Safefood-Online
Identify risks and increase opportunities



Issue | October 2026

NEWS LETTER

Dear Safefood-Online users,

In October, a total of 509 notifications were published in the European Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF). The key findings and analyses are presented in Section 1 of this newsletter.

Section 2 provides updates on pesticide regulation: The EU established new maximum residue levels (MRLs) for difenoconazole and is considering the non-renewal of the approval of triclopyr as an active substance under EU pesticide legislation.

The German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) has published a scientific opinion on nitrate in food.

We also report on new EFSA guidance for the safety assessment of bisphenols other than bisphenol A (BPA) and their derivatives.
As usual, the latest news on food safety and food fraud can be found in Section 3.

Our Topic of the Month focuses on the final scientific reports of the EuroCigua II project on ciguatoxins in fish (Section 4).

Pasta Chips from the Air Fryer – How High Are the Acrylamide Levels?

In our last newsletter, we reported on studies conducted by the German CVUA Stuttgart on acrylamide levels in homemade potato chips. The laboratory has now turned its attention to pasta chips prepared in an air fryer.

For the study, four different types of pasta were first cooked and then air-fried until crispy. In all four samples, the measured acrylamide levels were well below the European benchmark level of 750 µg/kg for potato chips (there is no specific EU benchmark level for pasta chips).

The relatively low acrylamide levels observed in the pasta chips compared with potato chips may be explained by two factors. First, wheat and pulses generally contain lower levels of free asparagine, a key precursor in acrylamide formation, than potatoes. Second, boiling the pasta before air-frying may further reduce its acrylamide-forming potential, as some water-soluble precursors, including free asparagine and reducing sugars, can leach into the cooking water. Both factors may contribute to lower acrylamide formation during the subsequent air-frying process.

We hope you enjoy this issue of the Safefood-Online Newsletter and, as always, we look forward to receiving your feedback.

Your Safefood-Online Team

1. RASFF Notifications October 2026

Compared with September and August, the number of new RASFF notific
increased again in October:



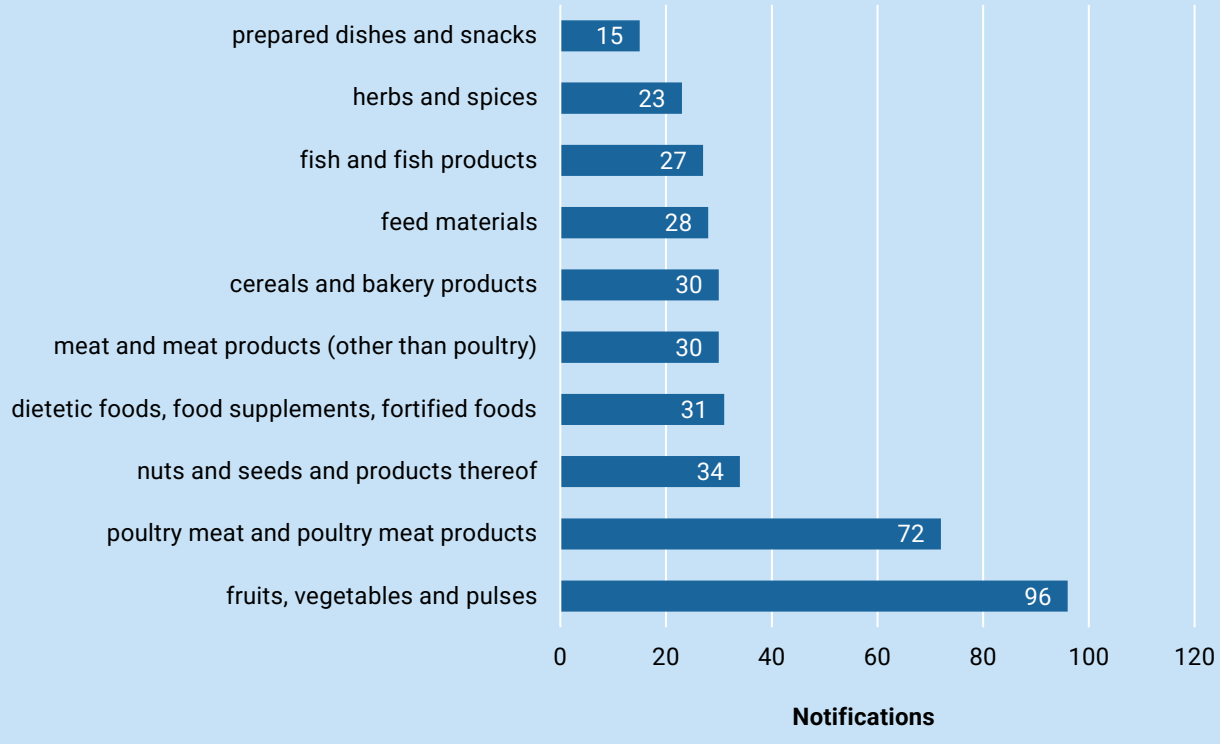
- **October 2026: 509**
- September 2026: 471
- August 2026: 395
-

The RASFF-notifications are divided as follows:

- Alert notifications: 126
- Border rejections: 128
- Information messages: 255

With 96 notifications, fruit, vegetables and legumes topped the RASFF statistics by product category, followed by poultry meat and poultry meat products (72 notifications) in second place and nuts, seeds and products thereof (32 notifications) in third place:

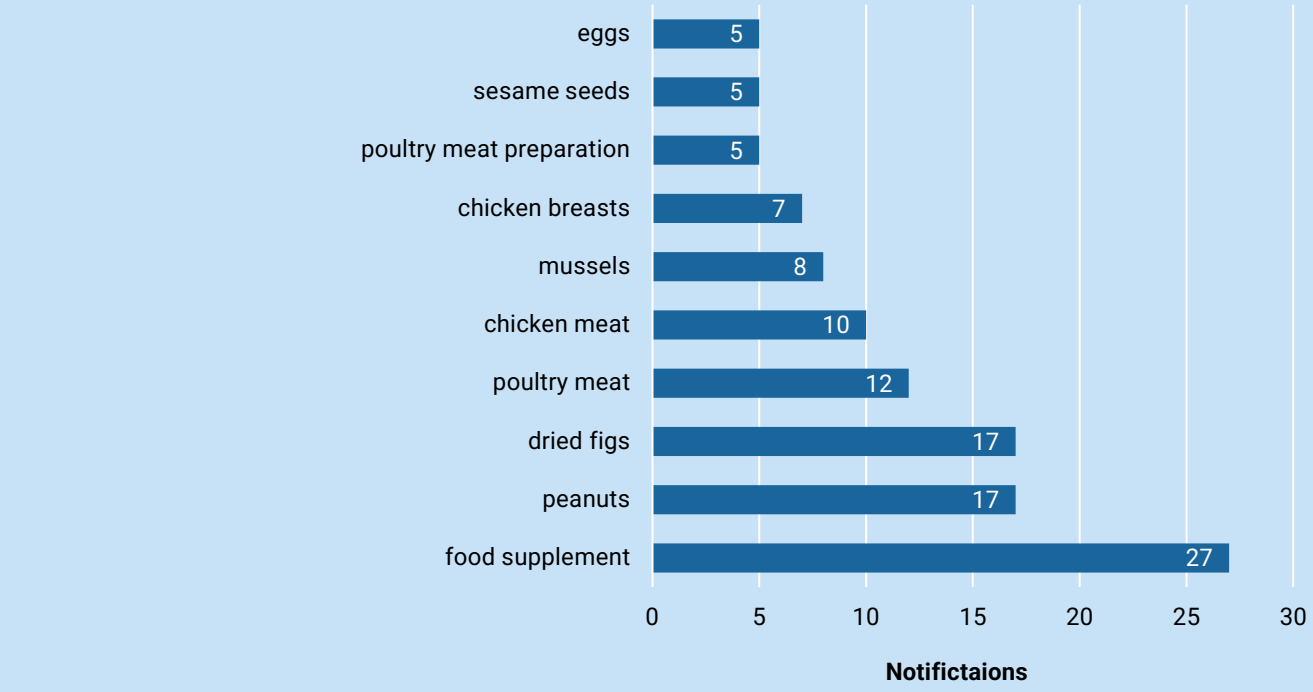
RASFF-Notifications October 2026: Top product categories



Among individual products, food supplements accounted for the highest number of notifications (27). With 17 notifications, peanuts and dried figs are following in second place:

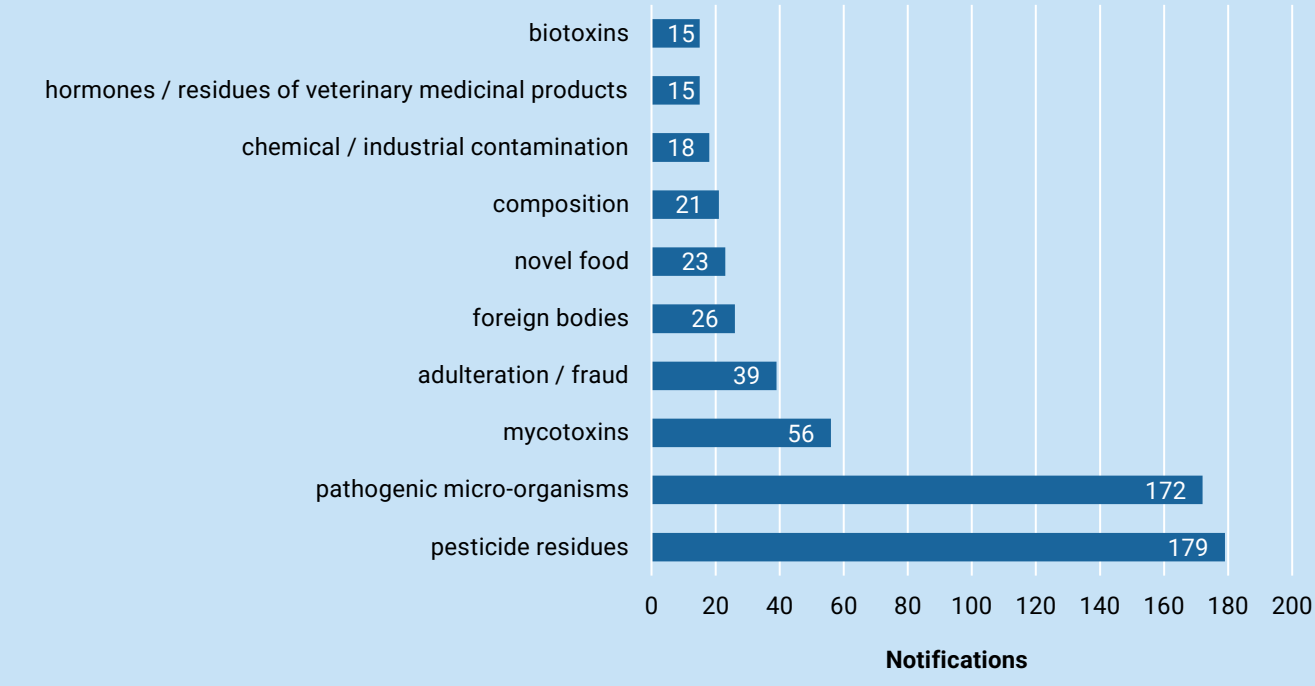
1. RASFF Notifications October 2026

RASFF-Notifications October 2026: Top 10 products



With 179 notifications, pesticides once again represent the largest hazard category in the RASFF. Most cases involved exceedances of maximum residue levels (MRLs) or the detection of unauthorised active substances. Some notifications involved multiple pesticide residues in the same product. For example, 25 different pesticide residues were detected in a tea-like product from China, 14 in bell peppers from Peru, and 10 different pesticides in chilli powder from India. Pathogenic micro-organisms ranked second with 172 notifications, followed by mycotoxins with 56 notifications.

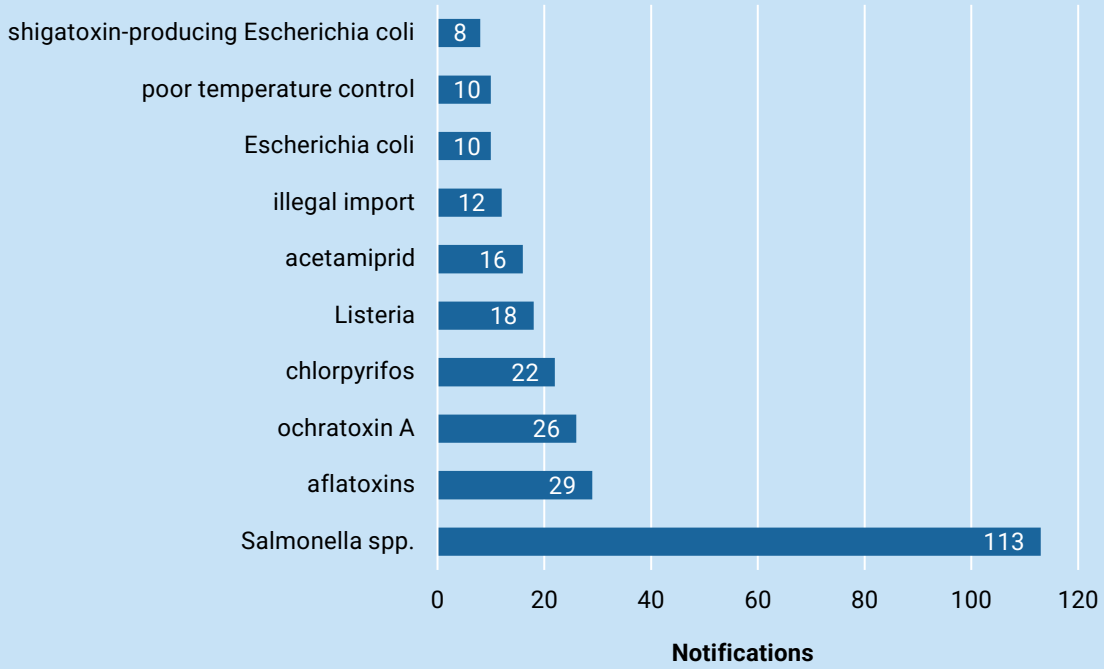
RASFF-Notifications October 2026: Top 10 hazard categories



1. RASFF Notifications October 2026

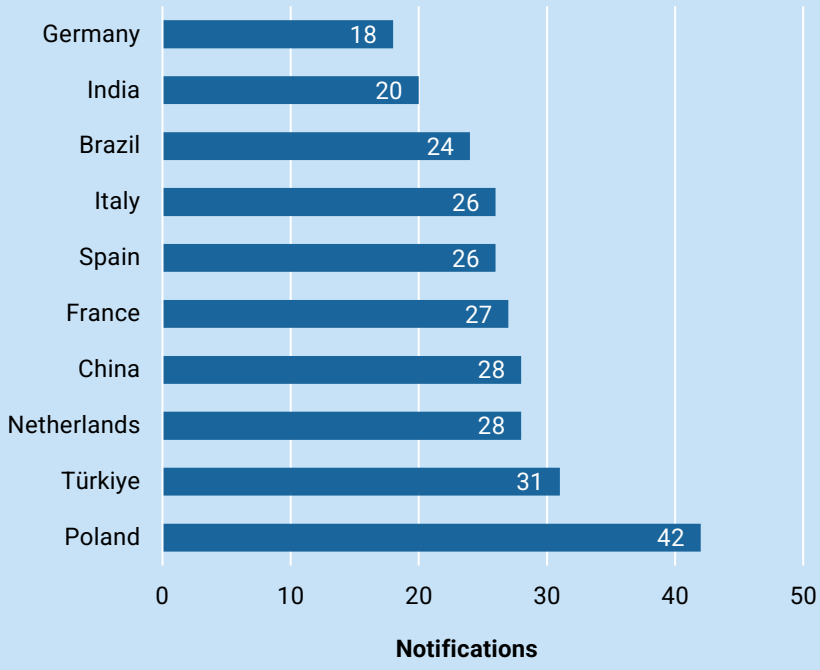
Salmonella were once again the most frequently reported hazard in the RASFF, with 113 notifications, followed by aflatoxins (29 notifications) and Ochratoxin A (26 notifications):

RASFF-Notifications October 2026: Top 10 hazards



The following chart shows the ten most frequently reported countries of origin:

RASFF-Notifications October 2026: top 10 countries of origin



With 42 notifications, Poland ranked first among the countries of origin, followed by Türkiye with 31 notifications and the Netherlands with 28 notifications.



EU Establishes New Maximum Residue Levels for Difenoconazole

With Regulation (EU) 2026/2299 of 15 October 2026, the European Commission has revised the maximum residue levels (MRLs) for the fungicide difenoconazole in a wide range of food products. The amendments are based on a comprehensive review of existing MRLs by EFSA and additional assessments of import tolerance applications.
The new provisions include lower MRLs for potatoes, sweet potatoes, aubergines, chard and celery. For various imported products, including citrus fruits, tree nuts, mangoes, papayas, dried peas and soybeans, MRLs have been established taking into account the requested import tolerances. In addition, a new residue definition based on the metabolite difenoconazole-alcohol has been introduced for food products of animal origin.
The new MRLs will apply from 5 May 2027. Food products placed on the EU market before that date will remain subject to the previous provisions.

BfR Scientific Opinion: Nitrate in Food

The assessment is based on data from the German BfR MEAL Study, which covers more than 90% of average food consumption in Germany.
For the dietary exposure assessment, analytically determined nitrate concentrations were combined with food consumption data for different population groups.
Mean nitrate intake was below the acceptable daily intake (ADI) of 3.7 mg/kg body weight per day in all age groups investigated.
At high exposure levels, certain age groups reached or slightly exceeded the ADI. Children aged six months to under three years were particularly affected.
The highest nitrate concentrations were found in foods including leafy salads, radishes, fresh culinary herbs, spinach and kohlrabi.
Adults following a vegetarian diet had a higher nitrate intake than those consuming a mixed diet. However, even at high exposure levels, nitrate intake among vegetarian adults remained below the ADI.
The potential conversion of nitrate to nitrite and the associated health risks were not addressed in this scientific opinion.
The BfR concludes that adverse health effects are not expected for most people at average levels of dietary nitrate exposure.
At the same time, the Institute recommends keeping nitrate intake as low as reasonably achievable without reducing vegetable consumption.
A varied selection of different types of vegetables is therefore particularly important.

Guidance on the Safety Assessment of Bisphenols Other Than Bisphenol A (BPA) and Their Derivatives

Following the EU ban on bisphenol A (BPA) in food contact materials, alternative bisphenols and related compounds are receiving increasing attention in safety assessments.
EFSA has published new guidance on the scientific data requirements for the safety assessment of these substances.

EU Plans Not to Renew the Approval of Triclopyr

The European Commission has notified the World Trade Organization (WTO) Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT Committee) of its intention not to renew the

approval of the active substance triclopyr (see draft Commission Implementing Regulation).

The proposed non-renewal is based on concerns regarding risks to residential children (children living near agricultural areas where plant protection products are applied), mammals and non-target arthropods.

If the non-renewal is adopted, EU Member States will be required to withdraw authorisations for plant protection products containing triclopyr, in accordance with the deadlines laid down in the implementing regulation.

MRLs for triclopyr may subsequently be lowered to the relevant analytical limits of determination (LODs) in 2027. Such changes would require a separate regulatory procedure under EU pesticide residue legislation.

Potential implications are expected for exporters of citrus fruits, apples, pears, apricots, peaches, kiwifruit, rice and products of animal origin.



Food Safety

EU-Commission:

- The EU has authorised the import of genetically modified soya beans of the varieties GMB151 × DAS-44406 and MON 94313-8 and has extended the authorisation for maize of the variety MON 87460-4

- Under Regulation (EU) 2026/2298, the European Commission has authorised Curdlan as a food additive. The substance has been assigned the E number E 424. Curdlan is a polysaccharide produced by microbial fermentation. It can be used as a gelling agent, firming agent, stabiliser and thickening agent. The authorisation covers various food categories, including processed cheese, ice cream, processed fruit and vegetable products, certain pasta products, meat products, sauces and desserts

EFSA:

- The European Food Safety Authority has published a new scientific opinion on extending the use of the preservative glycolipids (E 246). Glycolipids derived from Dacryopinax spathularia have been authorised in the EU for certain drinks since 2022. The new application concerns use in eleven additional food categories. The EFSA concludes that, given the intended levels of use, the proposed extension does not raise any safety concerns at the intended levels of use

Official food control and animal health laboratories:

- German CVUA Stuttgart: Pesticide residues in chickpeas – all 21 samples were safe for human consumption; 4 samples of dried chickpeas were found to exceed the maximum permitted levels

Individual reports:

- Italy: Four regions have reported cases linked to fresh cherry tomatoes. In Apulia, the health authority has banned raw tomatoes from school canteens, hospitals and care homes as a precautionary measure

- FDA: Action Plan for the Prevention, Control and Research into Cyclospora

- The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) has published an information sheet on Cyclospora, which focuses on preventing contamination

- Switzerland: Two people in Valais have contracted botulism. A pork knuckle terrine is suspected to be the source.

- EU's Darwin Project: New genetic engineering techniques are becoming increasingly easier to detect



Food Fraud

- The FDA published the results of an extensive investigation programme into the authenticity of lemon juice. A total of 195 samples were analysed between October 2022 and January 2025. Seven samples were found to be non-compliant. These were products from Taiwan, Turkey and Vietnam

- The FDA issued a warning regarding cold-smoked sprats produced by a New York-based manufacturer. During an inspection of the premises, the agency found that the necessary measures to control Clostridium botulinum had not been implemented. The FDA recommended that the company recall all affected cold-smoked sprats. The company refused to carry out the recommended recall. Consequently, the FDA issued a public warning to consumers, retailers and catering establishments

- USA: Recall of beef jerky products which were manufactured without the requisite regulatory checks and were incorrectly labelled due to the unauthorised use of a USDA inspection mark

- OLAF investigation into the sale of counterfeit fruit jellies containing THC: The European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) has concluded an investigation into the sale of fruit jellies containing tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the main psychoactive compound in cannabis. The investigation was prompted by the sale of these THC-containing products in counterfeit packaging that imitated the appearance of a very well-known European brand of fruit-flavoured sweets, thereby infringing its intellectual property rights. As part of the investigation, more than 3,560 packets of counterfeit fruit jellies were seized and destroyed. In addition, several online retailers offering such products for sale were identified

Ciguatoxins: An underestimated risk in fish

Ciguatoxins are marine biotoxins that can cause severe food poisoning in humans. The illness, known as *ciguatera fish poisoning (CFP)*, occurs primarily following the consumption of contaminated fish. Historically, it was mainly associated with tropical and subtropical marine regions. However, ciguatoxins are now also being detected in European waters, particularly around the Canary Islands.
Ciguatoxins are produced by certain unicellular microalgae, particularly species of the genera *Gambierdiscus* and *Fukuyoa*. The toxins enter the food chain through herbivorous fish and may subsequently accumulate in larger predatory fish.
A particular concern for consumers is that contaminated fish cannot be reliably identified by their appearance, smell or taste. Furthermore, ciguatoxins are largely heat-stable and are not reliably destroyed by cooking.

On 14 October 2026, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) published several final scientific reports from the EuroCigua II research project.
The preceding EuroCigua I project had already documented a total of 34 ciguatera outbreaks involving 209 cases of illness in Europe between 2012 and 2019. In addition, toxin-producing microalgae were detected not only in the Atlantic Ocean but also in the Mediterranean region, including waters around Crete, Cyprus and the Balearic Islands.
EuroCigua II focuses on several key areas: investigating ciguatoxins in imported fish, studying the distribution of toxin-producing microalgae in European areas at risk, improving analytical detection methods and developing models to predict potential risk areas.
Particular attention is being paid to the impact of climate change. Rising sea temperatures could favour the spread of toxin-producing microalgae, potentially increasing the risk of ciguatera fish poisoning in regions that have so far been less affected. However, the actual development will also depend on other ecological factors.

Fishery products containing ciguatoxins must not be placed on the market. Unlike several other marine biotoxins, however, no harmonised quantitative EU maximum levels have yet been established for ciguatoxins.
A major challenge is therefore the development of reliable and comparable analytical methods. The findings of EuroCigua II are expected to contribute to the harmonisation of detection methods, the availability of reference materials and improvements in risk assessment.

Feedback

Please forward your suggestions, questions and requests regarding this newsletter directly to:
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Imprint

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