



# NSF INTERNATIONAL

## FOOD SAFETY BITES

### August 2019



If you have any comments or queries about the articles below or would like further information on any matter, please contact [foodsafetybites@nsf.org](mailto:foodsafetybites@nsf.org)

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#### 1) **Brexit**

##### **A) Expect Brexit food shortages 'within weeks' as industry 'hardest hit' by no-deal**

The UK Food and Drink Federation (FDF) has sounded a fresh warning over the 'disastrous' impact that a no-deal Brexit would have on food availability after a report from the Committee on Exiting the EU said retail, food and drink would be among the sectors 'hardest hit' by this eventuality.

*"Within weeks it is likely that shoppers would notice significant and adverse changes to the products available and random, selective shortages. Limited shelf life products would face the most immediate risk."*

Read more [here](#)

#### 2) **Diet and health**

##### **a) Cancer charity urges UK government action on food industry to tackle obesity**

Campaigners in the UK have upped their calls for government action to limit foods and drinks high in fat, sugar and salt after a survey revealed that obesity topped smoking as the main cause of cancers. But the country's expected new prime minister hints he prefers a laissez-faire approach to policy, saying "sin taxes" disproportionately hit the poor.

Read more [here](#)

#### **b) Eating fish may lower risk of bowel cancer: study**

A new study provides stronger evidence on the health benefits of eating more fish. Eating more fish could reduce the risk of bowel (colorectal) cancer, according to new research published in *Clinical Gastroenterology and Hepatology* which looked at the dietary patterns of nearly half a million people.

This study found that those who ate more than three 100g portions of fish a week had a 12% lower risk of developing bowel cancer compared to those who ate less than one portion a week. Current UK diet guidelines suggest eating at least two portions of fish a week.

Read more [here](#)

#### **c) French study suggests 'possible' link between sugary drinks and cancer**

Another study suggests consumption of high sugar drinks - including fruit juices - is associated with cancer risks.

There is a "possible" association between the higher consumption of sugary drinks such as sugar-sweetened drinks and 100% fruit juice and an increased risk of cancer, according to a study that concluded that policy actions, such as taxation and marketing restrictions targeting sugary drinks, could "potentially" contribute to the reduction of cancer incidence.

Read more [here](#)

#### **d) UK bans sale of energy drinks to U16s**

The UK government has confirmed it will ban the sale of energy drinks to children under 16. The decision follows a government consultation on proposals last year and increasing support for restricting energy drink sales.

While a number of major retailers have already banned the sale of energy drinks to children, it has not been a legal requirement and energy drinks remain readily available from other retailers, convenience stores and vending machines.

Read more [here](#)

### **3) Food Fraud**

#### **a) Food fraud and illicit trade 'holding back progress' on the SDGs**

Food fraud and illicit trade in agri-foods is having a negative impact on progress towards the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

The Transnational Alliance to Combat Illicit Trade (TRACIT) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) co-hosted a meeting to expose where and how illicit trade is retarding efforts to deliver the SDGs in Geneva last week.

The intergovernmental meeting was designed to help governments understand the challenge of illicit trade and to consider policy measures to counteract the negative impacts of illicit trade on the SDGs.

Read more [here](#)

#### 4) Catering Business

##### **a) Just Eat taps Food Standards Scotland data for hygiene transparency**

Online food delivery firm Just Eat is publishing hygiene ratings for Scottish restaurants on its platform in response to growing demand for food safety transparency.

Just Eat claims to be the first online food delivery company to publish hygiene ratings for every Scottish restaurant and takeaway on its platform.

Read more [here](#)

#### 5) Ethical and Sustainability

##### **a) 'Global crisis in cocoa and coffee prices' are a threat to decent incomes for farmers**

Fairtrade's recent conference aims for decent incomes and a sustainable future for the world's small-scale farmers and workers.

In what Fairtrade International is calling 'a global crisis in cocoa and coffee prices', the organization convened a special conference earlier this month in Bonn, which brought together producers, businesses, governments and trade justice campaigners to map out a sustainable future for the world's small-scale farmers and workers.

Read more [here](#)

##### **b) Canned tuna brands fail to tackle modern slavery in supply chains, says human rights group**

Around 80% of tuna companies don't know who caught their fish, putting workers in the industry at risk of exploitation, according to the UK-based Business and Human Rights Resource Centre.

Food businesses are under increased pressure from both governments and consumers to reveal what actions they are taking to ensure their supply chains are free from slavery.

Read more [here](#)

##### **c) Consumer attitudes to plastic 'bordering on militant' but is food waste forgotten?**

An increased hard-line toward plastic among the public means food business are struggling to get the message across to customers that plastic plays an important role in preventing food waste.

Attitude to plastic among consumers is "*bordering on militant*", according to Ocado's head of corporate responsibility and corporate affairs Suzanne Westlake – a situation that risks curbing innovation among food business looking for ways of tackling the problem of food waste.

Food businesses, she said, were struggling to get the message across to customers that organic waste - including leftover food - has a bigger carbon footprint than plastic and plastic plays an important role in preventing food waste.

Read more [here](#)

#### **d) 'Sustainability is a step beyond organic': Regenerative food production in Crete**

Confusion still exists today between organic and sustainable practices and food producers are not doing enough to keep the eco-system alive, according to Greek social cooperative Local Food Experts.

The term 'sustainability' is somewhat over-used. To counter this a new movement focusing on 'regeneration' is evolving, connecting the land with the farmers, utilising practices that sequester carbon to build soil health, promoting biodiversity and informing consumers where their food was produced and how it was farmed.

Read more [here](#)

### **6) Nutrition – No update this month**

#### **7) Salt and Sugar**

##### **a) UK's voluntary salt-reduction programme linked to thousands of heart disease, stroke and cancer cases**

The UK's voluntary approach to salt reduction has been linked with 9,900 additional cases of cardiovascular disease and 1,500 cases of stomach cancer.

There will be 26,000 extra cases of heart disease/stroke and 3,800 cases of stomach cancer by 2025, without a change to the UK's current strategy on salt reduction, researchers have warned. The UK introduced the Public Health Responsibility Deal in 2011. This was a voluntary pact made between the UK government and industry to improve the nation's health by, among other things, reducing the salt content of food.

But a study published in the *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health* claims that the reduction in salt intake has slowed in England since the introduction of the pact.

Read more [here](#)

##### **b) Will UK sugar tax be extended to milk drinks?**

The UK government is considering extending its sugar tax to milk drinks: with the announcement made just before the confirmation of Boris Johnson – who has pledged a review of 'nanny state sin taxes' – as the country's next Prime Minister.

The UK government report – 'Advancing our health: prevention in the 2020s' – was published yesterday (July 22). It says the UK's Soft Drinks Industry Levy (SDIL) has been 'hugely successful' in removing sugar from drinks, reporting that the equivalent of 45,000 tonnes of sugar has been removed from shelves.

Read more [here](#)

## 8) Advertising and Labelling

### a) “The big ‘free-from’ deception”: Palm oil-free foods higher in saturates and less sustainable, finds study

Food brands are profiting from ‘free-from’ fake news, claims an Italian consumer rights organisation, after its study found ‘palm oil free’ products were higher in saturates and less sustainable than their palm oil counterparts.

Palm oil is found in a wide range of food and non-food products on supermarket shelves. The ingredient is odourless, high yield, and takes the prize for the most consumed vegetable oil in the world.

However, when unsustainably sourced, palm oil is far from the perfect ingredient. Irresponsible production has caused mass deforestation and biodiversity loss in the tropics and is the leading cause of orang-utan extinction.

These negative associations, along with focus on palm oil’s high saturated fat content, have prompted some retailers and food manufacturers to phase out palm oil from their supply chains.

Read more [here](#)

### b) Best practice labelling guidelines unveiled for insect-based products

The European insect sector publishes guidelines for labelling edible insects.

The International Platform of Insects for Food and Feed (IPIFF) has released guidance [providing recommendations towards best labelling practices for insects and insect-based products and ingredients in the EU](#).

Read more [here](#)

### c) Call for mandatory recycling labels on food packs

The food and drinks packaging industry should move towards a mandatory labelling system that makes it clear whether a product can or cannot be recycled, the head of packaging at frozen food retailer Iceland has urged.

Speaking at an Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (EFRA) committee hearing today (3 July), Stuart Lendrum was grilled by ministers on what the food and drink industry was doing to prevent consumers from being confused by on-pack recycling labels.

In response, Lendrum called for mandatory labelling that was simpler to understand than the current system found on packaging.

Read more [here](#)

#### **d) Sustainability campaigners demand consolidation of eco-labelled products**

Consolidation of eco-labelled products is badly needed, according to speakers at the 11th European edition of the Sustainable Food Summit held last month in Amsterdam.

#### **'Confusing mismatch for companies and consumers'**

However, with now over 200 eco-labels to choose from it risks creating confusion for consumers and companies, and the proliferation of third-party eco-labels and in-house certification schemes from big companies also risks a drop in standards.

Read more [here](#)

### **9) Food Safety**

#### **a) 'Sales of aspartame should be suspended': EFSA accused of bias in safety assessment**

EFSA's decision-making process may have been biased by 'conflicts of interest' and the distribution and sale of aspartame in the EU should be suspended, says the author of a new research dossier calling the safety of the sweetener into question.

According to UK academics at the University of Sussex, the safety of aspartame for human consumption has not been 'adequately proven'.

Since 1974, research has linked aspartame consumption with heightened risk of brain damage, liver and lung cancer, brain lesions and neuroendocrine disorders, the Sussex researchers stressed.

Nevertheless, in 2013 the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) concluded that aspartame and its breakdown products are 'safe for [the] general population', including infants, children and pregnant women. At the time, EFSA ruled out potential association between aspartame consumption and brain damage or cancer.

Read more [here](#)

### **10) Origin – no update this month**

#### **Food Alerts/Recalls – to 31<sup>st</sup> July**

2 July 2019

[P & B Foods extends its recall of Heera Chilli Powder Extra Hot because of the presence of salmonella](#)

P & B Foods Ltd is extending its recall of Heera Chilli Powder Extra Hot to include an additional pack size, because salmonella has been found in the product.

15 July 2019

[Iceland recalls 60 Crispy Chicken Dippers as they may contain pieces of hard plastic](#)

Iceland is recalling 60 Crispy Chicken Dippers as some packs may contain pieces of hard plastic. The presence of plastic makes this product unsafe to eat.

22 July 2019



[Tesco recalls 4 flavours of Tesco Finest Fruit Presse because of fermentation](#)

Tesco is recalling four flavours of Tesco Finest Fruit Presse because fermentation has occurred in some of the bottles. This is causing spoilage of the products, and may also cause the bottles to explode.

23 July 2019

[Quorn Foods recalls Quorn Cocktail Sausages because they may contain small pieces of metal](#)

Quorn Foods recalls Quorn Chilled Cocktail Sausages because they may contain small pieces of metal. The presence of metal makes this product unsafe to eat and presents a safety risk.

**Allergy – to 31<sup>st</sup> July**

5 July 2019

[P&B Foods recalls Heera Premium Quality Golden Sultanas because of undeclared sulphites](#)

P&B Foods Ltd is recalling Heera Premium Quality Golden Sultanas products because they contain sulphites which are not mentioned on the label.

5 July 2019

[Co-op recalls Veg Taster because of undeclared fish](#)

Co-op Ltd is recalling Co-op Veg Taster because some packs may contain fish (salmon) which is not mentioned on the label. This means the product is a possible health risk for anyone with an allergy to fish.

12 July 2019

[Leonidas boxed assortment of Belgian Chocolates may contain varieties with undeclared sesame seeds and nuts](#)

Leonidas boxed assortment of Belgian Chocolates may contain varieties of chocolates that contain sesame seeds and nuts which are not declared on the label of some boxes.

12 July 2019

[Windmill Organics recalls organic amisa lactose free rice milk chocolate rice cakes because of undeclared milk](#)

Windmill Organic Ltd is recalling organic amisa lactose free rice milk chocolate rice cakes because they contain milk which is not mentioned on the label.

15 July 2019

[Tan Y Castell recalls its Chocolate Chip Griddles because they may contain milk which is not mentioned on the label](#)

Tan Y Castell is recalling Chocolate Chip Griddles because they may contain milk which is not mentioned on the label. This means the product is a possible health risk for anyone with an allergy or intolerance to milk or milk constituents.

25 July 2019

[Flames Foods recalls various frozen products due to undeclared allergens](#)

Flames Foods is recalling various types of frozen products because they contain various allergens that are not mentioned on the label or have not been emphasised correctly.

25 July 2019

[Update: Tan Y Castell recalls its Chocolate Chip Griddles because they may contain milk which is not mentioned on the label](#)

Tan Y Castell is recalling Chocolate Chip Griddles because they may contain milk which is not mentioned on the label. This means the product is a possible health risk for anyone with an allergy or intolerance to milk or milk constituents.

**EU RASFF (Rapid alert system for food and Feed) – highlights to 31<sup>st</sup> July**

All RASFF can be found at: <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/rasff-window/portal/?event=notificationsList&StartRow=1>

Date	Country of origin	Subject	Country of notification	Classification
26/07/2019	India	unauthorised substance tricyclazole (0.14 mg/kg - ppm) in chillies from India	United Kingdom	border rejection border control - consignment detained
25/07/2019	Argentina	aflatoxins (B1 = 2.6; Tot. = 3.3 µg/kg - ppb) in groundnuts with shell from Argentina	United Kingdom	border rejection border control - consignment detained
25/07/2019	Brazil	Salmonella (in 4 out of 5 samples) in frozen salted chicken half breasts from Brazil	United Kingdom	border rejection border control - consignment detained
24/07/2019	China	too high content of sweetener E 952 - cyclamate (503 mg/l) in fruit flavoured freeze pops from China	United Kingdom	border rejection border control - consignment detained
24/07/2019	United Kingdom	risk of explosion of bottles containing fruit drinks from the United Kingdom	United Kingdom	alert company's own check
24/07/2019	United Kingdom	unauthorised substance tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) (91.3 mg/kg - ppm) in green tea with hemp from the United Kingdom	Germany	official control on the market - recall from consumers
24/07/2019	United Kingdom	metal fragments in chilled quorn cocktail sausages from the United Kingdom	United Kingdom	alert company's own check
22/07/2019	Brazil	frozen beef from Brazil with improper packaging	United Kingdom	border rejection border control - consignment detained
19/07/2019	India	aflatoxins (B1 = 11.1; Tot. = 11.6 µg/kg - ppb) in Cayenne pepper powder from India	United Kingdom	border rejection border control - consignment detained
19/07/2019	Ghana	attempt to illegally import groundnut kernels from Ghana	United Kingdom	border rejection border control - consignment detained
19/07/2019	India	aflatoxins (B1 = 7.8 µg/kg - ppb) in groundnuts with shell from India	United Kingdom	border rejection border control - consignment detained
18/07/2019	India	absence of health certificate(s) for idly powder from India	United Kingdom	border rejection border control - consignment



				detained
18/07/2019	Brazil	Salmonella (present in 1 out of 5 samples /25g) in frozen salted chicken half breasts from Brazil	United Kingdom	border rejection border control - consignment detained
17/07/2019	Ghana	attempt to illegally import smoked fish from Ghana	United Kingdom	border rejection border control - consignment detained
17/07/2019	United Kingdom	ochratoxin A (16 µg/kg - ppb) in roasted barley malt flour from the United Kingdom	France	alert - company's own check
16/07/2019	India	aflatoxins (B1 = 332 µg/kg - ppb) in groundnut kernels for birdfeed from India	United Kingdom	border rejection border control - consignment detained
15/07/2019	Ghana	attempt to illegally import smoked fish from Ghana	United Kingdom	border rejection border control - consignment detained
15/07/2019	Ghana	attempt to illegally import smoked fish and crabs from Ghana	United Kingdom	border rejection border control - consignment detained
15/07/2019	Ghana	attempt to illegally import shelled groundnuts from Ghana	United Kingdom	border rejection border control - consignment detained
12/07/2019	China	unauthorised genetically modified (present CaMV 35S) organic brown rice noodles from China	United Kingdom	border rejection border control - consignment detained
12/07/2019	Netherlands	milk ingredient (752 mg/kg - ppm) undeclared on organic rice cakes with 'rice milk' chocolate coating from the Netherlands	United Kingdom	alert official control on the market
12/07/2019	India	aflatoxins (B1 = 3 µg/kg - ppb) in peanut chikki from India	United Kingdom	border rejection border control - consignment detained
12/07/2019	Argentina	aflatoxins (B1 = 2.9 / B1 = 8.2; Tot. = 14 µg/kg - ppb) in blanched groundnut kernels from Argentina	United Kingdom	border rejection border control - consignment detained
11/07/2019	Ghana	attempt to illegally import palm oil from Ghana	United Kingdom	border rejection border control - consignment detained
11/07/2019	Ghana	attempt to illegally import smoked fish from Ghana	United Kingdom	border rejection border control - consignment detained
11/07/2019	Ecuador	damaged packaging of pouched tuna from Ecuador	United Kingdom	border rejection border control - consignment detained
11/07/2019	Ghana	attempt to illegally import smoked fish from Ghana	United Kingdom	border rejection border control - consignment detained
11/07/2019	Ghana	attempt to illegally import smoked fish and tinned mackerel from Ghana	United Kingdom	border rejection border control - consignment detained
10/07/2019	Bolivia	aflatoxins (B1 = 27.8 µg/kg - ppb)	United	border rejection border

		in groundnut kernels - birdfeed from Bolivia	Kingdom	control - consignment detained
10/07/2019	Ghana	attempt to illegally import smoked fish from Ghana	United Kingdom	border rejection border control - consignment detained
10/07/2019	Sri Lanka	aflatoxins (B1 = 11.6 µg/kg - ppb) in crushed chillies from Sri Lanka	United Kingdom	border rejection border control - consignment detained
09/07/2019	Ghana	attempt to illegally import groundnuts in shell from Ghana	United Kingdom	border rejection border control - consignment detained
09/07/2019	Ghana	attempt to illegally import groundnuts in shell from Ghana	United Kingdom	border rejection border control - consignment detained
09/07/2019	United Kingdom	unauthorised substance N-acetylcysteine (1400 mg/day) in food supplement from the United Kingdom	Sweden	monitoring of media - informing authorities
09/07/2019	United Kingdom	unauthorised substance N-acetylcysteine (up to 1500 mg/day) in food supplement from the United Kingdom	Sweden	monitoring of media - informing authorities
09/07/2019	United States	aflatoxins (B1 = 33.8; Tot. = 36.3 µg/kg - ppb) in pistachio kernels from the United States	United Kingdom	border rejection border control - consignment detained
08/07/2019	China	unauthorised genetically modified (35s Promoter) brown rice noodles from China	United Kingdom	border rejection border control - consignment detained
08/07/2019	Nigeria	attempt to illegally import dried beans from Nigeria	United Kingdom	border rejection border control - consignment detained
08/07/2019	United Kingdom	fish (salmon) undeclared on prepared dish from the United Kingdom	United Kingdom	alert company's own check
05/07/2019	India	aflatoxins (B1 = 15.6; Tot. = 15.9 µg/kg - ppb) in dried chillies from India	United Kingdom	border rejection border control - consignment detained
05/07/2019	United Kingdom	sulphite (889 mg/kg - ppm) undeclared on golden sultanas from the United Kingdom	United Kingdom	alert official control on the market
05/07/2019	United Kingdom	unauthorised substances yohimbine and 1,3-dimethylamylamine (DMAA) in food supplement from the United Kingdom	Poland	alert - monitoring of media
04/07/2019	United Kingdom	unauthorised substance yohimbine in food supplement from the United Kingdom	Poland	alert - monitoring of media
04/07/2019	Nigeria	attempt to illegally import melon seeds from Nigeria	United Kingdom	border rejection border control - consignment detained
03/07/2019	India	poor temperature control (between 4.1 and 10.7 °C) of	United Kingdom	border rejection border control - consignment

		chilled sardines ( <i>Sardinella</i> spp.) from India		detained
03/07/2019	United Kingdom	apple and blackcurrant drink from the United Kingdom with defective packaging (choking hazard)	United Kingdom	alert consumer complaint
01/07/2019	Germany	plastic fragments in frozen chicken dippers from Germany	United Kingdom	alert company's own check