

Our world-class services
ensure FOOD SAFETY AND QUALITY



Over 100 laboratories in 26 countries



October 2020

MARKET NEWS



Hotline: 400-645-8088

Email: sales.china@mxns.cn

www.merieuxnutrisciences.com

www.merieuxnutrisciences.com.cn



CONTENTS

FOCUS ON CHINA	1
<i>China publishes quality standards for geo-authentic TCM herbs</i>	1
<i>Health commission issues warning after fermented flour kills 9</i>	1
INTERNATIONAL NEWS	2
<i>FDA Establishes U.S. Agent Voluntary Identification System for Food Facilities</i>	2
<i>Food standards amendment backed in UK Ag Bill</i>	2
<i>Codex covers food hygiene and allergens in first ever virtual meeting</i>	4
<i>RASFF notifications broke 4,000 barrier in 2019</i>	6
<i>FSA questioned about post Brexit food safety rules</i>	8
<i>FDA Seeks Input on Nutrition Labeling for Certain Sugars and Issues Final Guidance on Allulose</i>	9
<i>Study finds E. coli, Listeria and Vibrio in seafood</i>	10
<i>Chemicals in food are a main safety concern for majority of Americans</i>	11
SAFETY ALERTS	13
ENTERPRISE NEWS	14
<i>UK hit hardest by outbreak linked to Brazil nuts; no cases in U.S. yet</i>	14
<i>Listeria found in a quarter of frozen veg in England</i>	15
<i>Fresh produce industry never likes testing such as that now imposed by Canada</i>	17
<i>Multi-country recalls due to ethylene oxide in sesame seeds</i>	19
MARKET NEWS - REPLY	20

Focus on China



China publishes quality standards for geo-authentic TCM herbs

China has published a compilation of standards to regulate the quality of over 150 kinds of geo-authentic traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) herbs and drug materials.

It is the first time authoritative standards for such herbs have been compiled in one document, and the move is expected to further boost the development of TCM, according to a statement from the China Academy of Chinese Medical Sciences (CACMS) on Wednesday.

Geo-authentic TCM drug materials are materials that are grown or obtained in specific areas and have, over a long period of clinical usage, proven to be effective and of better quality than those from other areas.

The document stipulates strict requirements regarding the origins, plant morphology, history of usage, growing environment and quality characteristics of the herbs, read the CACMS statement.

It will also help streamline resource development, production steps and processing techniques for such materials.

The compilation of the document, led by CACMS president Huang Luqi, was based on field studies and research involving relevant documents and ancient texts, to ensure its content is both time-honored and clinically tested, the statement read.

Health commission issues warning after fermented flour kills 9

People should avoid making and eating foods with fermented rice and flour, the National Health Commission said on Tuesday.

The commission released the public reminder after nine family members in Jixi city, Northeast China's Heilongjiang province, died after eating homemade corn noodles.

During a 12-member family gathering on the morning of Oct 5, nine older family members ate suantangzi, a thick noodle made from fermented corn flour. Three young people present refused to try the food because of its strange taste, according to the local government.

The nine who ate the noodles fell ill several hours later and eight were confirmed dead as of Oct 11, while the only survivor - a 47-year-old woman surnamed Li - received treatment in a hospital. Li died at noon on Monday, according to her son.

A high concentration of bongkrekkic acid, a respiratory toxin produced by the bacterium *Pseudomonas cocovenenans*, was detected in the noodles as well as the gastric fluid of those who became ill, the provincial health commission said on Oct 12.

Bongkrekkic acid is a main cause of poisoning from fermented flour and rice products and spoiled white fungus, as well as other spoiled starch products, experts said.

Eating food contaminated with bongkrekkic acid can result in poisoning for both humans and animals and even lead to death, with death rates as high as 40 to 100 percent.

Using fresh and unspoiled food materials and frequently changing water when making food can reduce the risk of contamination, but it is best to avoid making and ingesting foods made of fermented grain entirely for safety concerns, according to the commission.

International News

FDA Establishes U.S. Agent Voluntary Identification System for Food Facilities

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is issuing guidance establishing a U.S. Agent Voluntary Identification System (VIS) for food facility registration. The VIS is intended to be used in conjunction with our food facility registration database, the Food Facility Registration Module (FFRM), to streamline and expedite the U.S. agent verification process.

U.S. and foreign food facilities that are engaged in the manufacturing, processing, packing or holding of foods for consumption in the United States are required to register with the FDA under the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetics Act. Registered foreign food facilities are also required to have a U.S. Agent who acts as a communications link with FDA.

The VIS works in conjunction with the FDA's food facility registration database to allow U.S. agents to independently identify the facility or facilities they are representing. The FDA will then provide the U.S. agent with an identification number for their facilities. Additionally, foreign food facilities now have the option of providing the identification number of their U.S. agent during registration. When a foreign facility uses a U.S. agent identification number in accordance with the VIS and the name of the facility matches the facility name and address the U.S. agent has identified, FDA will consider that verification without taking any additional steps to verify the U.S. agent—thus facilitating the process of providing a food facility registration number.

The guidance document provides additional information about the VIS process

through questions and answers. More information about food facility registration can be found at [Registration of Food Facilities and Other Submissions](#).

Food standards amendment backed in UK Ag Bill



An amendment to the Agriculture Bill on food import standards has been approved in the United Kingdom.

Other proposed changes include asking the government to think again on the use of pesticides, climate change targets, and the Trade and Agriculture Commission.

The votes in the House of Lords mean the bill will return to the House of Commons in October, where Members of Parliament will decide whether the

amendments will be passed into law.

Members voted in favor of changes to limit the use of pesticides in certain areas to protect public health, proposals that agricultural and food imports should meet domestic standards, requirements for agriculture and associated land to contribute to climate change targets, and creation of a Trade and Agriculture Commission.

International Trade Secretary Liz Truss announced the establishment of a Trade and Agriculture Commission in June chaired by Tim Smith, a former chief executive of the Food Standards Agency.

Positive reaction to votes

Minette Batters, National Farmer Union president, said the amendment to strengthen the role of the Trade and Agriculture Commission would allow Parliament to get independent advice about the impact every trade deal will have on domestic food and farming standards.

“We believe the role of the Trade and Agriculture Commission is crucial to providing proper parliamentary oversight of our future trade policy and it is encouraging to see peers support this view. They were right to strengthen the Agriculture Bill to provide better scrutiny of future trade deals. I hope MPs will not ignore this strength of feeling when the bill returns to the House of Commons,” she said.

Sue Davies, head of consumer protection and food policy, at consumer watchdog Which?, said: “It is good to see that the House of Lords has recognized the need for iron-clad legislation to ensure future food imports and trade deals do not undermine decades worth of progress, or risk food produced to inferior standards ending up on the menu in schools, hospitals or on

supermarket shelves.

“It is vital that the government and MPs now accept this amendment into the Agriculture Bill, so consumers have the reassurance they need that the UK’s food standards will be maintained for years to come.”

The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) also welcomed the voting through of the amendment requiring food imports to meet domestic standards.

Gary McFarlane, Northern Ireland director at CIEH, said it was a victory to ensure that Britain’s food safety, environmental and animal welfare standards are not undermined in future trade agreements.

“Without legal protections, UK consumers could be exposed to cheap, low-quality imports like chlorinated chicken and hormone-treated beef, undermining existing standards and paving the way for the erosion of British standards in the future,” he said.

“We are delighted that the House of Lords has been able to hold the government to account on its manifesto commitment to maintain and improve existing standards post-Brexit. Voices from all corners of society have all warned that our treasured food standards should not be up for negotiation. In the interests of protecting public health, the government must now honor its commitments and not seek to overturn this amendment.”

EU-UK trade talks warning

Meanwhile, ahead of the ninth round of negotiations between the European Union and UK taking place next week, three industry groups have again warned of consequences of failing to reach a deal.

FoodDrinkEurope, Copa-Cogeca and CELCAA said no deal on future EU-UK trade relations will result in a “devastating double whammy” for farmers, agri-food businesses and traders already struggling because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The associations called on negotiators to agree to a future trade agreement that supports business and jobs and helps protect EU and UK trade that was worth €58 billion in 2019. They added the agreement must maintain a level playing field between the two parties and protect the integrity of the single market.

The trio said where business needs predictability, all they have is uncertainty, with no clarity as to how exports will be treated beginning in January 2021.

“Less than four months before the end of the transition period, there are still many unknowns that make preparation impossible. In particular, food operators from both sides of the Channel need to know the UK’s regulatory regime on plant health, animal health, food and feed controls, and any future requirements impacting EU exports.”

Copa and Cogeca represents 23 million farmers and 22,000 agricultural cooperatives in the EU, FoodDrinkEurope is a voice for the food manufacturing industry and CELCAA represents more than 35,000 trading companies in cereals, grains, oil, sugar, animal feed, wine, meat products, dairy products, fresh fruits and vegetables, eggs, tobacco, spices and nuts, cut flowers and plants.

Codex covers food hygiene and allergens in first ever virtual meeting

Work on food hygiene, allergens and support of food trade in Africa have been adopted by the Codex Alimentarius Commission, which recently met online for the first time in its history.

The first part of the virtual meeting on Sept. 24 to 26 saw six areas of new work

agreed upon. Further discussions are set to take place on Oct. 12 with adoption of the report on Oct. 19.

Codex Alimentarius is the food standards setting body of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO). The COVID-19 pandemic has made it impossible to hold physical meetings and has severely impacted Codex sessions in 2020.

One new topic was to create guidelines to support development of harmonized food laws in Africa. Current rules are said to be fragmented, overlapping and generally not risk based.

Proposed guidelines will cover general principles of food and feed law, risk analysis, farm-to-fork food safety management, public consultation and information, obligations of food trade, imports and exports guidelines and principles, responsibilities of food and feed businesses and authorities, traceability, recall, packaging and labelling. Final adoption is planned for 2024.



Allergen and hygiene documents approved

The code of practice on food allergen management for businesses was adopted during the meeting. It includes controls to prevent cross-contact where an allergen is transferred from a food with an allergen to another one that does not contain it.

The document supports a proactive approach to managing allergens in food production, rather than a reactive response once a food safety hazard has been identified. It covers the supply chain including primary production, during manufacturing, and at retail and food service.

Officials also agreed on a revised general principles of food hygiene document and its Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) annex. This code of practice forms the basis for all other Codex hygiene texts and standards.

In opening remarks, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General, said the COVID-19 pandemic was a challenge but also an opportunity for change and to build back better.

“We are pleased to see that food safety is starting to get more attention at the highest political levels. The UN Secretary-General has announced the convening of the UN Food Systems Summit, to be held later next year. WHO is looking forward to working with partners to ensure that a health lens is used in the preparations for the summit,” he said.

Ghebreyesus also mentioned the recently adopted resolution on “Strengthening efforts on food safety” by the World Health Assembly.

“It calls for greater investment in Codex Alimentarius. The resolution also requests an update to the WHO global strategy for food safety, in coordination with FAO and in consultation with member states and OIE, for possible adoption at the World Health Assembly in 2022. A technical advisory group is being

established to advise WHO on the update of the global strategy and a series of consultations is planned in the coming year with all relevant stakeholders,” he said.

Water reuse and regional standards

Efforts will start on guidelines for the safe sourcing, use and reuse of water in food production that comes into direct or indirect contact with food throughout the chain. The safest option might be use of water of potable or drinking water quality. However, this is often not sustainable, feasible, practical or responsible. Operators of food firms will be given practical guidance and tools to help them understand the risks and available interventions.

Other examples of new work are a regional standard for quick frozen dumplings in Asia, for soybean products fermented with *Bacillus* species, for maamoul and cooked rice wrapped in plant leaves.

Dumplings are made of dough and can be filled with meat, seafood, eggs, nuts or vegetables. The standard will establish specifications, processing procedures, hygiene and labelling requirements for the product to bring consistency across the region, improve safety and quality and ensure a level playing field for trade. It is set for adoption in 2024.

Products in the soybean standard include Natto, Cheonggukjang, Douchi Kinema and Thua nao sa which are produced and traded mainly in Asia. It will cover requirements for quality and safety, including product definition, essential composition and quality factors such as food additives, contaminants, hygiene, labelling as well as methods of analysis and sampling.

Cooked rice wrapped in plant leaves is eaten under a variety of names in China, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. It has rice as the main

raw material; with or without adding ingredients such as beans, nuts, meat, poultry and eggs as a filling. The standard aims to protect consumers' health, ensure product quality and promote fair trade and should be ready in 2024.

Maamoul is a filled pastry or cookie type product, consumed in countries of the Near East region, prepared mainly from wheat flour, semolina, wheat germ, food salt, butter and water and filled with a sweet chewy paste based on dates or other fruits. Scope of the work is to provide guidance on the preparation, packaging and labeling of the product.

Other developments included standards on kiwifruit, fresh garlic, ware potatoes, yams, fermented cooked cassava-based products; for fresh leaves of *Gnetum* spp, which is commonly consumed as eru, okok, fumbua and okasi and a regional standard on kava products for use as a beverage when mixed with water and mixed zaatar – which is raw and broadleaf thyme and the husk of sumac and sesame seeds, sometimes with other ingredients.

RASFF notifications broke 4,000 barrier in 2019

More than 4,000 reports on food or feed risks were filed by member states to the European Commission this past year.

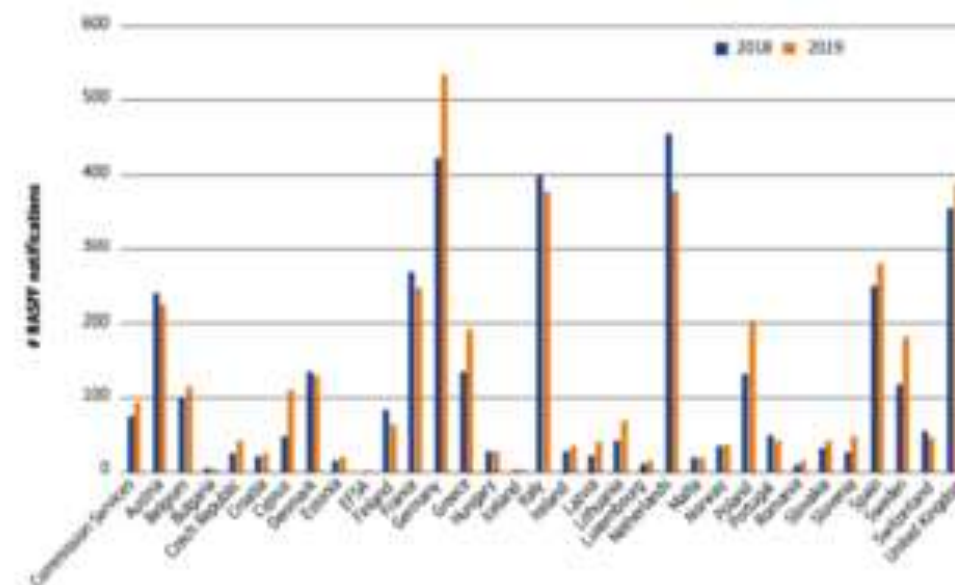
In 2019, 4,118 original notifications were transmitted through the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) which gave rise to 10,388 follow-up notices compared to 3,699 original notifications in 2018.

A small decline in follow-ups was because of the conversations feature in iRASFF. In 2019, more than 2,600 conversations were conducted in this application.

Aflatoxins in nuts remained the most frequently reported issue in food checked at EU borders.

RASFF notifications by notifying country in 2018 and 2019

Original notifications by notifying country in 2018 and 2019



China regained the top spot as the country responsible for origin of the most reports followed by Turkey and Poland with more than 300 and the United States with 220.

A total of 64 reports were triggered by a food poisoning event. Forty related to foodborne outbreaks in 2019. From these notices, 14 identified Salmonella as the probable cause, 11 were about *Listeria monocytogenes* and seven cited norovirus. Eight reports related to multi-country foodborne outbreaks.

Aflatoxin and Salmonella issues

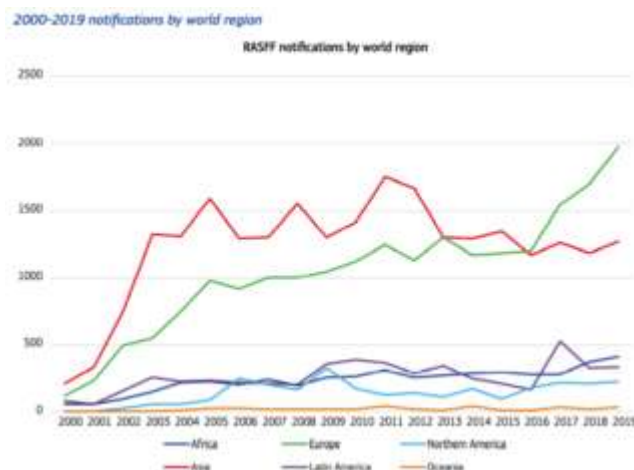
Germany made the most original reports followed by the United Kingdom, Netherlands and Italy in the network's 40th anniversary year. The U.K. could lose access to RASFF information once it has left the European Union.

The top notices by notifying country were from Netherlands concerning aflatoxins in nut products and seeds. Second was by the UK regarding 2,4-dinitrophenol (DNP) in food supplements and dietetic foods followed by Czech Republic because of Salmonella in poultry products.

The main notifications by country of origin saw Poland come up tops because of Salmonella in poultry, followed by Salmonella in nut products and seeds from Sudan, and 80 reports for aflatoxins in the same product category from the United States with Salmonella in herbs and spices from Brazil in fourth.

A significant part of RASFF notifications on products from EU countries concern pathogenic microorganisms in food of animal origin. There was a 17 percent increase in reports on pathogenic microorganisms in 2019 compared to 2018.

Salmonella is the most frequently reported pathogen in food from member countries. There were 181 reports for poultry products from Poland. About half of these concerned Salmonella Enteritidis or Salmonella Typhimurium. Fourteen operators were found to have recurrent problems.



Listeria monocytogenes in cold-smoked fish and ready-to-eat meat products caused foodborne outbreaks this past year. It was reported 16 times in cheese from France, often made from raw milk, and two firms were identified as having

recurrent problems.

Shiga toxin-producing E. coli caused 32 reports and was most often found on non-heat treated meat products and cheeses. There were 17 reports concerning norovirus, eight of which reported the virus in live oysters from France. Two reports were related to frozen red currants from Poland.

Products from outside Europe

Allergen notifications went up by 30 percent to 194. Milk, gluten and soya are the most commonly reported. Cereals and bakery products are most often reported. Foreign bodies caused 137 reports. The three most frequently reported types are metal, glass and plastic.

Mycotoxins was the most reported hazard on products from non-member countries with 534 reports. The main country of origin for aflatoxins was Turkey, with more than 100 notifications. Ochratoxin A is mostly found in fruits and vegetables, in particular raisins and dried figs. Turkey was again the top country of origin for it.

Pathogenic microorganisms caused almost 400 reports on products from countries outside Europe. Salmonella was mostly notified in sesame seeds, followed by in herbs and spices. Sudan was the main country of origin but 65 notices listed Salmonella in black pepper from Brazil.

In 2019, the most reported pesticide was chlorpyrifos that can no longer be used in the EU. Seventeen reports concerned tea, mostly from China. As many as 188 of the 253 reports are rejections at the border meaning the products never entered the EU.

FSA questioned about post Brexit food safety rules



Members of a parliamentary committee have written to the Food Standards Agency (FSA) about the future of food safety rules in the United Kingdom after leaving the European Union.

The Common Frameworks Scrutiny Committee asked the FSA's chief executive, Emily Miles, about the Food and Feed Safety and Hygiene (FFSH) framework, which will create a joint risk analysis process across the UK.

The Lords Select Committee was created to scrutinize and consider matters relating to these frameworks or UK-wide approaches. It is one of two committees that will be looking at the FFSH framework in the UK Parliament.

The FSA submitted a summary of the Common Framework for Food and Feed

Safety and Hygiene to the committee. As part of the process, they posed a number of questions and asked for a response from the agency within 10 working days. The committee decides whether or not to publish any information received.

Regulatory consistency

The UK's food and feed safety and hygiene policy is regulated by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and European Commission, but this will stop following the end of the transition period on Dec. 31, 2020, due to the UK's withdrawal from the EU, also known as Brexit.

EU regulations define the general principles and requirements of food safety and hygiene; food law enforcement official controls; food safety labelling; risk analysis; and incident handling. They set out a framework to develop food and feed legislation and lay down general principles, requirements and procedures that underpin decision making for food and feed safety, covering all stages of production and distribution.

Common Frameworks are a way for the UK and devolved governments to agree regulatory consistency for policy areas where returning EU powers have been devolved to Scottish, Welsh or Northern Irish governments.

The FFSH Common Framework is listed as a legislative framework meaning it may require primary legislation.

RASFF and sufficient input?

In the letter sent this past week, committee members ask how the framework will work with the Internal Market Bill, what role Northern Ireland will play and whether primary legislation will be required, and how parliamentary scrutiny will

work.

The situation around the European Commission-operated Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) is also still unclear.

Baroness Kay Andrews, chair of the Common Frameworks Scrutiny Committee and a Labour peer, asked if the UK is still hoping to negotiate full access to RASFF and, if so, how it would feed into the risk analysis process outlined in the framework.

A summary seen by the committee did not provide details on any stakeholder engagement done to prepare it.

Andrews asked which external stakeholders the FSA had consulted. She also questioned the agency on what steps had been taken to ensure it had received the views of relevant stakeholders from across the UK.

Ongoing talks

The EU and UK held a two-day summit at the end of this past week on post-Brexit trade talks. European trade unions in the agri food sector had previously urged negotiators to agree on a free trade agreement.

EFFAT- IUF Europe, SIPTU, Unite, USDAW, BFAWU and GMB warned that if the UK moves to trading on World Trade Organization terms after 2020, agro-food goods would attract the highest level of tariffs with consequences on trade levels and jobs.

Earlier in the week the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) heard from academic, non-governmental organizations and industry experts about possible divergences between EU and UK standards in areas including public health and food safety to consider policy measures that

might be adopted to combat adverse effects.

Speakers included Pamela Byrne, CEO of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland, and Martin McKee, professor of European public health at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

FDA Seeks Input on Nutrition Labeling for Certain Sugars and Issues Final Guidance on Allulose

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is taking two actions regarding the labeling of certain sugars on the Nutrition and Supplement Facts label. The FDA is issuing a Request for Information to receive information about the nutrition labeling of sugars that are metabolized differently than traditional sugars. The FDA also is issuing a final guidance regarding one of these sugars that are metabolized differently, allulose. The guidance addresses both the declaration of allulose on Nutrition Facts and Supplement Facts labels and the caloric content of allulose for use in nutrition labeling.

The Nutrition Facts label on foods and beverages lists the number or amount of calories, total carbohydrates, total sugars and added sugars, in addition to other information. The sugars that many consumers are most familiar with, like sucrose or “table sugar,” cause an increase in blood glucose and insulin levels after they are consumed, have 4 calories per gram, and are associated with tooth decay. Some sugars, such as allulose, D-tagatose, and isomaltulose, are metabolized differently than traditional sugars and do not have all of the same effects in the body as traditional sugars. Because of the different effects that these sugars can have, the FDA has received multiple requests from industry to treat certain sugars that are metabolized differently than traditional sugars as distinct for the purpose of nutrition labeling. For example, the FDA has been

asked to exempt allulose from being included as a carbohydrate, sugar, or added sugar on the Nutrition Facts label and for the number of calories be lower than the 4 calories per gram that is used for traditional sugars.

The FDA issued a draft guidance regarding one sugar that is metabolized differently—allulose—last year and is now finalizing that guidance. The FDA is advising manufacturers that it intends to exercise enforcement discretion regarding the requirement that allulose be included in the amount of total sugars and added sugars declared on the Nutrition Facts label, pending review of the issues in a rulemaking. However, allulose still must be included in the amount of total carbohydrates. The final guidance also advises manufacturers of the FDA's intent to exercise enforcement discretion for the use of 0.4 calories per gram for allulose when determining calories on the Nutrition and Supplement Facts labels.

Submit written comments on the Request for Information to Dockets Management Staff (HFA-305), Food and Drug Administration, 5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1061, Rockville, MD. Submit comments electronically, including attachments, to <https://www.regulations.gov>. Electronic comments must be submitted on or before 60 days after the date of publication in the Federal Register; comments received by mail/hand delivery/courier (for written/paper submissions) will be considered timely if they are postmarked or the delivery service acceptance receipt is on or before that date.

Study finds *E. coli*, *Listeria* and *Vibrio* in seafood

Researchers have looked at the presence of certain foodborne pathogens in seafood collected in Turkey.

The study examined levels of coliform bacteria, *E. coli*, *Listeria monocytogenes*,

Vibrio vulnificus, and *Vibrio cholerae* in 700 samples of raw sea fish, raw mussels, raw shrimp, and raw squid.



Nearly half of seafood products analyzed were contaminated with coliform bacteria. Almost one in five, or 131 of 700 samples, were contaminated with *E. coli*, 60 with *Listeria monocytogenes*, and 24 with *Vibrio vulnificus*. *Vibrio cholerae* was not found.

Microbiological quality of seafood can vary depending on environmental conditions, quality of water, water temperature, salinity, distance to residential areas and pollution, natural bacterial flora in water, food consumed by fish, fishing methods, and cooling conditions.

Since seafood and fish are susceptible to secondary contamination, the purchasing stage, treatments during the preparation process, and consumers' compliance with hygiene rules are important for food safety.

E. coli and Listeria results

All samples were collected in Istanbul, Turkey, from fish wholesale markets, fish markets, fish hawkers, and bazaars. This included 400 samples of raw fish such as gilt-head sea bream, sea bass, bluefish and horse mackerel, and 100 from the other types, according to the study published in the journal *Foodborne Pathogens and Disease*.

The number of positive samples for coliform bacteria for raw fish, raw mussels, raw shrimp, and raw squid were 210, 47, 41, and 39 respectively.

E. coli was detected in 67 raw fish samples, 21 raw mussels, 24 raw shrimp and 19 raw squid samples. *Listeria monocytogenes* was found in 29 samples of raw fish, 16 of raw mussels, 11 of raw shrimp, and four of raw squid.

Studies on the presence of *Listeria monocytogenes* in seafood are limited. Researchers said their results show it is a serious risk in such products. In particular, the lack of understanding of the epidemiology in seafood is considered to increase the risk for consumer health.

Vibrio risk

The number of positive samples for *Vibrio vulnificus* for raw fish, raw mussels, raw shrimp, and raw squid were 11, nine, four, and zero, respectively.

“When the pathogenicity of *Vibrio vulnificus* and possible infection results are taken into account, raw mussels sold uncontrolled by fish hawkers are very serious risk factors for public health. Another important danger related to *Vibrio vulnificus* is that it does not cause appearance, odor, and taste disturbances in seafood, such as fish, oysters, and mussels from which the agent is isolated,” said researchers.

Further studies are needed to reveal the detailed behaviors of seafood pathogens, manner of contamination, epidemiology, and genetic structures of contaminants to maximize consumer health.

To create public awareness, training of seafood employees at every stage of production is believed to be important to decrease the incidence of pathogens threatening public health. Effectiveness of government agencies in the seafood supply chain is also important, according to the report.

Total quality management and good hygiene practices should be applied at all points that sell ready-to-eat food and should be controlled at the ministerial level to minimize the risk of microbes and parasites to protect consumer health, said researchers.

Chemicals in food are a main safety concern for majority of Americans



Seven in 10 Americans are concerned about the presence of chemical products in food, according to a survey.

The poll by Mérieux NutriSciences and bioMérieux found 70 percent of

respondents were troubled about this topic that covers pesticides, antibiotics and additives. Two thirds were concerned about bacteria such as Salmonella and Listeria in food and 61 percent were worried about food fraud.

Viruses in food were the main concern for 59 percent of people, the use of new technology such as GMOs and nanotechnology worried 58 percent and traces of allergens or intolerance provoking substances in food was mentioned by 55 percent of respondents.

The Odoxa survey was conducted between Sept. 30 and Oct. 9 this year with a representative sample of 1,000 people in the United States aged 18 and over.

Steps for healthier and safer food

In the United States, 85 percent of people said they have confidence in the food they eat and three quarters said they are well informed about this subject. However, nearly 70 percent were more worried than before the coronavirus pandemic about the safety of the food they eat.

To get healthier and safer food, 78 percent said they would accept new packaging, 69 percent would go shopping more often to reduce the need for preservatives, 64 percent would buy food with an unusual appearance such as fruits and vegetables of irregular shapes, and 52 percent would pay more for food.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, 87 percent of the Americans asked said they bought their food in supermarkets often or from time to time, 68 percent at a butchers or greengrocers store, 48 percent at the market, 46 percent online, and 39 percent at the producer.

The poll, released on World Food Day, also asked the opinions of about 1,000

people in France, China and India.

Views from France, China and India

French respondents had the lowest levels of trust in food at 69 percent. This figure was 90 percent in India and 96 percent in China. Half of people in France also felt poorly informed about food safety.

In total, 86 percent of Indian consumers were more worried than before COVID-19 about the safety of food, compared to 70 percent in China and 66 percent in France.

The presence of chemical products in food was the top concern in all three countries. In France, the second biggest issue was food fraud and use of new technology was third. In China, viruses in food was second followed by bacteria in food. For Indians, food fraud was second and bacteria in food was third.

Yasha Mitrotti, executive vice president of industrial microbiology at bioMérieux, said the survey showed consumers want to be sure of what they are buying.

“Even if other criteria are considered depending on the country, the same dynamic is present: that of fear of the presence of bacteria and chemicals in food. This illustrates the importance of microbiological quality of food and drink for consumers in these countries,” Mitrotti said.

Almost three quarters of French people attached particular importance to the origin of products they consume and their traceability.

Accepting new packaging was the main change respondents in every country would consider for healthier and safer food. Seventy percent of Chinese consumers and 65 percent of those in India said they would pay more for food.

MARKET NEWS

Since the beginning of the coronavirus outbreak, people in France mostly bought their food in supermarkets, in stores such as butchers or at the market. For India, in stores was first, followed by at the market and in supermarkets. However in China, supermarkets was top followed by 80 percent saying they had often or from time to time bought food online.

Safety Alerts

Date	Brand Name(s)	Product Description	Product Type	Recall Reason Description	Company Name
10/23/2020	Trader Joe's	Gluten Free Battered Halibut	Food & Beverages, Allergens, Fish	Undeclared wheat and milk	Orca Bay Foods, LLC
10/22/2020	TROPIQUE	ASSORTED FRUIT JELLY BAG & JELLY ANIMAL JAR	Food & Beverages, Snack Food Item	Potential Choking Hazard	COMERCIAL MEXICANA INTERNACIONAL INC
10/14/2020	Eishindo	Jelly Cups	Food & Beverages,	Product poses a choking hazard.	Hadson Toko Trading Co., Inc.
10/13/2020	Cost Plus World Market, Great Value, O Organics,	Parsley and Herbes De Provence	Food & Beverages,	Salmonella	Red Monkey Foods, Inc.

	Full Circle				
10/12/2020	The Spice Hunter	Spices and blends	Food & Beverages,	Salmonella	Sauer Brands, Inc.
10/09/2020	Back to Nature	Organic Rosemary & Olive Oil Stoneground Wheat Crackers	Food & Beverages, Snack Food Item	Undeclared peanut	B&G Foods
10/08/2020	Champ, Field Trial, Good Dog, and Others	Pet Food	Animal & Veterinary, Food & Beverages, Pet Food, Ingredients	May Contain Aflatoxin	Sunshine Mills, Inc.
10/07/2020	Kandy Brand, Meijer Brand	Whole Cantaloupe, Select Cut Cantaloupe Fruit Trays & Bowls	Food & Beverages, Fruit/Fruit Product, Foodborne Illness	Salmonella	Meijer
10/05/2020	Seneca, Clancy's	Seneca Cinnamon Apple Chips and Clancy's Cinnamon Apple Chips	Food & Beverages,	Possible Salmonella contamination	Seneca Snack Company
10/03/2020	Walmart	Cut or sliced apples, grapes, mangoes,	Food & Beverages,	Potential to be contaminated with	Country Fresh

		pineapples, and cantaloupe		Listeria monocytogenes	
10/01/2020	Walmart, RaceTrac	Watermelon Chunks	Food & Beverages,	Potential to be contaminated with Listeria monocytogenes	Country Fresh

Enterprise News

UK hit hardest by outbreak linked to Brazil nuts; no cases in U.S. yet



More than 120 people are part of a multi-country Salmonella outbreak linked to Brazil nuts.

Since August 2019, the outbreak, caused by Salmonella Typhimurium and Salmonella Anatum, has affected three European Union countries, the United Kingdom and Canada. The United States was one of more than 30 countries that received Brazil nuts from Bolivia contaminated with Salmonella.

In total, 123 cases of Salmonella Typhimurium have been reported, of which 105 were in the UK, 14 in France, three in Luxembourg and one each in the Netherlands and Canada. One Salmonella Anatum patient was recorded in the UK.

A case-control study in the UK and patient interviews in the UK, France and Luxembourg indicated Brazil nuts and nut bars as likely vehicles of infections. Two batches of Brazil nuts from Bolivia tested positive for Salmonella Typhimurium and Salmonella Anatum matching the outbreak strains.

Bolivian authorities reported that both batches had been tested during “own-check” controls at the processing company and Salmonella had not been found.

Thirteen people hospitalized and one reported death

Brazil nuts were also used in other products manufactured by different companies in the UK and one in Austria. It is likely that the origin of infections is contaminated Brazil nuts, but the exact point of contamination could not be established, according to the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control and the European Food Safety Authority.

Recalls and withdrawals of nut products started in August 2020. In the UK, they

involved Holland & Barrett, Rude Health Food, Lidl GB, The Paleo Foods Co. and Hand2Mouth, which makes Eat Natural brand bars.

Thirteen people infected by Salmonella Typhimurium were hospitalized, including two children younger than five years of age. One death was reported in the UK but the role of Salmonella infection is not known.

In April, the UK reported a cluster of 38 Salmonella Typhimurium infections with sampling dates between Aug. 2, 2019, and April 4, 2020. Over 60 percent of cases were reported in March and April. Patients live in different areas of the UK and reported no travel history. Just more than half were male and the median age was 40 years with a range of 3 to 89 years old. After 14 months, the outbreak appears to be subsiding, with the latest patient reported in the UK in September.

Public Health England did 13 interviews, starting in April, that identified nuts/nut bars, chicken and salad consumption as potential vehicles of infection. A case-control study in June revealed nut and seed products as a risk factor. Patients reported consumption of several types of nut bars under two brand names produced by a British company.

Official controls and heat treatment

The first batch was imported in the UK by a British wholesaler in August 2019 in two allotments of 8,000 kilograms each. Samples were collected as part of an official control in early August 2020, with some positive for Salmonella Typhimurium.

The second batch was imported in the UK by the same British wholesaler in January 2020 in one allotment of 16,000 kilograms. Samples were collected during an official control in early August 2020 and some showed Salmonella

Anatum.

Some of the nut products were heat treated but the process was only intended for organoleptic purposes. Some flapjacks and nut bars received heat treatment during the manufacturing process that was considered sufficient to eliminate Salmonella so companies producing them did not withdraw or recall their nut products.

European officials said the likelihood of new cases is low but possible, as the nut products have a long shelf life until 2021, and people may have bought them before control measures were applied.

Countries that received affected Brazil nuts from Bolivia are Austria, Bahrain, Belgium, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Gibraltar, Greece, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mali, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Philippines, Qatar, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, UK and the United States.

Listeria found in a quarter of frozen veg in England

Listeria was detected in almost a quarter of frozen vegetable samples in England, according to a study.

Between December 2018 and April 2019, 1,050 frozen fruit and vegetable samples were collected. Listeria monocytogenes or other Listeria species were detected in 167 samples of vegetables. Listeria monocytogenes was present in 10 percent of frozen vegetables.

The study of frozen fruit and vegetables from catering and retail premises in England assessed microbiological quality with respect to Listeria and E. coli. Findings were published in the International Journal of Food Microbiology.

Eleven samples contained more than 100 colony forming units per gram (cfu/g) of *E. coli*. *Listeria monocytogenes* or other *Listeria* species were detected in six samples of fruit and six fruit and vegetable mixes.



Obtaining baseline data

Work was prompted after the outbreak of listeriosis that affected 54 people in six countries with 10 deaths in 2015 to 2018 associated with frozen sweetcorn produced by Greenyard in Hungary. Researchers found the strain from this outbreak remained in the UK frozen vegetable food chain until April 2019 and caused a case of *Listeria meningitis* in England in February this past year.

Amongst all samples, 351 were fruit, 673 were vegetables, and 26 were a mixture of the two. A total of 885 were sampled from unopened packs. There were 25 different types of frozen fruit, with the largest single category being mixed fruits.

The most common types within samples containing a single fruit were blackberries, blueberries, raspberries and strawberries. There were 43 different vegetable types plus mixtures. The main types of single frozen vegetables were peas, sweetcorn, beans and carrots.

All the 26 fruit and vegetable mixtures were frozen smoothie mixes, 17 of which contained either spinach and/or kale plus various types of fruit.

Seventy-nine percent of samples containing fruit were listed as ready-to-eat (RTE) products on the packaging compared to only 30 of the vegetables.

Seventy-seven percent of the vegetables were not RTE and the intended use on packaging advised cooking or blanching. In 12 percent of the vegetables, whether the product was RTE or otherwise was not stated.

Examples of contaminated items

Eleven samples had *E. coli* above 100 cfu/g, of which six were higher than 500 cfu/g and four above 1,000 cfu/g. Examples include pre-packed jackfruit from India labelled as non-ready-to-eat; an open sample of runner beans from the UK; pre-packed banana from Vietnam; pre-packed lima beans from Bangladesh; pre-packed coconut from the Philippines; and pre-packed cabbage from Belgium.

Listeria monocytogenes was detected in 69 of 673 vegetables, and six of 26 fruit and vegetable mixes compared to three of 340 fruit samples. Three samples contained *Listeria monocytogenes* at levels of 10 cfu/g: pre-packed spinach from Poland or 20 cfu/g: stir-fry vegetable mix from Poland and sweetcorn from Belgium. The only fruit samples contaminated with *Listeria monocytogenes* were melon.

A range of vegetable samples were contaminated with *Listeria monocytogenes*, the most common types being: mushrooms; peppers; sweetcorn; and squash. It was also recovered from vegetable mixes, including those containing carrot, sweetcorn, peas or beans.

“These results are of concern, particularly in products that may be defrosted and held at refrigeration or ambient temperature before consumption,” said researchers.

“The contamination of 23 percent of the frozen fruit and vegetable smoothie mixes with *Listeria monocytogenes* is of particular concern since these products may not be consumed directly after defrosting, do not undergo any cooking process, and therefore provide opportunities for the growth of *Listeria monocytogenes* before consumption.”

Results by product origin

Overall, 673 of 1,050 samples originated from within Europe, with the majority of all categories from within the EU. Products from outside the EU originated from 22 different countries. However, this may be where the product was packed, with the produce being grown in a country not indicated on the pack.

Six percent of 127 products from non-EU countries had *E. coli* levels above 100 cfu/g compared to 0.7 percent of 612 samples from EU nations.

Listeria monocytogenes and other *Listeria* species were detected in a larger proportion of items from EU countries with 47 of 612 samples for the former and 74 for the latter compared to non-EU countries with four of 127 samples for *Listeria monocytogenes* and five for other *Listeria* species.

Researchers said there must be education of consumers on the risks from

non-ready-to-eat foods but this may be difficult without clear labelling.

There is also a need to communicate with food manufacturers to mitigate against cross-contamination within the food chain and prevent non-RTE ingredients being put into RTE foods such as sandwiches or smoothies without a heating step.

Fresh produce industry never likes testing such as that now imposed by Canada



The nation’s only produce surveillance program did not survive the first term of the Obama administration. When it did exist, USDA’s Microbiological Data Program (MDP) used to conduct 80 percent of all federal produce testing for foodborne pathogens.

The program paid labs at Land Grant universities to test local produce as it came out of the ground. The national budget for the MDP did not top \$5 million, a

hardly noticeable amount in Washington D.C.

But from the moment it began during the first Bush administration, the fresh produce lobby wanted the MDP dead. It was too successful, working as a “tripwire,” interrupting fresh produce distributions whenever dangerous pathogens were discovered.

Fresh produce works fast, moving from the field to your dinner plate in only a matter of days, and sometimes hours. Anything that interrupts that fast flow is a problem for the industry.

So if the little MDP was too much for the fresh produce industry to bear, you can imagine the hurt Canada is imposing, at least on a temporary basis, on California’s Salinas Valley, according to leafy greens growers there.

Starting Oct. 7 and continuing at least through Dec. 31, shipments of romaine lettuce grown in the Salinas Valley must be tested For E. coli O157:H7 before Canada will accept them as imports.

The Packer, a fresh produce industry newspaper, reports the added food safety compliance costs would add \$1 to \$2 per carton to producer costs.

Importers must either prove that romaine being imported to Canada is not from Santa Cruz, Santa Clara, San Benito, or Monterey counties, or else provide certificates of analysis from an accredited laboratory that confirms the lettuce has below-detectable levels of E. coli before it is distributed in Canada.

Testing can be accomplished in the U.S. or Canada so long as the lab is accredited.

The reoccurring E. coli outbreaks, prior to 2020, are the reason for Canada’s cautionary approach for the current import season.

Canada produce suppliers are attempting to source romaine from outside the Salinas Valley, known as “America’s salad bowl.” Once local lettuce grown in Canada is no longer available, therefore some suppliers will have no choice but to obtain products from California.

“We are trying to understand (the import requirements) to make sure that we’re in compliance with the regulations, and we’re talking to the shippers and seeing what they think about it,” Van Whole Produce Ltd.’s Leonard Jang told The Packer.

Jang said the receiver likely will want E. coli testing done at the shipping point, not in Canada. That’s because if it fails the test in Canada, the disposal costs would fall on the supplier. And, adding to industry frustration, all testing will likely add two additional days of cold storage costs.

Import requirements for U.S. romaine are now being continuously updated by the Arizona and California Leafy Green Marketing Agreements, the Canadian Horticultural Council, the Canadian Produce Marketing Association, the Produce Marketing Association in the U.S., the United Fresh Produce Association, and Western Growers.

They are also wondering what is going to happen at the next seasonal transition when romaine harvests move from Salinas to the desert growing regions.

“I think the concern is that if this is a precedent set by the Canadian government and the way that they want to manage romaine from a longer-term standpoint, then there will be an economic impact,” Western Growers’ De Ann Davis, also told The Packer. “People will be more conservative in planting and it will impact trade.”

Canada’s requirements are very difficult to comply with, according to Scott

Horsfall, CEO of the California LGMA. He fears the temporary rules could become precedents for other commodities.

“The imposition of this type of requirement at the last minute is really problematic,” he said. Canada’s post-harvest E. coli testing requirement hasn’t proven to be an effective way to protect consumers in the past.

Horsfall said it is not possible to “test your way to food safety.” He pointed out the importance of preventive measures on the farm and in processing facilities.

“I think the hope is that, through discussions and through collaboration with the two governments, that something a little more reasonable can be accomplished,” Horsfall said. He predicts romaine shipments to Canada during the next couple of months will be on the decline.

Declines of \$11 to \$13 million a week are predicted for California romaine shipments to Canada over the several weeks

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is reportedly in talks with the Canadian Food Inspection Association about the future of the testing requirement. Industry representatives on both sides of the border are tracking those negotiations.

Multi-country recalls due to ethylene oxide in sesame seeds

The presence of an unauthorized substance in sesame seeds from India has prompted a spate of product recalls across Europe.

The ethylene oxide alert was first raised by Belgium in early September but now concerns almost 20 countries. Ethylene oxide is a genotoxic carcinogen after regular consumption.



Sesame seeds were used in the production of flour and recalled products include bread and bagels.

Several supermarket chains in Belgium have recalled products from shelves because of the high content of residues in the sesame seeds in them.

Seeds used in a variety of products

Austria, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland are all listed as being affected.

In Belgium, Soubry, Soezie, Colruyt, Albert Heijn, Delhaize, Focaccia BV, La Lorraine Bakery Group, 't Bakhuisje, l'Artemeersmolen and Aveve have issued recalls. In France, Auchan recalled some bagels, as did Aldente GmbH in Germany. Authorities told people who had the products not to consume them and to return items to the point of sale for a refund.

The use of ethylene oxide as a component of plant protection products is prohibited under EU regulation but its use as part of biocidal products is authorized for certain items.

Ethylene oxide is used to control insects as a fumigant for spices, seasonings, and foodstuffs. It is employed instead of high temperature processes that may damage certain products such as herbs, spices and seeds.

Ethylene oxide is used by the U.S. spice industry to prevent microbial contaminants such as Salmonella and E. coli, reduce bacterial loads, yeast and mold, coliforms and other pathogens.

In late 2019, Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency proposed to establish maximum residue limits (MRLs) for ethylene oxide on dried vegetables and sesame seeds to permit the sale of foods containing such residues. It is an insecticide registered in Canada for use on whole or ground spices and processed natural seasonings.

The MRLs proposed for ethylene oxide of 7 parts per million are the same as American tolerances. There are no Codex MRLs listed for ethylene oxide in or on any commodity.

MARKET NEWS - REPLY

If you have any views or comments on the articles in the marketing news please feel free to contact us on the following email address: sales.china@mxns.cn