



NSF INTERNATIONAL

FOOD SAFETY BITES

September 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

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1) **Brexit**

A) 'No-deal chaos': Food trade across Irish border a 'logistical nightmare' for businesses

If the UK crashes out of the EU without a deal, the introduction of border controls on the Irish border will disrupt food supplies and harm businesses trading across Europe's 'perimeter fence', warn experts.

Three years on from the Brexit vote, the UK is due to leave from the European Union in two months – on October 31. To date, no Withdrawal Agreement between been ratified.

The UK government is therefore actively preparing for a no-deal scenario, which will have 'serious consequences' for its food and agricultural sectors, according to the Food Research Collaboration, Centre for Food Policy at City, University of London.

Read more [here](#)

2) **Diet and health**

a) Consuming gluten in childhood linked to higher risk of coeliac disease

The risk of developing coeliac disease is connected to the amount of gluten children consume, a study has confirmed – but its authors stressed the study is observational and therefore does not prove causation.

The research published in the journal JAMA looked at whether the amount of gluten intake during the first five years of life is associated with the risk of coeliac disease autoimmunity and coeliac disease in at-risk children.

Read more [here](#)

3) Food Fraud

a) Artificial tongue detects counterfeit whisky

An artificial ‘tongue’ that can detect the differences between real and counterfeit whisky has been developed by scientists from the University of Glasgow.

The taster was used to sample a selection of whiskies – Glenfiddich, Glen Marnoch and Laphroaig – and was able to taste the differences between the drinks with greater than 99% accuracy.

Read more [here](#)

4) Catering Business

a) Hybrid burger helps meat-eaters overcome 'mindset gap': 'It tastes like 100% beef'

Austrian start-up Rebel Meat had developed a burger made from 50% meat and 50% plant-based ingredients. The hybrid patty will ‘reach those that purely vegan brands cannot’.

Rebel Meat is setting itself apart in the meat analogue and alternative protein space.

Yes, similarly to competitors Beyond Meat and Impossible Foods, the Austrian start-up is targeting flexitarians.

Read more [here](#)

5) Ethical and Sustainability

a) EC ‘lacks the will’ to deliver sustainable food production, researchers insist

The European Commission’s current proposals on the Common Agricultural Policy fail to support sustainable food production and demonstrate that the EU ‘lacks the will’ to meet public demand for environmentally-friendly agriculture, according to researchers.

Read more [here](#)

b) Palm oil free certificate approved in three more countries

Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands are the latest countries to adopt the International Palm Oil Free Certification Trademark (POFCAP), bringing the number of countries using the label to 20. POFCAP launched the certification program in Australia on August 19, 2017.

The US and nine European countries, including the UK, have approved the certification in the past two years. Outside the creator's home country, only Singapore and India have given it the go-ahead elsewhere.

To date, POFCAP has certified more than 1,000 products – from vegetable oils to snacks, skincare products to vitamins – as palm oil free.

Read more [here](#)

6) Nutrition

a) 'NutriScore is a consumer trap': Industry group calls for front-of-pack calorie logo

The German Sugar Industry Association has dismissed front-of-pack rating systems based on algorithms, arguing that NutriScore and traffic light labels mislead consumers.

Instead, the German Sugar Industry Association (WVZ) is campaigning for a calorie logo, which it says would be more effective in tackling obesity.

The NutriScore food label is based on an algorithm that takes both positive and negative attributes of a food's nutritional composition into account. Total content of sugars, saturated fatty acids, salt and calories have a negative influence on the final score, whereas the presence of fruits, vegetables, fibre or protein have a positive impact.

Read more [here](#)

7) Salt and Sugar

a) 'Food industry must cut salt from meat alternatives, urges campaigner

Savoury picnic foods, including vegetarian and vegan products, conceal 'dangerous levels of salt', according to Action on Salt.

Salt campaigners in the UK are demanding immediate compulsory front of pack nutritional labelling on all picnic savoury snacks and for bold and comprehensive salt reduction targets to be set in 2020 after discovering that one in four savoury picnic foods -- including vegetarian and vegan options -- are dangerously high in salt.

Read more [here](#)

b) Sugar levels in chocolate have soared 23% since 1992

Reformulation efforts in sugar have been hampered by costs and consumer tastes, research suggests.

The sugar content of chocolate confectionery products has increased 23% since 1992 in the UK, according to a study. Researchers at the Queen Mary University of London looked at the sugar and energy content of chocolate-based products available in the UK between 1992 and 2017.

Read more [here](#)

8) Advertising and Labelling

a) Could carbon labelling help cure today's toxic plant-based vs meat debate?

Could carbon labelling hold the key in helping consumers make the right environmentally-friendly food choices in today's polarising plant-based vs. animal-based climate?

Carbon footprint food labelling could help consumers better understand the environmental impact of the food they are consuming; an expert has suggested.

Carbon footprint labels on food – showing, for example, the greenhouse gas emissions of a certain product per serving -- have failed to find significant take off in the food industry for a host of reasons.

Read more [here](#)

b) Germany concerned over energy drink buzz: 'Excessive consumption increases health risk'

Having assessed the effects of energy drinks on the cardiovascular system, the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment warns that excessive consumption can pose a health risk in young adults.

Caffeine, in a variety of formats, is consumed regularly in small to moderate quantities across Europe. When consumed to excess – which the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) deems as more than three milligrams per kilogram of body weight per day for children and adolescents – caffeine can bring on nervousness, insomnia, gastrointestinal complaints, palpitations and increased blood pressure.

But beyond palpitations and boosted blood pressure, what effects does consumption of energy drinks have on young adults' cardiovascular systems?

Read more [here](#)

c) How can food brands keep pace with the prospect of tighter advertising regulations?

Increasing regulation restricting junk food advertising leaves FMCG (Fast-Moving Consumer Goods) brands facing the question of how to balance building awareness in a restricted landscape while also being good corporate citizens.

Obesity – and childhood obesity in particular – is one of the biggest health problems facing European governments.

Obesity is a major cause of ill health, increasing the risk of non-communicable diseases such as heart disease, stroke, type II diabetes and cancer.

The UK government is currently conducting a consultation on whether further advertising restrictions are needed to stop the rising tide of obesity rates.

Read more [here](#)

d) What does 'natural' food mean? Researchers develop index to boost transparency, simplicity, and trust

The term 'natural' is commonplace on food packaging, whether it be on muesli bar wrappers, breakfast cereal boxes, or on packets of confectionery. But in this context, what does the adjective actually mean? Does it assure consumers a product is 'healthy', minimally processed, or additive-free?

Read more [here](#)

e) 'Concern for young people's health' prompts energy drink restrictions in Scotland

The Scottish government has announced a ban on sales of high-energy drinks to under-16s in publicly funded leisure centres across the country.

According to the ruling, it is now illegal for publicly funded gyms in all local authorities to sell soft drinks with an added caffeine content of more than 150mg per litre to people under 16 years of age.

Read more [here](#)

9) Food Safety

a) Dr. Oetker slammed over E171: 'Stop using titanium dioxide'

A consumer watchdog has launched a campaign calling on Dr. Oetker to stop using the controversial ingredient titanium dioxide (E171) in its bakery ingredients and decorations in Germany.

Foodwatch has launched a petition urging the food maker to cut titanium dioxide from its ingredients list.

Although it is considered safe by European regulators, the contentious ingredient has been linked to negative health consequences, including damage to the intestinal flora and - in the form of very small nanoparticles - the development of cancer.

Read more [here](#)

b) Ciguatera fish poisoning is becoming an increasing risk in Europe

Ciguatera fish poisoning (CFP) is becoming an increasing risk in Europe with a 60% rise of ciguatoxin (CTX) cases in the last decade, according to AESAN (Spanish Agency for Food Safety and Nutrition).

The seafood-borne illness is typically caused by the consumption of fish that have accumulated ciguatoxins in their flesh produced by a certain microalgae cells (Gambierdiscus). Consumers eating affected fish can suffer from a range of symptoms including gastrointestinal, cardiovascular and neurological effects.

While ciguatera cases used to be confined to tropical and subtropical regions of the world, Spain and Portugal have been reporting outbreaks of ciguatoxin poisoning on the Canary Islands and Madeira since 2008. In Germany, as well, there has been at least one ciguatera outbreak with up to 20 affected people every year since 2012.

Read more [here](#)

10) Origin

a) Scottish farmers call for origin labelling

The National Farmers' Union in Scotland (NFU Scotland) has urged the introduction of country of origin labelling (COOL) on processed beef products.

In a letter to Defra Minister George Eustice, it outlined the importance of shoppers being able to identify where the beef they are buying comes from.

NFU Scotland livestock chair Jimmy Ireland said: *"Consumers need to be able to be confident when they are buying beef products that they are getting high quality, high welfare, environmentally considerate Scottish beef with low food miles."*

Read more [here](#)

b) EU pushes for dairy names protection through Australian free trade deal

As the EU and Australia negotiate a free trade agreement, the EU has given Australia a list of more than 400 products it wants protected as part of any deal, with many dairy terms included.

Australia's Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment Simon Birmingham said the public consultation process on Geographical Indications (GI), which opens today, would give industry a three-month opportunity to comment.

Minister Birmingham said agreeing to GIs was not a done deal, and that, *"Australians can be confident that we will drive a very hard bargain – as we always do – to achieve an overall agreement that delivers more opportunity for Australian farmers and businesses. Ultimately, we will only do this deal if overall it is in Australia's interests to do so."*

Read more [here](#)

c) 'Mozzarella' protected for global cheese use

The European Union's effort to take sole ownership of common cheese terms based on origin has ended in an agreement, protecting the fate of 'mozzarella' around the world.

The use of labels like Parmesan, Feta, Asiago and Mozzarella in cheese has been challenged through the priority of geographical indications (GI), particularly from Europe. But a new protection for the Mozzarella di Bufala Campana Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) has been established in the US and around the world.

Read more [here](#)

d) CETA raises questions over transparency of meat labelling

The EU-Canada trade deal, which came into force on a temporary basis in 2017, is working its way through national legislators for approval. The controversial agreement raises a number of questions about labelling and transparency.

Under European regulation, the labels of beef and beef products, whether they are fresh or frozen, have to indicate the country of origin. This is defined as both the country in which the animal has been reared in and where it has been slaughtered.

Canadian imported meat can have been partly raised in the US under US regulations, while its official country of origin is defined Canada. Today's regulations and labelling requirements can leave the consumer unaware of its real origin.

Read more [here](#)

Food Alerts/Recalls – to 31st August

2 August 2019

[Aldi recalls Key Lime and Millionaire's Cheesecakes because the glass pots may break](#)

Aldi is recalling Specially Selected 2 Key Lime Cheesecakes and 2 Millionaire's Cheesecakes because the glass pots containing the products may break. This is a potential safety risk.

13 August 2019

[Raw Treat Pet Food Ltd recalls Varieties of Frozen Raw Pet Food due to the presence of Salmonella](#)

Raw Treat Pet Food Ltd is recalling batches of frozen raw pet food because Salmonella has been found in the products.

30 August 2019

[Raw Treat Pet Food Ltd recalls varieties of frozen raw beef pet food due to the presence of salmonella](#)

Raw Treat Pet Food Ltd is recalling batches of frozen raw beef pet food because salmonella has been found in the products.

Allergy – to 31st August

2 August 2019

[AB World Foods recalls Blue Dragon Street Food Satay Skewers Kit because of undeclared mustard](#)

AB World Foods Ltd is recalling Blue Dragon Street Food Satay Skewers Kit because it contains mustard which is not mentioned on the label. This means the product is a possible health risk for anyone with an allergy to mustard.

3 August 2019

[itsu \(grocery\) recalls itsu veg gyoza because of undeclared prawns](#)

itsu (grocery) is recalling itsu veg gyoza because the product may contain prawns which are not mentioned on the label. This means the product is a possible health risk for anyone with an allergy to crustaceans.

7 August 2019

[COOK Trading recalls Green Thai Chicken Curry because of undeclared milk](#)

COOK Trading Ltd is recalling Green Thai Chicken Curry because it contains 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.

8 August 2019

[Lidl GB recalls SPEEDFEAST Quarter Pounder with Cheese because of incorrect allergen labelling](#)

Lidl GB is recalling its SPEEDFEAST Quarter Pounder with Cheese because an incorrect base label has been applied to the product. The product contains egg, milk and sesame which are not mentioned in the ingredients list.

9 August 2019

[Sainsbury's recalls Deliciously Free From 4 Fruity Hot Cross Buns by Sainsbury's because of undeclared soya](#)

Sainsbury's is recalling Deliciously Free From 4 Fruity Hot Cross Buns by Sainsbury's because they may contain chocolate chips which are milk free but contain traces of soya which is not declared on the label.

13 August 2019

[COOK Trading recalls Green Thai Chicken Curry because of undeclared milk](#)

COOK Trading Ltd is recalling two further batches of Green Thai Chicken Curry because it contains milk which is not mentioned on the label.

14 August 2019

[Waitrose recalls Waitrose Sweet Potato & Coconut Soup and Waitrose Roasted Tomato, Bean & Quinoa Soup because of undeclared soya](#)

Waitrose is recalling Waitrose Sweet Potato & Coconut Soup and Waitrose Roasted Tomato, Bean & Quinoa Soup because some of the pots have been filled with an incorrect product which contains soya that is not mentioned on the labels.

23 August 2019

[Thomas Tucker recalls various Morrisons Popcorn products because they may contain undeclared milk](#)

Thomas Tucker Ltd is recalling various Morrisons popcorn products because they may contain milk which is not mentioned on the label.

23 August 2019

[Updated: Thomas Tucker recalls several Popcorn products because they may contain undeclared milk](#)

Thomas Tucker Ltd is recalling several brands and flavours of popcorn because they may contain milk which is not mentioned on the label.

28 August 2019

[Naturli' Foods recalls Naturli' Organic Vegan Spreadable because of undeclared milk](#)

Naturli' Foods is recalling Naturli' Organic Vegan Spreadable because it may contain milk which is not mentioned on the label.

30 August 2019

[Flames Foods recalls various types of frozen products due to undeclared nuts \(almond\)](#)

Flames Foods is recalling various types of frozen products because they contain nuts (almonds) that are not mentioned on the label. This means the products are a possible health risk for anyone with an allergy to nuts (almond).

30 August 2019

[Sunburst Snacks recalls its Spicy Cashews because they may contain undeclared mustard and celery](#)

Sunburst Snacks Ltd recalls its Spicy Cashews because they may contain mustard and celery which are not mentioned on the label. This means the product is a possible health risk for anyone with an allergy to celery and/or an allergy to mustard.

30 August 2019

[Updated: Thomas Tucker recalls several popcorn products because they may contain undeclared milk](#)

Thomas Tucker Ltd is recalling several brands and flavours of popcorn because they may contain milk which is not mentioned on the label.

EU RASFF (Rapid alert system for food and Feed) – highlights to 31st August

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
31/08/2019	United Kingdom	mustard and celery undeclared on chilli cashew & peanut mix from the United Kingdom	United Kingdom	alert company's own check
28/08/2019	China	absence of health certificate(s) for rice noodles from China	United Kingdom	border rejection - consignment detained
28/08/2019	USA	poor temperature control (-5.5 °C) of frozen Alaskan pollock (Theragra chalcogramma) from the United States	United Kingdom	border rejection - consignment detained
26/08/2019	United Kingdom	milk ingredient undeclared on popcorn from the United Kingdom	United Kingdom	alert company's own check
26/08/2019	China	dead insects and live insects in	United	border rejection -

		glucosamine sulphate from China	Kingdom	consignment detained
23/08/2019	United Kingdom	unauthorised food additive sodium chlorite in sodium chlorite tablets and solution from the United Kingdom	United Kingdom	information for attention monitoring of media
22/08/2019	Uganda	unauthorised substance carbendazim (0.52 mg/kg - ppm) in chillies from Uganda	United Kingdom	border rejection - consignment detained
22/08/2019	USA	aflatoxins (B1 = 81.3; Tot. = 93.5 µg/kg - ppb) in shelled groundnuts from the United States	United Kingdom	border rejection - consignment detained
16/08/2019	United Kingdom	soya undeclared on chilled soups from the United Kingdom	United Kingdom	information for attention company's own check
14/08/2019	Turkey	ochratoxin A (20.2 µg/kg - ppb) in raisins from Turkey	United Kingdom	border rejection - consignment detained
14/08/2019	United Kingdom	too high content of colour E 124 - Ponceau 4R / cochineal red A (717 mg/kg - ppm) in sugar paste from the United Kingdom	Cyprus	official control on the market - official detention
13/08/2019	United Arab Emirates	unauthorised substance ethion (0.13 mg/kg - ppm) in chilli peppers from India, via the United Arab Emirates	United Kingdom	border rejection - consignment detained
13/08/2019	Malaysia	Salmonella (presence /25g) and high count of Escherichia coli (1500 CFU/g) in betel leaves from Malaysia	United Kingdom	border rejection - consignment detained
12/08/2019	United Kingdom	too high count of Escherichia coli (>18000 CFU/100g) in live cockles from the United Kingdom	United Kingdom	information for attention official control on the market
12/08/2019	India	Salmonella (in 1 out of 5 samples /25g) in betel leaves from India	United Kingdom	border rejection - consignment detained
09/08/2019	United Kingdom	unauthorised food additive sodium chlorite in sodium chlorite solution from the United Kingdom	United Kingdom	information for attention monitoring of media
09/08/2019	India	unauthorised substance tricyclazole (0.06 mg/kg - ppm) in chillies peppers from India	United Kingdom	border rejection - consignment detained
08/08/2019	Denmark	traces of milk (4.6; 5.1 mg/kg - ppm) in dairy-free organic	United Kingdom	alert official control on the market

		vegan butter alternative from Denmark		
08/08/2019	United Kingdom	unauthorised novel food ingredient holy basil (<i>Ocimum sanctum</i>) in food supplements from the United Kingdom	Denmark	official control on the market - no stock left
08/08/2019	Pakistan	unauthorised substances methamidophos (0.38 mg/kg - ppm) and acephate (0.45 mg/kg - ppm) in chilli peppers from Pakistan	United Kingdom	border rejection - consignment detained
07/08/2019	United Kingdom	crustaceans undeclared on glucosamine sulphate from the United Kingdom	United Kingdom	alert official control on the market
07/08/2019	USA	poor temperature control (- 2.4 to -1.8 °C) of frozen pollock from the United States	United Kingdom	border rejection - consignment detained
07/08/2019	Uganda	Salmonella (presence /25g) in organic ginger slices from Uganda	United Kingdom	alert official control on the market
07/08/2019	USA	aflatoxins (B1 = 7.5; Tot. = 8.6 µg/kg - ppb) in shelled groundnuts from the United States	United Kingdom	border rejection - consignment detained
02/08/2019	China	aflatoxins (B1 = 8.3; Tot. = 9.7 µg/kg - ppb) in blanched groundnut kernels from China	United Kingdom	border rejection - consignment detained
02/08/2019	United Kingdom	traces of gluten (68.6 mg/kg - ppm) in aromatic spice blend from India, packaged in the United Kingdom, via the Netherlands	Greece	official control on the market - recall from consumers
01/08/2019	Uruguay	poor temperature control of chilled boneless beef from Uruguay	United Kingdom	border rejection - consignment detained
01/08/2019	Brazil	frozen boneless beef from Brazil with improper packaging	United Kingdom	border rejection - consignment detained
01/08/2019	Turkey	absence of health certificate(s) and of certified analytical report for fig composite products from Turkey	United Kingdom	border rejection - consignment detained