NEWSMONTH

April 2021

MARKET NEWS

CONTENTS

International News

EFSA presents data on pesticide residues in food

The non-compliance rate for pesticides in foods decreased in 2019, according to a report published by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA).

The report is based on data from official national controls done by EU member states, Iceland and Norway.

For 2019, 96.1 percent of the 96,302 samples analyzed fell below the maximum residue level (MRL), 3.9 percent, or 3,720 samples, exceeded this level, of which 2,252 were non - compliant based on measurement uncertainty.

The number of samples tested in 2019 increased compared to 91,015 in 2018. The MRL exceedance rate was 4.5 percent and the non-compliance rate was 2.7 percent in 2018.

Fipronil findings still featured in eggs with 23 samples and animal fat with eight. It is a veterinary medicinal product or biocide and presence in eggs is the result of illegal use. EFSA advised that member states continue analyzing for it in animal products. Ethylene oxide, which has prompted thousands of recalls across Europe from late 2020, was not mentioned.

Multiple findings and origin details

Reporting countries looked for 799 different pesticides in 2019. On average, 233 different ones were analyzed per sample. National control programs are risk-based, targeting products likely to contain pesticide residues or for which infringements have been identified in previous years.

Of all samples, 44.1 percent contained one or several pesticides in quantifiable concentrations, which is down from 47.8 percent in 2018. Multiple residues were reported in 25,584 samples. In a dried vine fruit sample with unknown origin, up to 28 different pesticides were found. In 313 tests, more than 10 pesticides were detected in the same sample.

The most frequently quantified pesticides were copper compounds, fosetyl, phosphane, bromide ion and chlorates. The one with the highest MRL exceedance rate was chlorate, a result in line with past years.

More than 61,000 samples came from one of the reporting countries and a quarter were from non-EU nations. Samples with unknown origin increased to 11.3 percent compared to 10 percent in 2018. France reported nearly half of its samples as unknown origin. Country of origin is a valuable piece of information for traceability reasons in the case of non-compliance, according to EFSA.

Of samples from the reporting countries, 2.7 percent exceeded the MRL and 1.3 percent were non-compliant. Samples from non-EU countries had a higher exceedance rate of 7.8 percent and a higher non-compliance level at 5.6 percent.

The highest MRL exceedance rates were linked to products from Malta, Cyprus and Poland, with more than 5 percent of samples above the MRL. The non-compliant rate was most for products grown in Malta, Cyprus and Bulgaria. The top exceedance rates for non-EU countries were in Laos, Malaysia, Ghana, Uganda, Vietnam, Pakistan, Dominican Republic, Thailand and Cambodia.

Food for children, organic and glyphosate

The MRL exceedance rate in processed food products for 9,983 samples, was 2.8 percent, which is lower than that for unprocessed products.

Among 86,319 samples of unprocessed food products, 4 percent had residues above their corresponding MRLs and 2.4 percent were non-compliant samples. The percentage of non-compliances is slightly lower than 2018.

The highest MRL exceedance rates were in grape leaves, yard-long beans, coriander leaves, chili peppers, watercress, passion fruits/maracujas, pitahaya (dragon fruit), celery leaves, pomegranates, teas, and prickly pears/cactus fruits.

Reporting countries analyzed 1,513 samples of foods for infants and young children. MRL exceedances were reported in 20 samples and non-compliance was found five times. In one case, five pesticide residues were reported in the same sample.

More than 6,000 samples of organic food were tested. In total, 76 samples had residue levels above their corresponding MRLs, of which 31 were non-compliant. Animal products showed a higher quantification rate in organic samples of 15 percent than conventional samples at 6 percent mainly because of hexachlorobenzene, DDT, thiacloprid and copper findings.

Glyphosate was analyzed by 26 countries. From the 13,336 samples of different products, it was quantified at levels below the MRL in 364 samples and levels exceeded the limit for 12 samples.

For the 12,579 samples in the EU - coordinated control program (EUCP), 2 percent, or 241, exceeded the MRL and 120 were non - compliant.

The EUCP covered apples, head cabbages, lettuce, peaches, spinach, strawberries, tomatoes, oat grain, barley grain, wine, cow's milk and swine fat. Samples were analyzed for 182 pesticide residues.

Pesticides, not approved in the EU and found on crops grown there at non-compliant levels, included acephate, carbofuran, chlorfenapyr, chlorothalonil, chlorpropham, clothianidin, cyfluthrin, dieldrin, iprodione, methomyl, oxadixyl and triadimefon. Non-approved residues found to be non-compliant on imported samples were acephate, chlorfenapyr, clothianidin, dichlorvos, fipronil, permethrin and thiamethoxam.

Because these results indicate possible misuse of non-approved substances, EFSA recommended that member states follow-up the findings to investigate reasons for their presence and use and take action where appropriate.

FDA announces 'Closer to Zero' plan to reduce toxic elements eaten by babies and young children

Janet Woodcock, the acting Commissioner of Food and Drugs, and Susan T. Mayne, director of the Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN) Thursday announced Closer to Zero, a new action plan for reducing exposure to

toxic elements in foods commonly eaten by babies and young children to the lowest possible levels.

Their comments associated with the announcement included the following:

"Although the FDA's testing shows that children are not at an immediate health risk from exposure to toxic elements at the levels found in foods, we are starting the plan's work immediately, with both short- and long-term goals for achieving continued improvements in reducing levels of toxic elements in these foods over time.

"We recognize that Americans want zero toxic elements in the foods eaten by their babies and young children. In reality, because these elements occur in our air, water, and soil, there are limits to how low these levels can be. The FDA's goal, therefore, is to reduce the levels of arsenic, lead, cadmium, and mercury in these foods to the greatest extent possible. We are also sensitive to the fact that requiring levels that are not currently feasible could result in significant reductions in the availability of nutritious, affordable foods that many families rely on for their children. Our plan, therefore, outlines a multi-phase, science-based, iterative approach to achieving our goal of getting levels of toxic elements in foods closer to zero over time.

"Closer to Zero includes research and evaluation of changes in dietary exposures to toxic elements, setting action levels (recommended limits of toxic elements in foods that can be achieved by industry and progressively lowered as appropriate), encouraging adoption of best practices by industry, and monitoring progress.

"Our action plan will occur in three phases. As part of the first phase, we'll immediately begin our work setting action levels using a four-pronged approach:

1. Evaluate the scientific basis for activity levels. The cycle of continual improvement starts with the FDA evaluating existing data from routine testing of the food supply, research and data on chemical analytical methods, toxicological assays, exposure and risk assessments, and other relevant scientific information. Through a process that may include advisory committees, public workshops, and consultation with scientific experts, federal agency partners, and other stakeholders, the agency will establish interim reference levels (IRLs) for certain toxic elements as appropriate. An IRL is a measure of exposure from food that the FDA may use to determine if the amount of exposure to an individual element across foods could result in a specific health impact.
2. Propose action levels. The IRLs may be among the key factors that inform the development of the FDA's proposed action levels for certain toxic

elements in categories of baby foods (e.g., cereals, infant formula, pureed fruits, and vegetables, etc.) and other foods commonly eaten by babies and young children.

3. Consult with stakeholders on proposed action levels, including the achievability and feasibility of action levels. For each toxic element—for every identified category of food—the FDA will gather data and other information through a process of consultation that could include workshops, scientific meetings, and collaboration with federal partners to assess, among other things, the achievability and feasibility of the proposed action levels and the timeframes for reaching them.

4. Finalize action levels. The FDA will use the information gathered from stakeholders, updated scientific research, and routine monitoring data to make any needed adjustments and finalize action levels.

"Once the FDA has published final action levels, the agency will establish a timeframe for assessing the industry's progress toward meeting the action levels and recommence the cycle to determine if the scientific data support efforts to further adjust the action levels downward.

"Our action plan will start with prioritizing our work on those elements for which we have the most data and information – arsenic and lead – while research continues on other elements, progressing through each element over time across various categories of foods consumed by babies and young children. During the plan's first year (phase one), we will be proposing action levels for lead in categories of foods consumed by babies and young children, consulting with and gathering data from stakeholders and federal partners on issues such as the feasibility of meeting action levels for lead, and sharing resources with industry on best practices for reducing or preventing lead contamination. We will also complete updated sampling assignments testing toxic element levels in baby foods and evaluate the science related to arsenic exposure from foods beyond infant rice cereal. Phases two, three, and beyond are outlined in our plan.

"Through this plan, we'll also take measures to ensure that limiting exposure to toxic elements in foods does not have unintended consequences—like limiting access to foods that have significant nutritional benefits by making them unavailable or unaffordable for many families, or unintentionally increasing the presence of one toxic element when foods are reformulated to reduce the presence of another. In addition, our goal of moving closer to zero reflects the reality that fruits, vegetables, and grains do take up toxic elements in the environment as they grow. With a cycle of continual improvement and collaboration, we aim to push the levels of toxic elements in these foods closer and closer to zero over time.

"While our testing of toxic elements in foods has shown there have already been significant reductions of toxic elements found in foods, the FDA is confident that our new plan will help further advance our work in this area. As part of our ongoing efforts to reduce exposure to toxic elements from foods, we'll be continuing our research and collaborations on this topic, finalizing action levels for arsenic in apple juice and issuing draft action levels for lead in juices in the near future, evaluating the potential impact of new technologies, interventions, or mitigation controls to reduce exposure, and reevaluating risks based on declining levels of toxic elements in foods. We view this work and our Closer to Zero plan as part of a larger effort to improve maternal and infant nutrition and health. We plan to combine our efforts to reduce exposure to toxic

elements in baby foods with other FDA initiatives to improve the health of mothers, infants, and children.

"Again, it's important to note that the FDA's testing shows that children are not at an immediate health risk from exposure to toxic elements at the levels found in foods. However, we know that additional progress can be made and are confident that a science-driven, transparent and inclusive process will help lead to even further reductions in exposure to these toxic elements. We look forward to providing additional updates on our plan as new data, information, progress updates, and additional material are made available."

Norwegian Salmonella outbreak traced to dried fruit from multiple countries

A dried fruit mix linked to an outbreak of Salmonella in Norway contained products from South East Asia and Africa, according to researchers.

From the end of 2018 to mid-March 2019, 56 people fell ill and 21 were hospitalized but no deaths were recorded.

"The outbreak was characterized by an unusual, severe clinical presentation with systemic infections seen in seven, urinary tract infections in 10 and hospitalization in 21 of the 56 cases," said researchers in the journal Eurosurveillance.

The mix contained fruit from different suppliers: cubed pineapple and papaya from Thailand, sultanas from Turkey, sliced coconut from Ghana and banana chips from the Philippines. It was packed at a factory in Italy in October 2018 and sent to Norway as a ready-to-eat product. In total, 4,032 bags at 400-grams each of the mix were exported to the Norwegian distributor and distributed to grocery stores and supermarkets.

The 33 women and 23 men affected by Salmonella Agbeni ranged in age from 2 to 91 years old. The majority were women above the age of 40. Those sick lived in 13 of the 18 counties in Norway. One person had a dual infection with Salmonella Wagenia and Salmonella Agbeni.

Severe infections

Patients mostly reported nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, diarrhea, fever and joint pain but nine developed urinary tract infections (UTIs). Salmonella Agbeni was isolated from urine in 10 cases and from blood culture in seven, of which one had a UTI in addition to bacteraemia.

Investigators said observed clinical symptoms and rate of hospitalization could be explained by properties of the Salmonella serotype involved, or the fact that women above 40 are more likely to eat dried fruits than other age groups.

Patient interviews revealed 19 out of 20 had eaten different mixes of nuts, dried fruits and raisins. Other common items were spices, especially oregano for 16 people, and chicken products in 15 cases.

In a case-control study, consumption of dried banana and dried mixed fruit were strongly associated with illness. Other items linked to illness were dried papaya, dried apricot and dried pineapple.

Based on information from data sources including an electronic questionnaire and grocery store receipts, scientists confirmed 45 out of 56 patients had consumed the fruit mix.

Not clear where contamination occurred

Salmonella Agbeni was detected in all nine opened and one intact bag of "Dryss på – husk! eksotisk miks" that were tested. Another serovar, Salmonella Gamaba, was found from two intact packages.

The Italian company had previously taken 17 samples of the products but all microbiological analyses were negative for Salmonella spp. Testing of papaya, pineapple and banana chips by suppliers was negative. Italian food safety authorities inspected the facility and took five samples of sliced coconut which were negative for Salmonella spp.

Findings suggest the mix could have been contaminated with three different serotypes of Salmonella. Researchers said as all testing of the raw materials for the mix were negative, it is not known where in the production process contamination occurred.

"The complexity of the origin of the fruit mix and the finding of three different serovars of Salmonella highlight the need for strict hygiene measures when producing such ready-to-eat products," they said.

The five raw materials used for the product were also mixed with other ingredients in 331 lots of 66 other products that were distributed from March 2018 in six European countries. Romania received the exact same mix as Norway but no other infections were reported.

The mix was recalled from the market in early March 2019 by the Norwegian distributor, Bama Gruppen. It had been on sale in supermarkets and grocery stores across Norway since mid-November 2018. Five other dried mix products that contained some of the ingredients from the same batch of raw materials used in the contaminated batch were also recalled but testing found they were negative for Salmonella.

Researchers said the outbreak highlights dried fruits as a risk product for foodborne infections, which is of particular concern in ready-to-eat products. Additional investigations are needed to estimate the risk of such products for pathogens.

EU data shows foodborne bacterial resistance to antimicrobials remains high

Data on the occurrence of antimicrobial resistance in human infections from Salmonella and Campylobacter in Europe has revealed little progress.

The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) found that resistance is still high in bacteria that are causing foodborne infections.

Data from 2018 and 2019 on antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in zoonotic and indicator bacteria from humans, animals and food are collected annually by EU member states and analyzed by EFSA and ECDC.

The 2018 monitoring focused on poultry and derived carcasses and meat, while in 2019 the target was pigs and calves under 1 year of age, and their meat.

Reporting of AMR included data on Salmonella, Campylobacter and indicator E. coli isolates, as well as from monitoring of presumptive ESBL - /AmpC - /carbapenemase - producing E. coli isolates.

Salmonella and Campylobacter

In humans, high resistance to ciprofloxacin, an antibiotic commonly used to treat several types of infections, was reported for Salmonella Kentucky. In recent years, Salmonella Enteritidis resistant to nalidixic acid and/or ciprofloxacin has been increasingly reported in several countries.

The rising occurrence of fluoroquinolone and quinolone resistance in these Salmonella types probably reflects the spread of particularly resistant strains, said experts.

In Salmonella spp. from human cases in 2019, resistance to ampicillin, sulfonamides and tetracyclines was at overall high levels, while resistance to third-generation cephalosporins was low at 1.8 percent and 1.2 percent for cefotaxime and ceftazidime, respectively.

Only eight countries tested resistance to the last line antimicrobials azithromycin and tigecycline but resistance was low among Salmonella spp. at about 1 percent.

For Campylobacter, resistance to ciprofloxacin is so common in most countries that this antimicrobial is of limited use in treating such infections in humans.

The proportion of human Campylobacter jejuni isolates resistant to erythromycin was low at 1.5 percent but higher in Campylobacter coli at 12.9 percent.

High proportions of resistance to tetracycline were observed in Campylobacter jejuni and coli. Countries reported low resistance levels to gentamicin except Italy for Campylobacter coli.

Multiple resistance and trends over time

Combined resistance to two critically important antimicrobials — fluoroquinolones and third generation cephalosporines in Salmonella and fluoroquinolones and macrolides in Campylobacter — remains low. These antimicrobials are commonly used to treat serious infections from Salmonella and Campylobacter in humans.

Multidrug resistance (MDR) was high overall at 25.4 percent among Salmonella spp. from human cases. It was most frequently reported among monophasic Salmonella Typhimurium 1,4,[5],12:i:- and Salmonella Kentucky at about 73 percent. Eleven isolates were resistant to eight of the nine tested substances, only susceptible to meropenem.

MDR in isolates tested for four antimicrobial classes — fluoroquinolones, macrolides, tetracyclines and aminoglycosides — was overall low in Campylobacter jejuni but moderate in Campylobacter coli. The most common was resistance to both ciprofloxacin and tetracycline.

From 2015 to 2019, a decline in resistance to ampicillin and tetracyclines was seen in Salmonella isolates from humans in eight and eleven member states respectively. Increasing trends in resistance were more common than decreases for ciprofloxacin/quinolones and tetracycline in Salmonella Enteritidis and ampicillin in Salmonella Infantis.

Increasing trends of fluoroquinolone resistance were observed in Campylobacter jejuni in nine nations and for Campylobacter coli in two. Overall, tetracycline resistance went up but erythromycin resistance went down.

A decreasing trend has also been observed in the prevalence of extended-spectrum beta-lactamase (ESBL)- producing E. coli in samples from food producing animals from 13 nations between 2015 and 2019. This is important as particular strains of ESBL-producing E. coli are responsible for serious infections in humans, said experts.

Remote audits in the spotlight at GFSI

There is a lack of trust in remote audits from some in the food industry, according to an expert who looked into the subject for the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI).

Solely remote audits are not GFSI recognized but a blended audit, which involves virtual and onsite checks, is accepted. Certification program owners such as BRCGS and FSSC22000 are offering fully remote food safety audits.

Alan Gillies, managing director of AGLC, helped produce a report for the GFSI on remote audits but this has not yet been made public.

"GFSI started us off with a simple question: Is there valid science evidence out there to show we can deliver the same level of assurance by a video facilitated remote audit as by a site visit? The simple answer is no," he said at the 2021 virtual GFSI Conference.

"We did find, because of what's happened and industry response, there was a lot going on so another conclusion to GFSI was it was a real opportunity as an industry to learn from the year we've had, from what they have done in response to the pandemic and use that going forward. The other theme was video facilitated remote audits are the start of the journey of the use of technology in food safety. The goal of introducing technology should be to make auditors better and food safer. I don't see the two in competition."

Gillies, also chair of a GFSI panel on the use of ICT in remote audits, said not all the industry trusts the remote audit process.

"A number of people said they want to get back to doing audits properly which suggests people see this as a stopgap and those trying remote audits were generally doing it with their low risk sites. There was a lack of belief in some responses that we could get to the same level of trust," he said.

Continuous monitoring instead of snapshot

Monitoring technologies are coming that allow the generation of a lot of data as you go instead of a snapshot model, which is part of traditional auditing, according to Gillies.

"Some people have said are we going to replace auditing with continuous

monitoring? I don't believe that is the case. We change the way people work but we don't get rid of it altogether. If you move from a snapshot auditing system to one that is based on continuous monitoring then that can give us a lot of trust so we can see what is happening all the time and not just between audits. But then there is a need to verify the monitoring is finding what you think it's finding and are the processes reliable. I think we will be changing the nature and relationships between the different types of audits but auditing is here to stay."

Gillies said the future may be auditing the monitoring process rather than the food safety.

"We'll need to audit that people understand what the data is telling them, that the equipment is working correctly and generating the right numbers and that we're measuring what is important and not what is easy as they are not always the things safety relies on. I don't think people need to worry about their jobs anytime soon. They need to be prepared for auditing to be disrupted but they'll find new challenges in the technology facilitated world," Gillies said.

Monitoring technologies are good at looking for problems you know are there, said Gillies.

"So if you predict these are the likely events it's often easier to create monitoring systems to look for those continuously and find them.," he said. "We can give the novel problems to the human beings. In any situation where you go in and are designing new ways of monitoring, the people who know best what the issues are, are those on the ground. The staff understand their process and environment."

Feeding 22 million a day

Another session covered resiliency and technology with speakers from Nestlé, Cargill and Ecolab.

David Maclennan, CEO of Cargill, said there was a lot of pressure from state, local, federal and non-U.S. governments to continue making food to keep people fed.

"The key to a resilient food supply chain system is open access for trade, reducing barriers that are put up in panic moments like COVID by governments but we've got to keep food moving across borders."

Maclennan added one of firm's beef plants feeds 22 million people per day.

"The mantra is disrupt yourself or someone else is going to disrupt you. That being said, agriculture has been a little slower as an industry to adopt technology but the pace of change is increasing rapidly. People want to know more about where does their food come from. It's no longer good enough to trust a brand, it's who are their suppliers, what are those companies like? So the demand for knowledge and traceability on basic food consumption is higher than it's ever been and it's an area we've spent a significant amount of time developing technology."

Disruption relative to COVID-19 meant business was not as usual, said Maclennan.

"We had one training session with 300,000 dairy farmers in China online," he said. "There would have been no way to train them all at the same moment, other than through technology. Another example is artificial intelligence, we have facial recognition technology for cows. So it is able to track the dairy cows to see are they eating properly, are they getting enough water, what is their health and does the farmer need to change their feed rations or formulations as a cow isn't drinking or eating properly."

Solving issues faster

Natasa Matysova, head of quality management at Nestlé, said 2020 accelerated adoption of digital technologies.

"It is the normal daily routine where you are monitoring your environment and sometimes having findings which you need to eradicate by proper cleaning and disinfection practices," she said.

"So how do we empower our workers and those on the frontline to know the results? We use a connected worker platform which is a tablet enabled operation where the operator would see all the data he needs to run his line, whether it's performance, quality checks or environmental monitoring results. He sees where the latest finding was, finds out what is the proper procedure and applies it. So the quality professional can refocus on making preventive actions, coaching and helping."

Matysova said when a microorganism is found they use bioinformatics and whole genome sequencing to find out more.

"We can do this for Listeria and Salmonella and it tells us if the microorganism is a home-based bacteria or a visitor to the facility and we have to find the source in a raw material or people. When we have these events and need to support the factory because they may not have the expertise, in past years we would have flown people in and delayed the solution of the problem. Today we use Google Glass, we feel we are at the plant, we see the problem and help solve it at the site without delay," she said.

"Whatever we have learned during this pandemic, it will stay and become routine practice. We have other digital tools helping us with predicting what come next, whether it is advanced analytics or artificial intelligence, it becomes a normal routine of working where we rely on data and make ourselves better to predict and eradicate before it has become a problem."

Learning from incidents

Christophe Beck, CEO of Ecolab, spoke about three capabilities: predicting disruptions that could happen, helping customers respond and providing real time control to learn and prepare for the next problem.

"It can be African Swine Fever or an E. coli outbreak in a plant or a group of plants. Our customers and ourselves can see when things are going wrong, we know where the weakest link can be in a plant and help respond to that as quickly as we can. Every time there is a disruption we learn a bit more and become better at it."

Beck said it would have been harder for industry to have managed operations 10 or 15 years ago.

"Since we have 40,000 systems around the world that are connected to the cloud, it helps us generate so many insights that we can compare across plants, companies or industries to understand what best and what worst looks like. We have 24/7 monitoring with customers connected to the cloud. We can address it remotely, prevent it and continue operations," he said.

"We are seeing consumers shift from assuming it is trustworthy to you need to demonstrate to me that I should trust you. We've learned the hard way during the pandemic with our hotel and restaurant customers where many guests didn't want to go to restaurants and hotels because they were worried they would get sick with COVID-19."

Pet foods in this huge Salmonella recall may also cause human illness from handling

Human risk of illness is on the rise due to the handling of contaminated pet foods named in a massive recall by Evansville, IN-based Midwestern Pet Foods.

Specific cat and food brands including CanineX, Earthborn Holistic, Venture, Unrefined, Sportmix Wholesomes, Pro Pac, Pro Pac Ultimates, Sportstrail, Sportmix, and Meridian brands produced at its Monmouth, IL production facility because they have the potential to be contaminated with Salmonella.

A full list of recalled products is included in this announcement. In addition to the risk to humans, Salmonella can affect animals eating the products.

Surfaces not thoroughly washed after having contact with the products or any surfaces exposed to these products are at risk.

People infected with Salmonella should monitor themselves for some or all of the following symptoms: nausea, vomiting, diarrhea or bloody diarrhea, abdominal cramping, and fever. Salmonella can result in serious ailments, including arterial infections, endocarditis, arthritis, muscle pain, eye irritation, and urinary tract symptoms. Consumers exhibiting these signs after having contact with this product should contact their healthcare providers.

Pets with Salmonella infections may be lethargic and have diarrhea or bloody diarrhea, fever, and vomiting. Some pets will have only decreased appetite, fever, and abdominal pain. Infected but otherwise healthy pets can be carriers and infect other animals or humans. If your pet has consumed the recalled product and has these symptoms, please contact your veterinarian. No human or pet illnesses have been reported to date.

Products were distributed to retail stores nationwide and to online retailers.

Lot code information may be found on the back of the bags in the following format:

“EXP AUG/02/22/M1/L#

This recall covers only certain products manufactured at the Midwestern Pet Foods Monmouth, Illinois facility. The unique Monmouth Facility identifier is located in the date code as an “M”.

The recall was the result of a routine sampling program by the company which revealed that the finished products may contain the bacteria.

Retailers and distributors should immediately pull recalled lots from their inventory and shelves. Do not sell or donate the recalled products. Retailers are encouraged to contact consumers that have purchased the recalled

products if the means to do so exists.

Do not feed the recalled products to pets or any other animals. Destroy the food in a way that children, pets, and wildlife cannot access. Wash and sanitize pet food bowls, cups, and storage containers. Always ensure you wash and sanitize your hands after handling recalled food or any utensils that come in contact with recalled food.

EU rules on risk assessment come into force; reviews continue

New rules on the transparency of Europe's risk assessment process in the food chain have come into force.

When a company wants to market a new food additive, pesticide or GMO, it submits studies to the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) to show the product is safe.

The revised legislation means all submitted scientific studies and data will be disclosed to the public on EFSA's website. There are exceptions to this if reasons of confidentiality and commercial harm can be justified.

To identify whether other relevant data or studies are available, EFSA will consult the public and other partners before preparing a scientific output.

Boost public trust

The legislation was developed in response to a European Citizens' Initiative on glyphosate and a review of the General Food Law regulation completed in January 2018. It was adopted by the European Council and European Parliament in June 2019.

The European Commission will do fact-finding missions at laboratories in the next four years to assess whether they apply the relevant standards for tests and studies submitted to EFSA as part of the application process.

Commissioner Stella Kyriakides, in charge of Health and Food Safety, said more transparency on EU scientific work on food will reinforce consumer trust.

"These new transparency rules directly respond to calls from our citizens. We are putting them in place at a time when the Commission has taken a strong commitment, through our Farm to Fork Strategy, in ensuring greater sustainability so that that the way we produce and consume our food is healthy not just for us, but also for our planet," she said.

New arrangements are not being implemented retroactively, which means there will be a period of adjustment during which much of EFSA's work will continue under the previous rules and legal provisions.

Bernhard Url, EFSA's executive director, described it as a "pivotal moment" for the food safety system.

"EFSA is grateful to legislators for giving us this exciting opportunity to bring citizens and stakeholders closer to our work and to benefit from greater scrutiny of our working processes and practices," he said.

Protecting innovation

Commenting on the proposals when they were endorsed in April 2019, European Consumer Organization (BEUC) Director General Monique Goyens said the EU was taking transparency to the next level.

"Public controversies around glyphosate, aspartame or bisphenol A have eroded consumer confidence in the way the EU decides what food is safe and what is not. It was high time the EU stopped the secrecy around the studies

EFSA relies on for its assessment of substances that end up in our food," she said.

"We will have to remain vigilant, however, on how the new transparency rules work in practice. Independent scientists should be able to access, use and quote safety data produced by the food industry without having to seek permission."

Also reacting in 2019, FoodDrinkEurope, which represents the food and drink industry, supported the objective of the proposals but raised some issues.

"FoodDrinkEurope has expressed its concern on the potential impact the proposal may have on the competitiveness of the EU food and drink industry and welcomes initiatives that have been introduced to the regulation to protect innovation within the EU risk assessment model."

The European Commission, EFSA and member states are also working on a plan to ensure coherent risk communication throughout the risk analysis process.

Dual food quality findings

Meanwhile, the EU Commission has published results from the second part of an EU-wide quality comparison of food products sold under the same branding.

The Joint Research Centre (JRC) work found variances did not follow a geographical pattern. Sensory differences were found in 10 of 20 products tested.

Věra Jourová, vice-president for transparency and values, said there can be no unjustified differentiation of products in the EU.

"This is why we strengthened our consumer laws and empowered consumers in this regard. These laws must be vigorously enforced, also on this issue, and the commission stands ready to support the authorities, if needed."

The first part of the study, published in 2019, found differences in ingredients for about one-third of items tested, which were identically or similarly branded.

The follow-up work tested 20 products that had shown differences in the first study. Samples of each were purchased in five to 10 member states. Testers were specifically trained for such a role.

Didier Reynders, commissioner for justice, said consumers need to know what they are buying.

"They must not be misled by the same or a similar front-of-pack (information) implying that goods are the same when they are not. This is unfair and contrary to EU consumer law."

Further studies are planned from the JRC in 2021 and 2022 to look at the evolution of products in the first batch of tests in 2019. An amended directive to clarify when dual quality of products is a misleading practice is scheduled to apply across the EU beginning May 28, 2022.

EU food irradiation report shows continued decline

Frogs legs made up two thirds of the products irradiated in Europe in 2018 and 2019, but use of the food safety technique continued to fall, according to a report.

The three main commodities are frozen frog legs at 65.1 percent, poultry at 20.6 percent, and dried aromatic herbs, spices and vegetables seasoning at 14 percent.

The report covers from January 2018 to December 2019 and includes information

sent to the European Commission by 28 member states and Norway in 2018, and 27 member states in 2019. Latvia did not submit any data for the latter year.

Irradiation is the physical treatment of food with high-energy ionizing radiation. Food that has been irradiated or contains irradiated ingredients must be labelled. It is not radioactive.

The treatment is for sanitary and phytosanitary purposes to kill bacteria such as Salmonella, Campylobacter and E. coli, and to eliminate organisms harmful to plant products such as insects and other pests. It is also used to delay fruit ripening, stop vegetables such as onions and potatoes from sprouting or germination, and to extend shelf life.

Most irradiation in Belgium

Rules on foods and ingredients authorized for irradiation in the EU are not harmonized. Some countries allow it for fruit and vegetables including root vegetables; cereals, cereal flakes and rice flour; spices and condiments; fish and shellfish; fresh meats, poultry and frog legs; and raw milk camembert.

At the end of December 2019, there were 24 approved irradiation facilities in 14 countries: France had five, Germany had four, Bulgaria, the Netherlands and Spain had two, while there was one each in Belgium, Czech Republic, Croatia, Estonia, Italy, Hungary, Poland, Romania and the United Kingdom. However, Bulgaria, Italy, Romania and the UK did not irradiate any foodstuffs during 2018 to 2019.

A total of 7,832 tons of products were treated with ionizing irradiation in EU nations in 2018 and 2019, which was down by 23.3 percent compared to 2016 and 2017.

Treatment was mainly in Belgium with 81.4 percent, or 6,377 tons, of the irradiated food in the EU followed by Spain, France, Germany and Hungary.

The amount of foodstuffs treated by ionizing radiation in the EU has decreased since 2010 but went up slightly in 2019 from 2018. The EU Commission held a public comment period on the legal framework for food irradiation in 2020.

Product checks

A total of 9,808 samples were analyzed at the product marketing stage by 25 member states, which is 12.1 percent less than in 2016 to 2017. More than 5,000 of these checks were done by Germany, with Italy in second, Romania third and Poland fourth.

Denmark and Norway didn't do any analytical checks at this stage in 2018 to 2019 because of budgetary restrictions. Cyprus cited a lack of laboratory capacity and Sweden said it had other control priorities.

From these samples, 83 were not compliant and 88 gave inconclusive results. The issues observed were mainly incorrect labelling and forbidden irradiation. The percentage of non-compliance was slightly higher than in previous years. The most non-compliances were found in Germany with 22, followed by 18 in France and 11 in Finland.

The majority of products analyzed were herbs and spices and cereals, seed, vegetables, fruit and their products. Food supplements and soups and sauces were also checked.

Alerts this year on the RASFF portal show unauthorized irradiation for fish products from Vietnam as well as a food supplement and grindelia extract, both from China.

FAO: Organic label is not a guarantee of food safety

The term organic is not a guarantee of food safety, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

Organic is a way to grow food following specific rules and guidelines, according to a document published by the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. Organic certification refers to a product made in line with certain standards throughout the production, handling, processing and marketing stages; it does not cover the characteristics of the finished item.

Such standards and regulations may differ between and among countries' supply chains for regulating chemical use and other requirements for soil and water quality maintenance.

The agency says the aim of organic food is better incomes for small-scale farmers and increased food security, environmental benefits such as enhanced soil and water quality and biodiversity preservation, and improved animal welfare.

Pesticide use

The U.S. organic sector saw food sales hit $50.1 billion in 2019, up 4.6 percent from the previous year, according to the Organic Trade Association.

Organic agriculture is seen as a promising approach to address challenges raised by increasing demographics and urbanization as well as climate change. For consumers, this often translates into healthier, safer, tastier and more environmentally friendly foods, organic proponents contend.

Organic labels rely on rules that prohibit or limit use of some synthetic fertilizers and agrochemicals, which is attractive for consumers. Pesticides produced by plants are still used in organic agriculture, which at high dosages may have negative effects on human health. The major difference is the type of pesticides used. The document stated that conventional and organic farmers need to follow the same safety standards.

From 172 countries in a survey by the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture, 87 had organic standards, and another 18 were developing legislation for them.

The FAO reported authorities could check that food safety measures are included in any existing organic certification schemes at the national level and organize a forum with the organic food industry to discuss approaches to ensuring inclusion of food safety actions in organic agriculture.

Food allergen advice

Meanwhile, the FAO has also published a document with examples of practices to establish labeling regulations for food allergens.

National contexts can differ in terms of predominance of food allergies. The FAO report says investigation is needed within countries to understand what foods should be labelled, and determine the allowable quantities of allergens that may unintentionally be present in foods.

Food allergens recognized by Codex may not cover all those that have an impact on different populations, such as the case for buckwheat in Japan.

Three case studies are presented: Japan, Australia and New Zealand, and the U.S's Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act (FALCPA).

The guide also covers unintentional introduction of a food allergen in a product through cross-contamination, recalls due to undeclared allergens and precautionary labeling.

National agencies were advised to regularly monitor common food allergies, ensure clarity and readability of labels and provide education on how to read them and work with the private sector, particularly e-commerce platforms and restaurants, to ensure allergens are explained to customers.

U.S. House passes FASTER Act for sesame labeling

The U.S. House has approved the Food Allergy Safety, Treatment, Education and Research (FASTER) Act, bringing sesame one step closer to becoming the ninth major allergen, as defined by federal law.

The legislation requires that sesame be labeled on packaged foods and prioritizes food allergy research. This action follows the Senate passage of the FASTER Act March 3. The bill now goes to President Biden for his consideration.

According to Lisa Gable, CEO of FARE (Food Allergy Research & Education), the world's leading non-governmental organization engaged in food allergy advocacy and the largest private funder of food allergy research, there are more than 1.5 million Americans who are allergic to sesame. FARE has been advocating for the passage of the FASTER Act alongside Rep. Doris Matsui, D-CA, Rep. Anna Eshoo, CA, and more than 90 other legislative supporters for more than two years.

The Center for Science in the Public Interest also has been working to get sesame labeled as a major allergen since they petitioned the Food and Drug Administration back in November 2014 for similar allergen disclosure.

"Our advocacy has been grounded in emerging science demonstrating that the prevalence and severity of sesame allergy warranted labeling protections on par with the original major allergens," according to a statement released by CSPI.

"There is nothing more important to the food allergy community than ensuring that the FASTER Act is put into law," said Lisa Gable, FARE CEO. "On behalf of

the nearly 1.6 million Americans who are allergic to sesame, I thank Rep. Doris Matsui, D-CA, and Rep. Patrick McHenry, R-NC, for championing this critical piece of bipartisan legislation and now look forward to President Biden signing it into law."

Other advocates for the Act included Sens. Tim Scott, R-SC, and Chris Murphy, D-CT, who co-sponsored the legislation in the Senate.

The FASTER Act has been the highest legislative priority for FARE. The FASTER Act would require that sesame be labeled as an allergen on packaged foods. Sesame would become the ninth food allergen for which the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requires plain-language labeling. Sesame is often used when a label reads "natural flavors" or "natural spices," adding another layer of difficulty when consumers review product labels at their local grocery stores. If approved, this would be the first time since 2006 that a new allergen has been added to the Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act (FALCPA).

"Today is a testament to the hard work of thousands of food allergy advocates who sent emails, made calls, and visited members of Congress and staff to build support and make sesame the ninth allergen to be labeled under law," said Rep. Matsui.

"The outpouring of support was incredible, and I'd like to thank Lisa Gable and everyone at FARE for their hard work mobilizing this dedicated, resilient community. The FASTER Act will truly make a difference for those living with potentially life-threatening food allergies and we are proud that it will now be signed into law."

The FASTER Act would also require the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) to issue a report on scientific opportunities in food allergy research that examines prevention, treatment and new cures. In addition, the legislation establishes a risk-based scientific process and framework for establishing additional allergens covered by the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act.

"Today, I was proud to see the FASTER Act pass the House, said Rep. McHenry. "This bill provides a much-needed update to allergen labeling laws to include sesame, which affects the over 1.5 million people allergic to sesame. Additionally, the bill will enable us to better treat the millions of Americans that suffer from life-threatening food allergies by requiring the Secretary of Health and Human Services to regularly review promising food allergy treatments and research."

"Today is a life-changing and life-affirming day for our family and for the families of the nearly 1.6 million Americans allergic to sesame," said Talia Day, a food allergy advocate with two children who are allergic to sesame.

"With today's passage and hopefully President Biden's signature, no longer will I have to live in fear that my children could accidentally eat something that would kill them simply because it was not included on a food label. I thank Senators Scott and Murphy, Representatives Matsui and McHenry, FARE, and the thousands of food allergy advocates who helped make today possible and created a better future for the more than 32 million Americans living with potentially life-threatening food allergies."

Enterprise News

EU gets stricter on black pepper from Brazil and peanuts from India

The European Commission has tightened checks on black pepper from Brazil because of Salmonella and peanuts from India because of aflatoxins.

These and other products entering the European Union from non-EU countries are now subject to a temporary increase of official controls. Revised legislation has also seen some checks become less strict.

The basis of the changes is the occurrence of incidents reported through the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) and information from official controls performed by member states on food and feed of non-animal origin.

Tighter controls

The frequency of identity and physical checks on black pepper from Brazil has been increased from 20 percent to 50 percent. This is because of the large amount of non-compliances with EU requirements for Salmonella contamination detected during official controls in 2019 and early 2020 and the high number of reports in the RASFF during that period.

This year there have been 28 RASFF reports of Salmonella in black pepper from Brazil with most reported by Germany. Serotypes include Rubislaw, Infantis, Saintpaul, Coeln, Matadi, Gaminara, and Javiana.

The frequency of identity and physical checks on peanuts, also known as groundnuts, from India because of aflatoxins has also gone up from 10 percent to 50 percent. Checks on peppers of the Capsicum species, other than sweet, for pesticide residues from Thailand will rise from 10 percent to 20 percent.

Sweet peppers from Turkey are already listed in the regulation because of the risk of contamination by pesticide residues but this has been amended to cover all peppers of the Capsicum species.

Reduced measures

Checks on goji berries from China because of pesticide residues and dried grapes from Turkey because of Ochratoxin A have been relaxed because of improved compliance in the second half of 2019 and first quarter of 2020.

For peanuts from Brazil, the rate of identity and physical checks has been set at 10 percent because of the risk of contamination by aflatoxins. The frequency of non-compliance with EU rules during official controls decreased in the second semester of 2019 and remained at low levels in the first few months of 2020.

Controls of this product from China because of the same issue are also at 10 percent.

The frequency of identity and physical checks for hazelnuts from Turkey because of aflatoxins has been reduced to 5 percent.

Foodstuffs containing betel leaves originating in, or being sent from, Bangladesh have been banned since June 2014 because of Salmonella contamination. However, the European Commission approved an action plan submitted by Bangladesh in July 2020 covering all steps of the production chain. The frequency of identity and physical checks will be set at 50 percent.

Foodstuffs consisting of dried beans from Nigeria remain suspended because of pesticide residue concerns. Peanuts and pistachios from the United States are being checked for aflatoxins at a rate of 10 percent.

Other products still subject to a temporary increase in controls include peanuts from Bolivia because of aflatoxins with checks at a frequency of 50 percent; sweet peppers from China because of Salmonella at a rate of 20 percent; sesame seeds from Ethiopia because of Salmonella at 50 percent; palm oil from Ghana because of Sudan dyes at 50 percent and turnips from Lebanon because of Rhodamine B at a frequency of 50 percent.

FDA's warning shot for leafy greens

On April 6, the Food and Drug Administration fired an unmistakable warning shot at the leafy greens industry. I hope it will serve as a call to urgent action that gets to the root of the problem of the persistent presence of dangerous E. coli in the growing environment for leafy greens and other fresh produce.

Carefully using the regulatory language in its produce safety rule (21 CFR 112.11) and citing the recurring nature of the E. coli hazard in the Salinas and Santa Maria growing area, FDA declared the recurring strain implicated in the 2020 outbreak to be a "reasonably foreseeable hazard," which FDA attributed to the presence of cattle on land adjacent to growing fields.

This finding seems obvious and shouldn't be surprising. The surprise, however, is that FDA used regulatory language to express its finding and spelled out the implications: farms covered by the FSMA produce safety rule "are required to implement science and risk-based preventive measures" to minimize the risk of serious illness or death from the E. coli hazard.

Make no mistake, however, FDA's message is aimed not only at farms but at every entity involved in the commercial production, processing and sale of leafy greens coming from the California Central Coast Growing Region. The message is that, without effective preventive measures, such leafy greens are in violation of federal food safety regulatory standards.

I do not anticipate FDA taking judicial action to enforce its April 6 finding, absent egregious practices or clear negligence in a particular leafy green growing situation. I do see, however, a heightened sense of urgency at FDA and frustration that efforts to date have not solved the leafy greens safety problem. I share that frustration.

Fifteen years ago, the disastrous spinach outbreak caused by E. coli O157:H7 was linked by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to run-off from nearby grazing land. Since then, we've had outbreak after outbreak associated with E. coli in leafy greens and other fresh produce. And the outbreaks are just the tip of the public health iceberg. The federal government estimates that 60 percent of all food-related E. coli O157:H7 illnesses are associated with fresh

produce. The vast majority of these illnesses are not part of an identified outbreak.

The E. coli outbreaks and illnesses persist despite a lot of hard work by a lot of people in the leafy greens industry, researchers, the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), the FDA and its federal partners. Stop Foodborne Illness, the organization of illness victims and their families whose board I co-chair, works with the California LGMA on the common cause of strengthening food safety culture in the leafy green industry. We also advise the Leafy Greens Safety Coalition, a group of leading retailers working to strengthen safety practices. I have participated in the California Agricultural Neighbors Workgroup convened by CDFA Secretary Karen Ross. So, I know serious people are at work on the problem.

What then is the urgent call to action? What do consumers expect of the leafy greens industry, especially those individuals and families who know first-hand the devastating human impact E. coli infections can have? What does the public health demand?

At one level, the answer to all three questions is the same. The leafy greens industry and all those across the leafy greens supply chain and in government should be doing urgently everything they reasonably can to minimize the now well-known risk posed by E. coli O157:H7. According to FDA, the law requires no less. Certainly, this includes prevention measures within the leafy greens production system, such as strict implementation of rigorous water quality and irrigation standards, improved compost management, sanitation of harvesting equipment, and pre-harvest test-and-hold programs.

But the prevention strategy must go deeper. Modern food safety best practices dictate that prevention should begin at the root of the problem. As long as leafy greens are grown outdoors in the vicinity of cattle operations, I believe the food safety problem will persist until the shedding by cattle and the release of dangerous E. coli into the environment is minimized at its source. Effective vaccines are available. Changed feeding practices have promise. Perhaps containment measures can reduce risk.

The experts need to determine what combination of measures works best, but it is clear that no responsible food manufacturer would today deem it acceptable to produce food in an environment in which dangerous bacteria are being released or are present on a sustained basis. The same principle should apply to leafy greens and other fresh produce grown outdoors.

The important difference, of course, is that the leafy greens producer has no direct control over the source of the hazard. And the cattle producer isn't

responsible for where leafy greens are grown. That is why FDA Deputy Commissioner Frank Yiannas calls for "industry leadership and collaboration among growers, processors, retailers, state partners and the broader agricultural community," including cattle producers.

I am glad FDA is sounding the alarm, but I know from experience that the kind of leadership and collaboration that is urgently needed is easier said than done in an industry and government structure that is notoriously fragmented and often works in silos. And the obstacles to solving the problem are not just technical. They include the need for creative solutions on such matters as who pays for interventions needed in cattle production to make leafy greens safe.

But too much is at stake for all concerned to let such obstacles stand in the way. Now is the time for leaders from all across the commercial value chain and government to act together, with greater urgency, to get to the root of the problem and prevent it.

Sweden reports histamine outbreak from imported fish

Almost 20 people have fallen ill in Sweden this month from histamine poisoning in fish from Vietnam.

The foodborne outbreak at the beginning of April affected 19 people in Stockholm.

Guests eating tuna at three different restaurants in Stockholm reported symptoms of histamine poisoning.

All three restaurants purchased frozen tuna loins with the same expiry date from the same supplier, indicating that high levels of histamine occurred before the tuna was brought into Sweden from Vietnam via the Netherlands.

Recurring issue

In March, Italian authorities reported an outbreak caused by histamine in frozen yellowfin tuna loins from Vietnam, via the Netherlands but did not say how many people were affected.

In 2020, Sweden recorded three outbreaks of histamine poisoning in tuna from Vietnam in three months.

These outbreaks affected about 60 people but were not directly related as the tuna originated from different batches. Patients were from different areas in southern and central Sweden.

Onset of histamine food poisoning symptoms can range from minutes to several hours following ingestion of the toxin. Typically, the average incubation period before illness is one hour.

The most common symptoms of histamine, also known as scombroid fish poisoning, are tingling or burning sensation in the mouth, facial swelling, rash, hives and itchy skin, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea. They usually resolve within several hours without medical intervention.

Production of histamine is related to mishandling of food because of storage at incorrect temperatures. Once produced, histamine cannot be eliminated by normal cooking or freezing temperatures.

New rules and Salmonella study

Meanwhile, new legislation has come in from this month in Sweden that includes food control authorities being able to make purchases without disclosing their identity as an official agency until afterward. This makes it easier to check that food on the market is what it claims to be, does not mislead consumers, and that it is not harmful to health.

It applies to distance purchases such as e-commerce and to physical stores. Previously, there had been no support in law for authorities to act without making themselves known. The changes were made to bring domestic rules into line with EU regulations.

Finally, the government has commissioned the Swedish Board of Agriculture and Swedish Veterinary Institute to do a feasibility study on measures to effectively prevent and manage the presence of Salmonella in farm animals.

In the past year, the number of Salmonella cases has increased in food-producing animals and in pig herds. This leads to increased costs for animal owners and the state in combating outbreaks.

The work will investigate possible sources of infection and include new knowledge on analysis methods. Findings will be reported by the end of January 2022.

Deaths reported as Danish Salmonella outbreak grows

A Salmonella outbreak in Denmark is continuing to affect more people and has also been linked to three deaths.

The Statens Serum Institut (SSI) previously reported that 25 people were infected and 14 had needed hospital treatment with most falling ill this past month.

The agency has now revealed 33 people have the same type of Salmonella typhimurium in the country and 19 have been hospitalized.

Infection a contributing factor in deaths

Patients fell sick between mid-November 2020 and the end of March this year.

Seventeen women and 16 men aged 2 to 92 years old that live across the country are affected. Hovedstaden has 12 patients, eight are sick in Syddanmark, six in Sjælland, four in Nordjylland and three in Midtjylland.

Three people positive for the Salmonella strain linked to the outbreak died within 30 days of the sample being taken but it is unknown if they died of or with the Salmonella infection. All three had underlying diseases but Salmonella infection is considered to be a contributing cause of death.

An investigation by SSI, Danish Medicines Agency, the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration (Fødevarestyrelsen) and DTU Food Institute have traced the source of infection to a brand of herbal supplements sold by Orkla Care called HUSK Psyllium in capsules.

The product was mentioned during patient interviews and testing by the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration has found Salmonella in products that two patients had at home.

A case-control study showed 13 of 15 patients had consumed the herbal medicine compared to only three of 45 in the healthy control group. All cases had the product in capsules, while the three controls had consumed it as a powder.

EU wide recalls and review started

Luise Müller, an epidemiologist at SSI, said it was the first time a herbal medicine had been identified as the cause of a Salmonella outbreak.

"Those who take this product are often people who already have stomach problems. I am therefore concerned that the Salmonella infection will not be detected because the people or their doctor believe that symptoms of the Salmonella infection stem from their existing stomach problems," she said.

Muller added it was not yet known how Salmonella entered the product so other items may contain the pathogen.

Orkla Care has issued a recall of products in Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Bulgaria. Norwegian authorities reported less than 3,000 packs of HUSK Gut Balance Basic capsules were sold in pharmacies throughout the country while Bulgarian officials said 162 packs were affected.

The company decided to recall the entire range of HUSK products including capsules and powder because of the suspected link and one positive test on capsules during self-controls. These supplements were discarded before being packed for the market.

Orkla Care has also started a review of processes from the raw material supply to the finished item with a hope to have products back on sale again in the summer.

Earth Notions recalls raw bitter apricot kernels that may cause cyanide poisoning

For the fourth time this month apricot kernels, also known as pits or seeds, are being recalled because of elevated levels of cyanide that could lead to food poisoning.

The three previous recalls, initiated in Canada, were posted on March 11, March 17, and March 24. Those recalls and the one posted today all involve imported apricot kernels, according to recall notices posted by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). The problem was discovered during CFIA testing.

The new recall involves the Earth Notions brand Raw Bitter Apricot Kernels.

Earth Notions Inc. is recalling Earth Notions brand Raw Bitter Apricot Kernels from the marketplace due to natural toxin amygdalin. Consumers should not consume the recalled product described below as it contains excessive amygdalin which may cause acute cyanide poisoning.

The product has been sold in Ontario and nationally through Internet sales.

Apricot kernels naturally contain amygdalin, which can release cyanide after being eaten. The human body can eliminate small amounts of cyanide, but larger amounts can result in cyanide poisoning, which could lead to death.

Symptoms of cyanide poisoning include weakness and confusion, anxiety, restlessness, headache, nausea, difficulty breathing and shortness of breath, loss of consciousness, seizures, and cardiac arrest.

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