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**Food**

**Risk Insights**

**Eurofins Food Testing Ireland Ltd**

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## In Focus

Emerging issues, trends and legislative changes

Regulation & compliance updates; PPWR, GM Maize, FSA reforms

Outbreaks, recalls & contamination incidents; sprouted seeds, pistachios, baby food

Listeria; controls, costs & lessons learned

Food fraud & authenticity risks

Import, border & supply chain enforcement UK and international

Commodity & ingredient risk watch

Market pressures & food system resilience

Tools, testing & prevention insights

RASFF last quarter report


Welcome to the May 2026 Food Risk Insights from Eurofins Food Testing Ireland Ltd's Compliance and Risk Management Team.

In this issue, regulatory change, enforcement action, outbreaks and food crime underscore the real-world impact of compliance failures across food supply chains.

We are here to offer expert advice and support; helping you reduce risk, strengthen compliance and protect your business.

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## EU to enforce new packaging rules

 The Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR) is a new EU law that replaces older rules on packaging waste. It came into force in February 2025 and will start to apply from August 2026.

The aim of the new law is to:

- Make sure packaging can be recycled, uses less material, and is clearly labelled
- Increase the amount of recycled material used in plastic packaging over time
- Encourage reuse or refill options for some products
- Reduce unnecessary packaging and limit the use of harmful substances

UK exporters will need to comply with PPWR when selling any packaged goods to the EU. Noncompliance could result in goods being rejected at EU borders. PPWR covers all aspects of packaging, including labelling, recyclability, and reusability. For businesses exporting to the EU, it is important that they understand and are compliant with this regulation.

An overview of the PPWR can be found at:

[https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/waste-and-recycling/packaging-waste/packaging-waste-regulation\\_en](https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/waste-and-recycling/packaging-waste/packaging-waste-regulation_en)

## EU revokes GM maize events

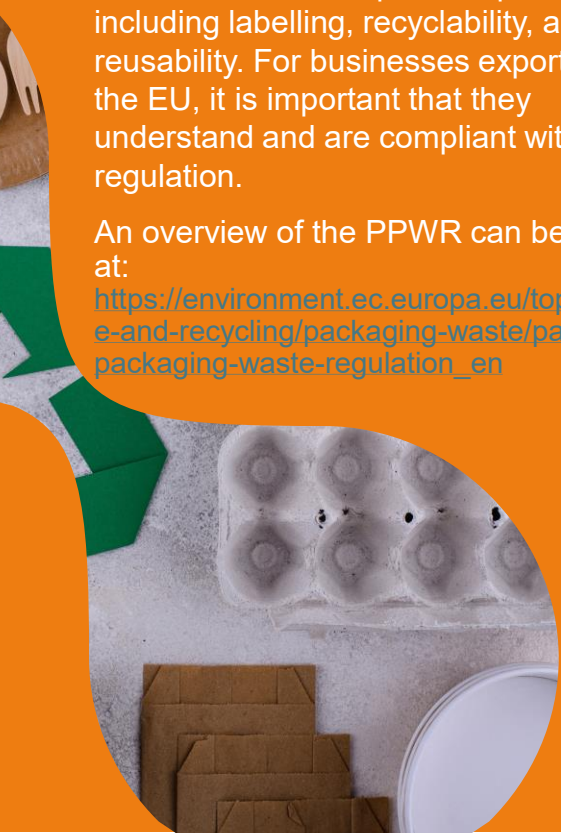
 The European Commission has revoked the authorisation of the genetically modified maize events MON87403 and MON87419 with effect from 27 March 2026, even though both authorisations would originally have remained valid for several more years. With immediate effect, a zero-tolerance policy now applies for these events in food within the EU. In accordance with Commission Regulation (EU) No 619/2011, a minor presence of up to 0.1% in animal feed remains permitted.

The authorisation of a genetically modified organism (GMO) in the European Union is a complex and lengthy process. Once an authorisation is granted, it is normally valid for 10 years. It then needs to be renewed to remain valid. As different limits apply to individual GMOs in food and feed, depending on the current status of the authorisation, continuous monitoring of the authorisation situation is essential, especially for single GMO events. This ensures compliance with the applicable regulations and the safe handling of GMOs in production and trade.

## Cost of a Listeria incident

A major international food manufacturer reported £28 million (\$37 million) in costs linked to a US fish recall caused by *Listeria monocytogenes*. The charges stemmed from inventory restrictions, shipment suspensions and write-offs.

The organism was detected at a smoked salmon processing subsidiary in Greece, leading to enhanced regulatory controls in the United States. A June 2024 recall involved stores across 15 US states.



## Salmonella outbreak across Europe

✦ A multi-country outbreak of Salmonella has sickened 50 people with suspicions again falling on sprouted seeds from Italy. According to the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), the outbreak is affecting at least six European countries. UK, Ireland and Finland have reported 50 patients infected with genetically closely related bacterial isolates of *Salmonella Bovismorbificans* from January to April 2026.

A 2026 RASFF alert report has linked the outbreak to alfalfa, clover, broccoli, and radish seeds. Batches of sprouted seeds have been recalled in several countries.

Sprouted seeds (alfalfa, clover, mung

bean) are high risk for Salmonella because the warm, humid conditions required to grow them also allow bacteria to multiply rapidly, with contamination often originating from the seeds themselves.

While methods exist for decontaminating the starting seed material from Salmonella (e.g. soaking in hypochlorite, treating with hydrogen peroxide, hot water treatments) no single method eliminates pathogens without compromising seed viability, germination rates, or yield.

From 2023 to 2025, a major outbreak linked to sprouted seeds had 509 confirmed cases across 10 countries. The incident involved eight Salmonella serotypes but not *Salmonella Bovismorbificans* and was traced to an Italian supplier.

## NI survey finds strong Listeria controls but knowledge gaps

✦ A survey of Northern Ireland ready-to-eat food manufacturers found good compliance with Listeria control measures but gaps in knowledge of EU Listeria regulation (EC 2073/2005); particularly food safety criteria. It also identified a lack of Listeria-specific training for production staff, raising concerns about potential weaknesses in contamination control despite preventative practices being in place.

It recommended targeted development of education, training and instructional materials focused specifically on *L. monocytogenes*. This would enable current food industry staff to become familiar with the regulatory requirements and further improve compliance, with the consideration that content be designed to be easily updated in line with future regulatory changes or amendments.

## FDF Scotland funding to help HFSS goals

Food and Drink Federation (FDF) Scotland has opened a new funding round to help Scottish food and drink manufacturers improve the health profile of their products and prepare for forthcoming high fat, sugar and salt (HFSS) regulations later this year. The funding is available to manufacturers seeking to reformulate products, including those not covered by the HFSS rules.



## Increased food price risks

**⚠️** According to the World Bank's Commodity Markets update, global food markets are facing renewed price pressure. Food prices increased in March, mainly due to sharply higher energy and fertiliser costs, with fertiliser prices showing particularly strong month on month growth. As fertilisers are closely linked to energy markets, sustained high input costs may increase production expenses for farmers and, over time, translate into higher prices for cereals, oilseeds and processed food ingredients.

For food industry buyers, the World Bank highlights ongoing cost driven volatility as a key risk factor for ingredient pricing and supply chain stability in the coming months.

In a separate World Bank linked report The International Finance Corporation (IFC) (Part of the world Bank) reported that food safety should be seen as a strategic investment, not a cost. Offering deliverable measurables in the reduction in risk exposure to incidents and the avoidable costs associated with food safety failures, including product recalls, regulatory penalties, reputational damage, and supply chain disruptions.

They also pointed out that while traditional food safety practices can often rely on inspecting finished products to detect problems after they occur, focus should be preventive, utilising a process-based approach which identifies potential food risks and manages them proactively minimising their impact. HACCP is an example of such an approach. to manage the risks.

## Concerns over FSA reforms

The Food Standards Agency's (FSA) "Future of Food Regulation" programme aiming to create a "consistent, national approach" for regulating large food businesses in England has prompted pushback and concern from various stakeholders.

There is apprehension that a national approach for large businesses could undermine the role of local authorities (LAs) and end up with less scrutiny of these businesses. Local authorities have traditionally handled food safety enforcement. There is a need to ensure a national system complements rather than duplicates or hampers these efforts, along with the possibility of affecting the primary authority funding model.

Concerns were also raised around the FSA's competence in the overall monitoring of these areas and who checks the FSA. The safety, accessing and use of data submitted were also noted as a concern.

## Apple cost pressures

British Apples & Pears Limited (BAPL) has commissioned an independent review into the impact of the Iran conflict on UK apple and pear production costs. It found that inflation has added £31.30 per tonne to Gala apple costs. This is alongside the original 2026 forecast increase of £32 per tonne largely due to higher fertiliser, fuel, energy, packaging and transport costs. This follows sharp increases after the 2022 Ukraine conflict, when production costs rose by around 30% in two years.



## Methods for adulterant in spices

👁 Recently, an interlaboratory validation was conducted by the Joint Research Centre (JRC) of thirteen real-time quantitative polymerase chain reaction (qPCR) methods, involving fifteen European laboratories, aimed at detecting and quantifying the five most common adulterations in six widely used spices and herbs: paprika/chili, turmeric, saffron, cumin, oregano and black pepper. The spices and adulterants were as follows:

- Paprika; maize seed, tomato, and sunflower seed
- Saffron; safflower and Mexican marigold
- Cumin; caraway seed
- Turmeric; maize seed, rice seed, oat seed and bell pepper
- Oregano; goosefoot leaf
- Black pepper; rice seed

The authors conclude that, after data examination, the 13 qPCR methods are fully validated and may be included in international standards in official control laboratories for confirming a suspicion of fraud.

To read the full report [click here](#)

## Microbiological quality of ready-to-eat salad

👁 Following links between salad consumption and STEC (Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli*) cases, a survey carried out in England and Northern Ireland from April 2023 to March 2024 tested nearly 2,500 ready-to-eat salads and salad components for foodborne pathogens.


The study found that there were no links to human illness, and most salad

## Canadian pistachio alert still ongoing

Canada's Public Health Agency says its investigation into a *Salmonella* outbreak linked to pistachios remains ongoing a year after the first case was identified. In an April update the agency said new illnesses were reported as recently as March 2026, bringing the total to 189 cases since March 2025.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency has issued dozens of recalls covering pistachios and pistachio containing products, ranging from chocolates and biscotti to trail mixes and raw kernels. Canadians are advised not to consume pistachios imported from Iran, which have been subject to an import ban since September 2025 while the investigation continues.

Reasons suggested for the continuing issue include: The long shelf-life of pistachios, their wide distribution, popularity of pistachios and their common inclusion as an ingredient, along with the fact that food can carry *Salmonella* without appearing spoiled or noticeable through appearance, smell or flavour.



samples met satisfactory microbiological standards, though *Salmonella* and STEC were detected in a very small number of samples. *Listeria monocytogenes* was not found. STEC was detected more often in summer, reflecting a seasonal pattern seen in UK and European studies and likely linked to environmental factors.

These findings, alongside repeated salad related outbreaks emphasise the need for ongoing monitoring and greater awareness of this risk. Though the likelihood is low, the risk does exist.

## Food Risk Insights

### Man arrested over baby food poisoning

A 39 year old man has been arrested in Austria after HiPP recalled baby food jars found to contain rat poison in central Europe. Authorities had previously seized jars of HiPP brand baby food.

The affected jars were marked with a white sticker and a red circle on the bottom. According to police, the product tested positive for rat poison. The jar had a damaged lid that had already been opened and made no "pop" sound when opened again. It also had an unusual smell.

### Meat processing company in fraud investigation

The Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority (NVWA) has arrested two directors and a manager of a meat processing company in the Netherlands. The company is suspected of trading unsuitable and unsafe meat and of falsifying documents.

The NVWA has immediately withdrawn the company's approval, which means it is no longer allowed to process or trade meat for human consumption. The company's administration is being investigated to determine the scale of the suspected fraud.



### Climate change price risks for farmed salmon

✦ A new report from the Norwegian Institute of Marine Research (HI) shows that climate change is creating more challenging and unstable conditions for salmon farming, with direct implications for production costs and prices.

Rising sea temperatures, more frequent marine heatwaves, lower oxygen levels and changes in salinity increase stress, disease risk and sea lice pressure in farmed salmon. This is likely to lead to higher mortality, more frequent delousing and the need for new technologies, such as deeper or more flexible cage systems.

For buyers, these developments point to higher and more volatile production costs, which may reduce supply growth and support continued upward price pressure on farmed salmon and salmon-based products in the medium to long term.

### Suspected maple syrup scam

An investigation found that a major Quebec maple syrup producer was diluting its product with cane sugar and selling it to grocery chains. Samples tested by the provincial lab, Le Centre ACER, confirmed the fraud.

The investigation came about after a reporter noted a strange taste to a maple syrup they had bought. Questions were also raised about the origin of Quebec maple syrup.

The Canadian maple syrup market, a dominant global force, had production valued at over \$1.3 billion USD in 2023 and is expected to reach roughly \$2.2 billion by 2031.

## Over 200 tonnes of unsafe food blocked at border

Ashford Port Health Authority has stopped over 208 tonnes of unsafe food from entering the UK since November 2024, equivalent to the weight of around 35 elephants. Including 39 tonnes seized

since March 2026. The figure underlines the extent of this activity and the Authority's frontline role in protecting public health, supported by increased use of AI to strengthen border checks. The food poses a genuine risk due to contamination, poor storage or failure to meet UK standards, with potential biosecurity implications for the wider farming industry.



## May in brief | Regulatory change, enforcement and the cost of getting it wrong

May highlights the growing intersection between regulation, supply chain pressure and the cost of getting food safety wrong.

Regulatory developments remain front and centre, with the EU's Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation moving closer to application in August 2026. For UK exporters supplying the EU market, packaging compliance is becoming a business-critical issue, with real risks of border rejection for non-compliance.

There has also been a sharp focus on enforcement and zero-tolerance positions. The revocation of authorisations for two GM maize events, effective immediately for food in the EU, underlines the need for continuous monitoring of ingredient approval status. Alongside this, multiple food safety incidents (from a multi-country *Salmonella* outbreak linked to sprouted seeds, to the ongoing pistachio investigation in Canada) reinforce the vulnerability of long-shelf-life and high-risk commodities.

Closer to home, survey data from Northern Ireland shows that while many ready-to-eat producers have robust *Listeria* controls in place, gaps remain in

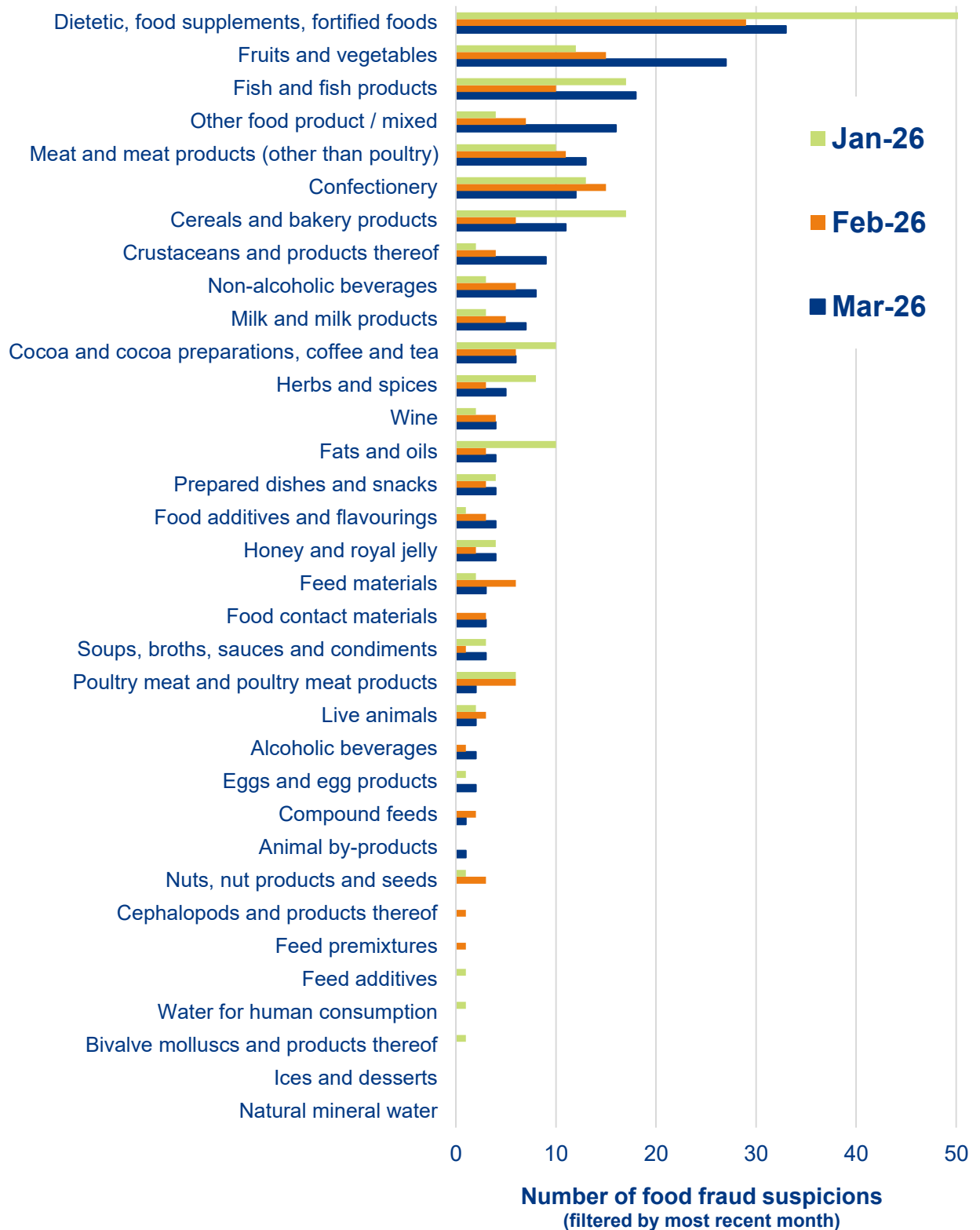
regulatory understanding and staff training. When set against the reported £28 million cost of a single *Listeria* recall at a major food business, the commercial case for preventative, process-based food safety systems is clear.

Market pressures also continue to build. Climate-related challenges in salmon farming, inflationary impacts on UK apple production, and ongoing global fertiliser and energy price volatility all point to sustained pressure on ingredient costs. Against this backdrop, recent World Bank messaging is timely; food safety should be viewed as an investment, not a cost, delivering measurable risk reduction and protecting brand value.

**Overall, May's insights point to a common theme: strong food safety governance, regulatory awareness and supplier assurance are no longer just compliance requirements – they are essential tools for resilience in an increasingly volatile food system.**

RASFF latest quarter's report

### Summary of Food Fraud Suspicions





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# Food Risk Insights

The Eurofins Compliance and Risk Management Team can work with you to identify and mitigate risks within your business, whether they be microbiological, contaminants, allergens, pesticides, authenticity (food fraud) or risks to your supply chain such as price changes or climate fluctuations.

We are here to work with you to protect your customers, brand and reputation.



[eurofins.ie/food-feed-testing](https://eurofins.ie/food-feed-testing)



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