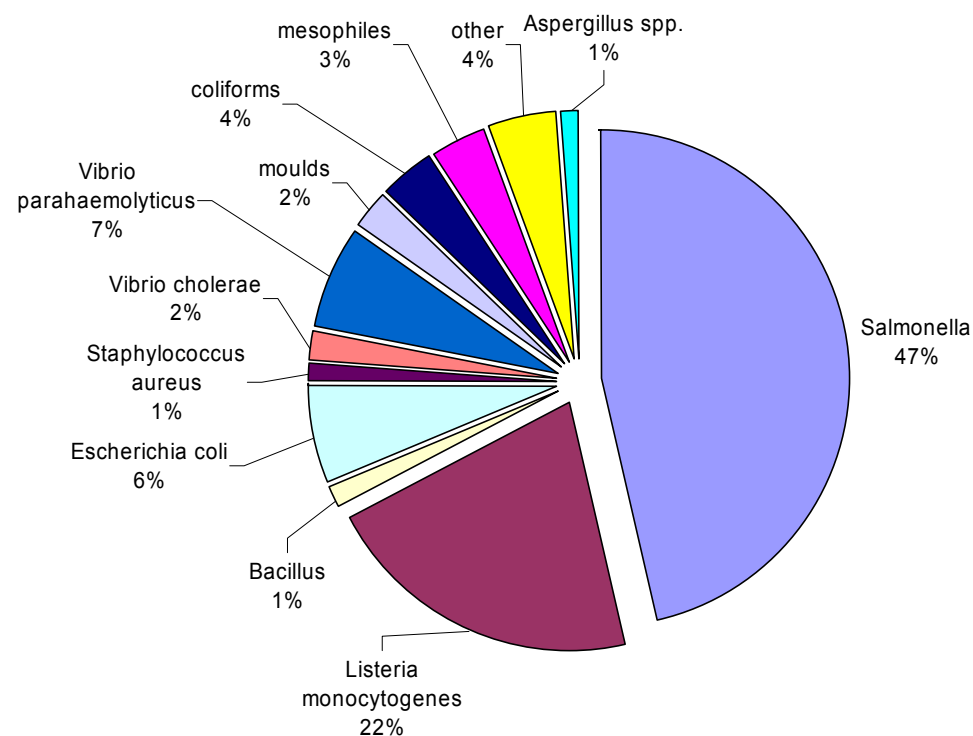
⁴ mainly Vibrio parahaemolyticus in shrimps

⁵ mainly Salmonella spp. in beef

⁶ mainly Listeria monocytogenes in smoked salmon

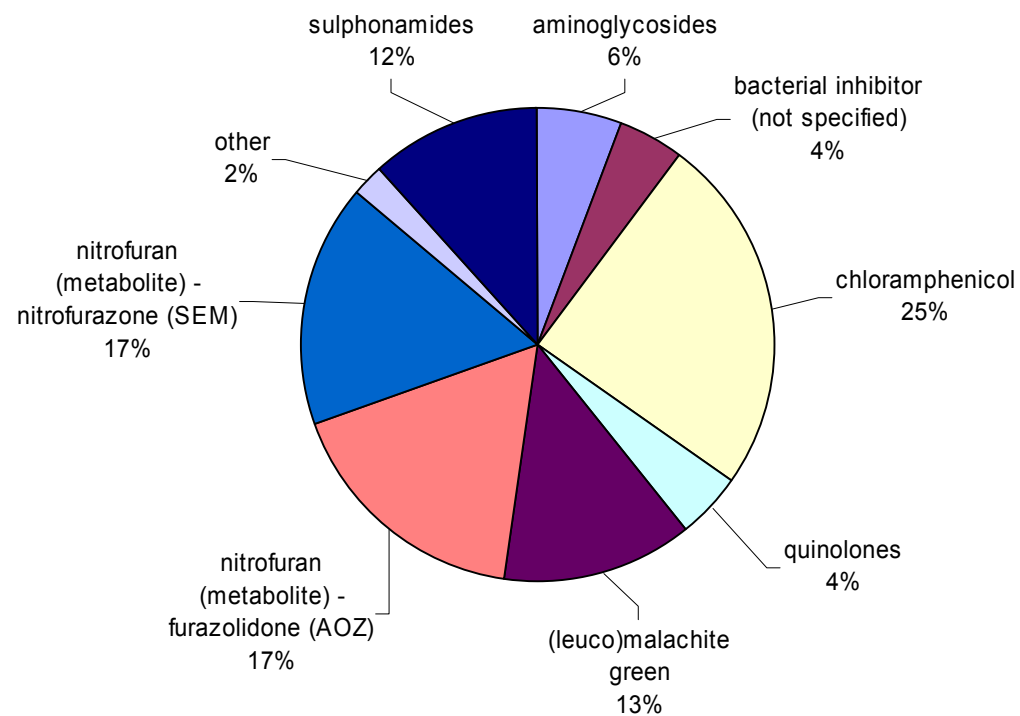
⁷ mainly Salmonella spp. in soy bean meal

⁸ mainly Salmonella spp. in pork



RESIDUES OF VETERINARY MEDICINAL PRODUCTS

Third countries	product category	# not	Member States	product category	# not
INDIA	crustaceans and products thereof	14	SLOVAKIA	confectionery, honey and royal jelly	10
VIETNAM	fish and products thereof (other than crustaceans and molluscs) ¹	11	LITHUANIA	eggs and egg products	4
INDONESIA	crustaceans and products thereof	10	DENMARK	fish and products thereof (other than crustaceans and molluscs)	3
BANGLADESH	crustaceans and products thereof ²	5	SPAIN	confectionery, honey and royal jelly	3
VIETNAM	crustaceans and products thereof	5	SPAIN	milk and milk products	3
			ITALY	confectionery, honey and royal jelly	2
			GERMANY	animal nutrition	2
			ITALY	meat and meat products (other than poultry)	2

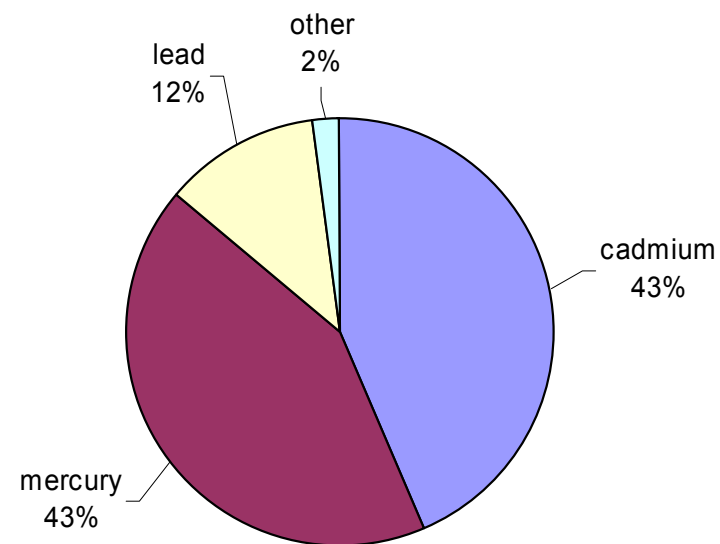


¹ mainly malachite green and leucomalachite green

² nitrofurazone metabolite SEM

HEAVY METALS

Third countries	product category	# not.	Member States	product category	# not.
INDONESIA	fish and products thereof (other than crustaceans and molluscs) ¹	20	SPAIN	fish and products thereof (other than crustaceans and molluscs) ²	6
SINGAPORE	fish and products thereof (other than crustaceans and molluscs) ³	13	GREECE	food contact materials ⁴	2
INDIA	molluscs and products thereof ⁷	5			
TAIWAN	fish and products thereof (other than crustaceans and molluscs) ²	5			
NEW ZEALAND	fish and products thereof (other than crustaceans and molluscs) ⁵	4			
AUSTRALIA	crustaceans and products thereof ⁶	4			
THAILAND	molluscs and products thereof ⁷	3			
SRI LANKA	fish and products thereof (other than crustaceans and molluscs)	3			



¹ mainly mercury and cadmium in swordfish

² mercury

³ mercury and cadmium in swordfish and mercury in mako shark

⁴ lead in ceramic products

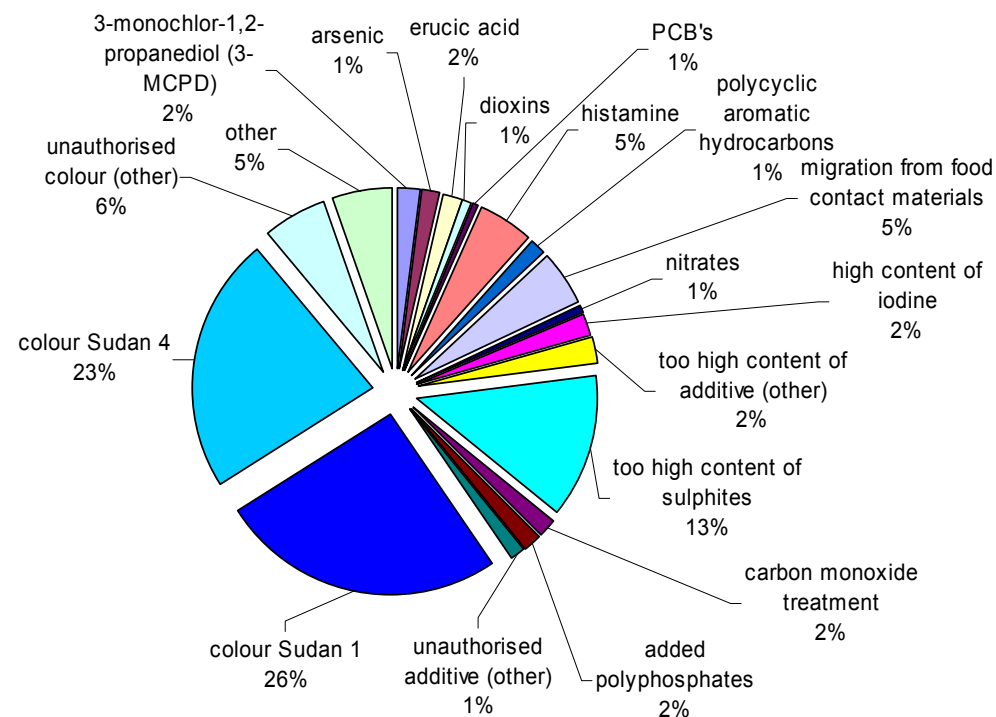
⁵ mercury in ling

⁶ cadmium in frozen shrimps

⁷ cadmium in cuttlefish and squid

CHEMICAL CONTAMINATION (OTHER)

Third countries	product category	# not	Member States	product category	# not
GHANA	fats and oils ¹	53	FRANCE	crustaceans and products thereof ⁶	25
INDIA	herbs and spices ²	35	ITALY	cereals and bakery products ²	14
TURKEY	fruit and vegetables ³	33	GERMANY	herbs and spices ²	12
TURKEY	herbs and spices ²	31	ITALY	soups, broths and sauces ²	10
INDONESIA	fish and products thereof (other than crustaceans and molluscs) ⁴	27	FRANCE	herbs and spices ²	7
CHINA	fruit and vegetables	22	UNITED KINGDOM	herbs and spices ²	7
CHINA	food contact materials ⁵	19	ITALY	herbs and spices ²	7
BRAZIL	crustaceans and products thereof ⁶	13			
PAKISTAN	herbs and spices ²	10			
THAILAND	fruit and vegetables	10			
VIETNAM	soups, broths and sauces ⁷	10			



¹ adulteration of palm oil with chemical dye Sudan IV

² adulteration of spices and product containing spices with chemical dyes Sudan 1 and IV

³ mainly unauthorised titanium dioxide (E171) in roasted chickpeas and too high content of sulphites in dried apricots

⁴ carbon monoxide treatment of and histamine in tuna fish

⁵ mainly migration of organic compounds and metals from kitchen utensils and flatware

⁶ too high content of sulphites in shrimps

⁷ 3-monochlor-1,2-propanediol (3-MCPD) in soy sauces

Notifications according to product category

	2002 TOTAL	2002 Alert	2002 Information
Additives	3	1	2
Alcoholic beverages (other than wine)	1	0	1
Non-alcoholic beverages	6	3	3
Wine	1	1	0
Animal nutrition	90	31	59
Cereals and bakery products	8	5	3
Cocoa and cocoa preparations, coffee and tea	20	4	16
Confectionery, Honey and royal jelly	53	19	34
Dietetic foods, food supplements and fortified foods	26	19	7
Eggs and egg products	18	8	10
Fish, crustaceans and molluscs	480	112	368
Crustaceans and products thereof			
Farmed crustaceans and products thereof			
Wild caught crustaceans and products thereof			
Fish and products thereof (other than crustaceans and molluscs)			

2003 TOTAL	2003 Alert	2003 Information
4	1	3
5	2	3
27	5	22
2	2	0
69	16	53
44	25	19
34	2	32
72	16	56
25	9	16
35	13	22
(545)	(97)	(448)
110	11	99
56	10	46
52	10	42
193	54	139

2004 TOTAL	2004 Alert	2004 Information
2		2
23	8	15
3		3
63	24	39
51	30	21
19	5	14
68	18	50
20	11	9
11	4	7
(541)	(168)	(373)
89	27	62
48	7	41
24	2	22
185	78	107

	2002 TOTAL	2002 Alert	2002 Information
Farmed fish and products thereof (other than crustaceans and molluscs)			
Wild caught fish and products thereof (other than crustaceans and molluscs)			
Molluscs and products thereof			
Fats and oils	13	11	2
Fruit and vegetables	212	59	153
Herbs and spices	30	7	23
Ices and desserts	0	0	0
Materials and articles intended to come into contact with foodstuffs	5	1	4
Meat and meat products, game and poultry	234	98	136
Meat and meat products (other than poultry)			
Poultry meat and poultry meat products			
Milk and milk products	45	19	26
Nut and nut products, snacks	251	24	227
Prepared dishes	4	1	3
Soups, broths and sauces	14	6	8
Other food products / mixed	1	1	0
TOTAL	1515	430	1085

2003 TOTAL	2003 Alert	2003 Information
44	5	39
25	3	22
65	4	61
3	1	2
211	38	173
113	44	69
1	1	0
9	1	8
(249)	(98)	(151)
153	69	84
96	29	67
42	24	18
744	16	728
13	7	6
55	35	20
8	1	7
2310	454	1856

2004 TOTAL	2004 Alert	2004 Information
28	12	16
84	23	61
83	19	64
79	36	43
242	49	193
228	103	130
5	3	2
36	11	25
(279)	(123)	(156)
153	73	80
126	50	76
48	32	16
778	19	759
22	13	9
65	33	32
5	1	4
2588	691	1897

Notifications according to hazard type

	Total	Alert	Information
mycotoxins	881	44	837
chemical contamination (other)	636	273	363
microbiological contamination	515	214	301
residues of veterinary medicinal products	142	41	101
heavy metals	96	14	82
not determined / other	59	20	39
parasitic infestation	57	26	31
pesticide residues	48	7	41
foreign bodies	40	19	21
radiation	23	8	15
labelling absent / incomplete / incorrect	20	2	18
pathogenic micro-organisms	19	9	10
packaging defective / incorrect	18	2	16
organoleptic changes	12	2	10
food additives	11		11
adverse effects / allergic reaction	9	3	6
biotoxins (other)	9	7	2
GMO / novel foods	9	2	7
feed additives	7	2	5
threats / extortion / bioterrorism	1	1	0
adulteration			
Total	2612	696	1916

A notification might be related to more than one hazard type.

Notifications according to notifying country

COUNTRY	number of notifications 2004	Alert notifications 2004	Information notifications 2004
AUSTRIA	32	20	12
BELGIUM	59	30	29
CYPRUS	23	5	18
CZECH REPUBLIC	41	4	37
DENMARK	53	39	14
ESTONIA	6	1	5
FINLAND	52	21	31
FRANCE	124	45	79
GERMANY	526	133	393
GREECE	95	10	85
HUNGARY	22	3	19
ICELAND/ESA	2	2	0
IRELAND	16	13	3
ITALY	576	169	407
LATVIA	15	7	8
LIECHTENSTEIN	0	0	0
LITHUANIA	21	5	16
LUXEMBOURG	13	5	8
MALTA	8	1	7
NETHERLANDS	146	36	110
NORWAY/ESA	85	44	41
POLAND	17	0	17
PORTUGAL	25	3	22
SLOVAKIA	24	10	14
SLOVENIA	27	8	19
SPAIN	305	3	302
SWEDEN	44	25	19
UNITED KINGDOM	231	49	182
TOTAL 2004	2588	691	1897

Notifications according to country of origin of the product

IRAN	493
TURKEY	181
CHINA	163
INDIA	111
BRAZIL	108
FRANCE	108
ITALY	90
GERMANY	88
SPAIN	80
GHANA	74
INDONESIA	70
UNITED KINGDOM	59
VIETNAM	59
THE UNITED STATES	53
DENMARK	49
ARGENTINA	46
THAILAND	46
THE NETHERLANDS	45
EGYPT	34
POLAND	32
BELGIUM	30
GREECE	30
MALAYSIA	23
CHILE	20
SINGAPORE	19
BANGLADESH	18
NIGERIA	17
ECUADOR	16
PAKISTAN	16
REPUBLIC OF KOREA	16
BOTSWANA	14
NORWAY	14
SRI LANKA	14

SLOVAKIA	13
SUDAN	13
TAIWAN	13
LITHUANIA	12
SOUTH AFRICA	12
COUNTRY NOT MENTIONED	11
IVORY COAST	11
TUNISIA	11
SYRIA	10
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION	10
HUNGARY	9
ISRAEL	9
JAPAN	9
LEBANON	9
MOROCCO	9
NICARAGUA	9
IRELAND	8
MEXICO	8
ROMANIA	8
SWEDEN	8
CROATIA	7
NEW ZEALAND	7
PORTUGAL	7
THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	7
AUSTRALIA	6
BULGARIA	6
COLOMBIA	6
THE PHILIPPINES	6
UKRAINE	6
AUSTRIA	5
CZECH REPUBLIC	5
GAMBIA	5
NAMIBIA	5

PERU	5
SLOVENIA	5
CANADA	4
CHINA (HONG KONG)	4
CYPRUS	4
ESTONIA	3
SENEGAL	3
SWITZERLAND	3
URUGUAY	3
AFGHANISTAN	2
ICELAND	2
LATVIA	2
SAUDI ARABIA	2
SURINAME	2
UZBEKISTAN	2
VENEZUELA	2
YEMEN	2
ALGERIA	1
BELARUS	1
CAMEROON	1
COSTA RICA	1
CUBA	1
ETHIOPIA	1
FIJI	1
GREENLAND	1
GUATEMALA	1
GUINEA	1
HAITI	1
JORDAN	1
LUXEMBOURG	1
MADAGASCAR	1
MALI	1
MALTA	1

MAURITIUS	1
MONGOLIA	1
MOZAMBIQUE	1
MYANMAR	1
NEPAL	1
OMAN	1
PARAGUAY	1
REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA	1
SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO	1
SIERRA LEONE	1
SWAZILAND	1
TANZANIA	1
TOGO	1
UGANDA	1

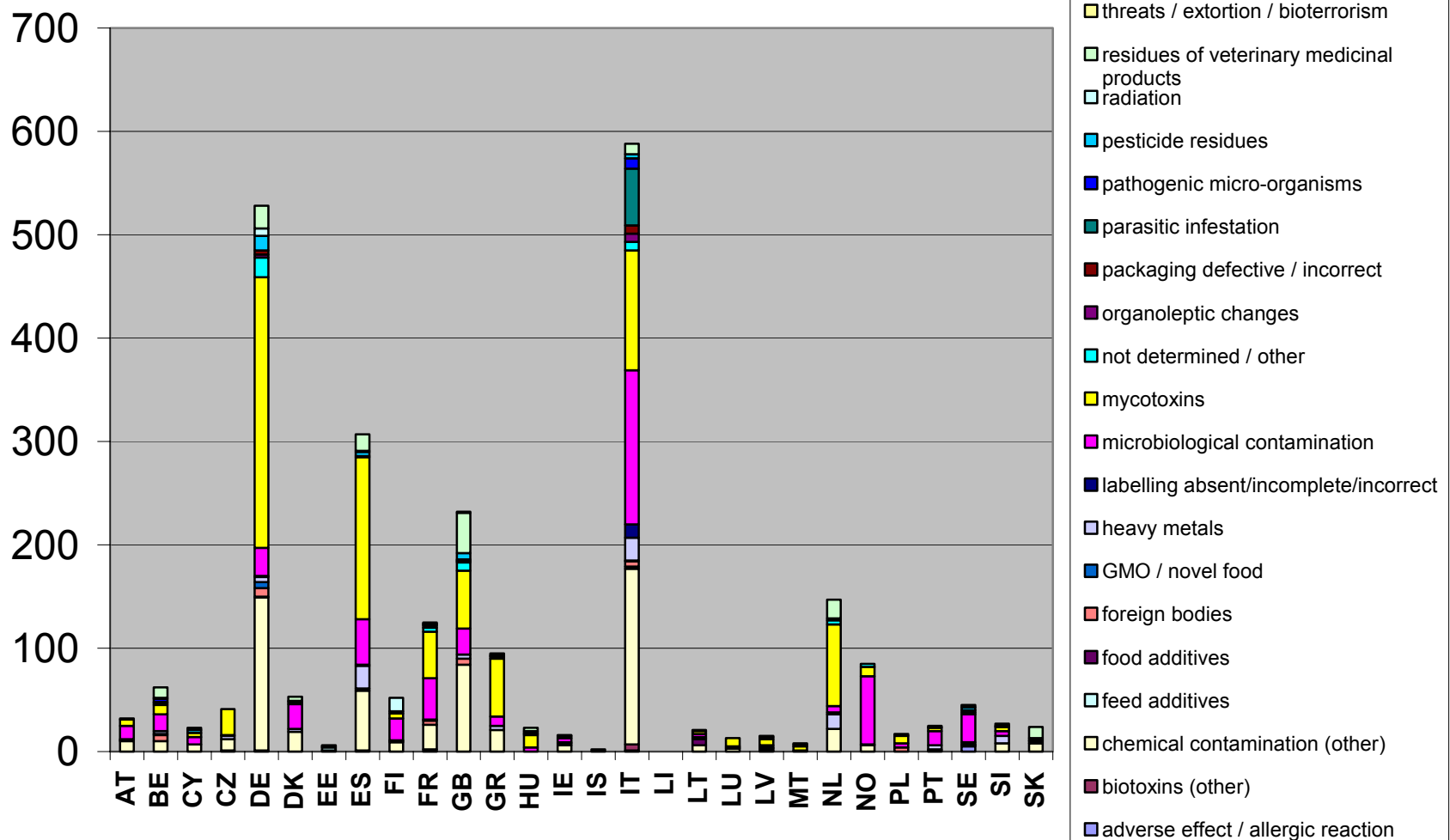
A consignment might originate from more than one country.

Notifications according to notifying country and hazard type

DANGER	AT	BE	CY	CZ	DE	DK	EE	ES	FI	FR	GB	GR	HU	IE	IS	IT	LI	LT	LU	LV	MT	NL	NO	PL	PT	SE	SI	SK
adverse effect / allergic reaction				1	1		1									1										5		
biotoxins (other)								1		2						6												
chemical contamination (other)	10	10	7	11	148	19		58	9	24	84	21		6	2	170		6	3	1	1	22	6		1	1	8	8
feed additives					1		3													2								
food additives								2	1							2		6										
foreign bodies		6			8					4	6			2		5			1	1			1	4	1	1		
GMO / novel food	1	1			6											1												
heavy metals		3		3	5	2		22		1	4	4		1		22		1				14			4	2	7	
labelling absent / incomplete / incorrect					1		1	1	1							13		1				2						
microbiological contamination	13	16	7	1	27	24	1	44	21	40	25	9	4	4		149		3	1	2		6	66	4	14	27	5	2
Mycotoxins	6	9	4	25	262	2		157	5	45	56	56	12			116		3	8	6	4	79	9	7	3	2	4	1
not determined / other	1	2			19			1	2	4	8		1	2		8						4	3	2				2
organoleptic changes					3						1					8												
packaging defective / incorrect		1			4					2	1					8					2							
parasitic infestation										1			1			55												
pathogenic micro-organisms		3									1					10				2						2	1	
pesticide residues		1	3		14	1		4		1	6	2	2	1		4		1		1	1	2			1	3		
Radiation					7			1	13	1		1																
residues of veterinary medicinal products		10	2		22	4		16			39	2	3			10						18			1	2	1	11
threats / extortion / bioterrorism											1																	
Total	32	62	23	41	528	53	6	307	52	125	232	95	23	16	2	588	0	21	13	15	8	147	85	17	25	45	27	24

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

Notifications by notifying country and type of hazard

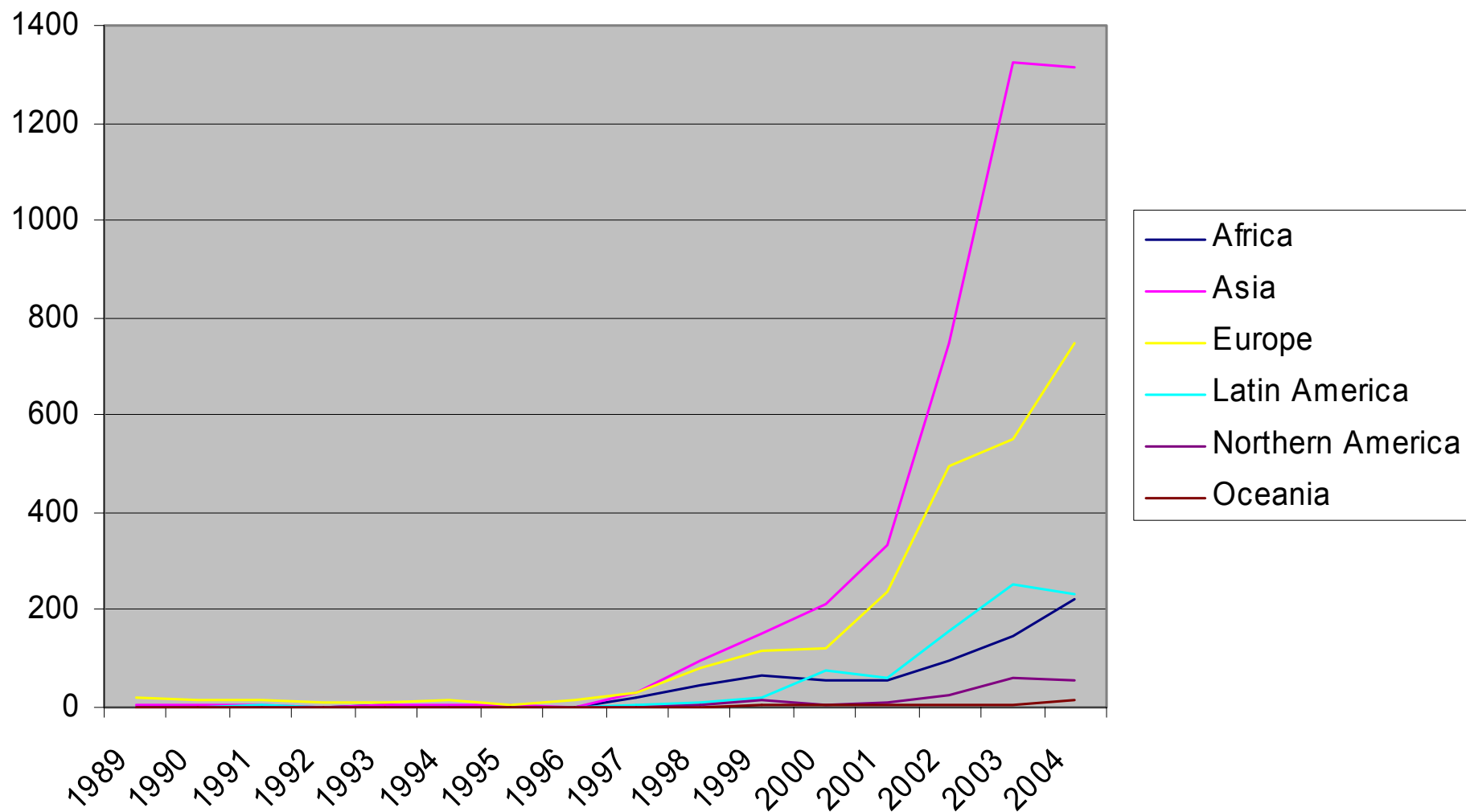


Notifications according to origin of the product, classified by world region.

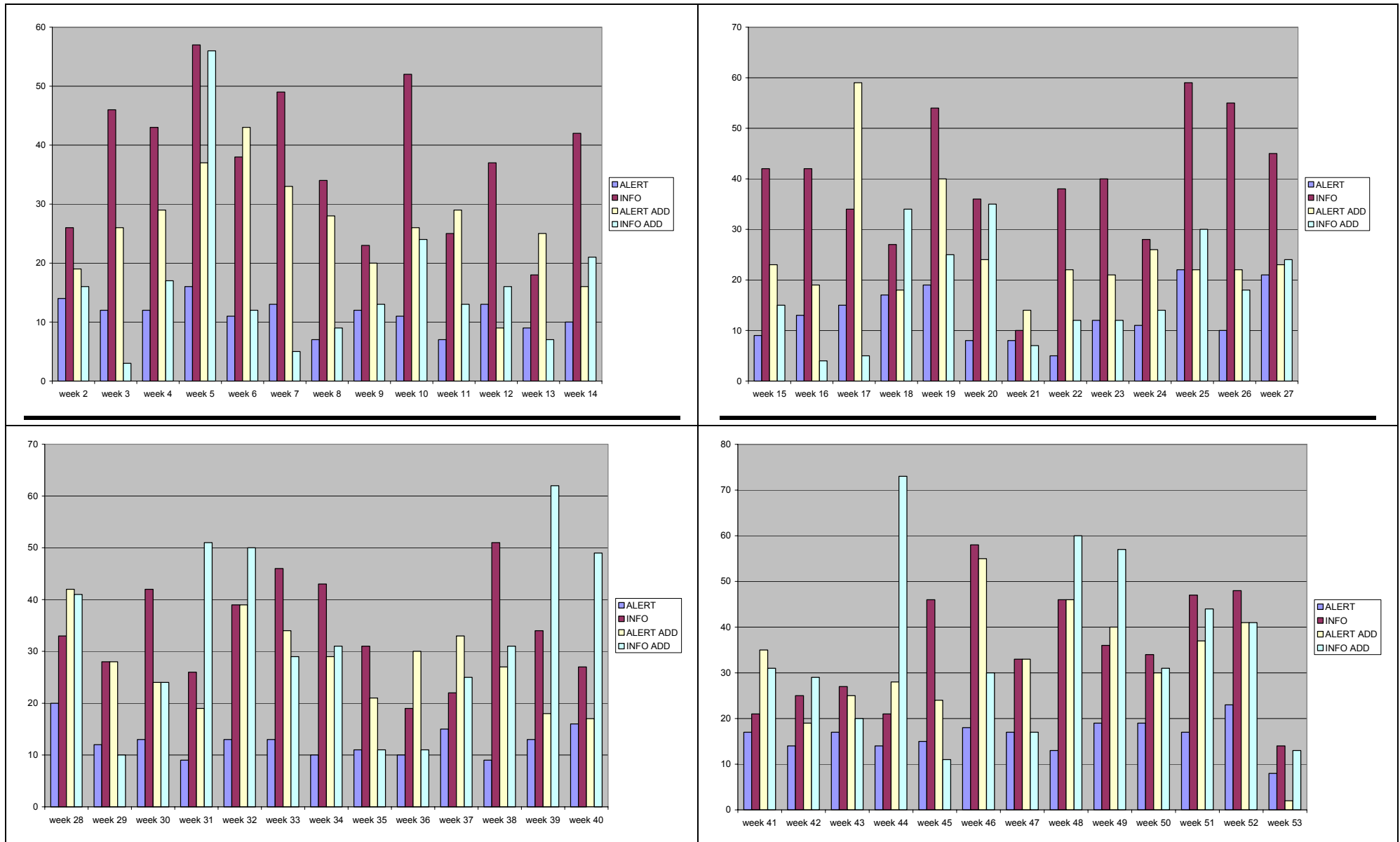
Region	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	Total
Eastern Africa					2				5	12	8	8	4	8	15	6	68
Middle Africa											1	2		4	1	1	9
Northern Africa	2				1				5	15	23	18	28	32	73	68	265
Southern Africa											22	6	7	32	25	32	124
Western Africa								1	12	16	11	23	17	20	33	114	247
Eastern Asia	3	2	1		1	3	2	1	6	22	32	49	82	163	180	206	753
South-central Asia	1	1			2	1	2		12	29	53	73	100	150	650	657	1731
South-eastern Asia	2		1	1	2	1		1	7	31	37	53	100	280	270	224	1010
Western Asia			1		1	2	2		3	15	30	35	54	155	225	226	749
Eastern Europe	1				2	1			2	29	24	11	11	42	57	91	271
Northern Europe	2	3	3	1	3	3		4	3	16	13	25	38	85	109	157	465
Southern Europe	9	6	3	4	2	7	2	3	9	12	25	28	108	145	163	221	747
Western Europe	10	8	9	3	5	6	1	7	14	22	52	59	79	223	221	280	999
Caribbean		1										2			4	2	9
Central America									1	2	2	8	3	10	10	19	55
Southern America	2		3	1	1				4	9	17	68	56	145	241	209	756
Northern America					1			2		3	16	6	8	25	62	58	181
Australia and New Zealand					1	1			1		3	3	6	4	7	13	39
Melanesia														1		1	2
Micronesia																	0
Polynesia										1							1

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

NOTIFICATIONS BY WORLD REGIONS 1989 - 2004



Overview of notifications by week in 2004



Overview of total exchanges in 2004

