



Food Risk Insights

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

In this issue, we see tightening scrutiny across food safety, authenticity and imports, against a backdrop of persistent cross-category fraud risk.

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



NFCU strategy

✚ The National Food Crime Unit (NFCU) highlighted its agreed Control Strategy priorities for 2026/27, along with associated intelligence requirements. The NFCU are inviting those around the food industry to take note of these priorities, and to share any relevant intelligence with the NFCU to support efforts to address gaps.

The current food crime priorities are based on analysis of a range of intelligence sources. They help the NFCU in its work to prevent, deter and disrupt food crime, and bring offenders to justice.

The priorities through to March 2027 are:

- Adulteration and substitution of lamb, beef and poultry products
- Waste diversion including animal by-product (ABP) handling within red meat, poultry, dairy and feed supply chains
- Specific supply chains presenting high levels of authenticity risk to the UK
- Maintaining a focus on illegal meat imports and continuing work on mapped Organised Crime Groups

On Horizon Scanning three areas of concern were also mentioned:

- **Pistachio nuts:** Supply pressure due to the Iran war and Iran being a major supplier
- **Cod:** Falling Atlantic stocks leading increased risk of fraudulent substitution or mislabelling
- **Raisins:** Authenticity of origin with reliance on a few producing regions: California, Turkey, Iran and the current fragile global supply (climate volatility and geopolitical tensions).

EU judgement on pest control

⚠ In a major European food safety ruling, the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) determined that repeated findings of rodent activity alone are enough to prove a food business has breached European hygiene rules. The court ruled that authorities do not need to prove a company failed to take available preventative measures.

The ruling stems from a dispute in Belgium where inspectors repeatedly found pest traces, such as rodent droppings and chewed food, across several warehouses of a supplier.

The CJEU established that the continuous presence of pests indicates that proper preventative procedures and adequate protocols were not implemented, applying that a strict liability standard applies.

A strict liability standard holds a party legally responsible for damages or offenses regardless of their intent, fault, or negligence. If the prohibited act occurs or the harm is caused, the responsible party is liable even if they took all reasonable precautions and acted in good faith.

This overturned a prior lower court ruling in a Belgian court where judges agreed with the defence that the law only required an "obligation of effort" rather than guaranteed results.

This judgement ultimately overturned that, ruling that the repeated presence of pest traces is sufficient on its own to demonstrate a breach of European food law.

Latest EFSA pesticide report

👁 According to the EFSA (European Food Safety Authority), compliance with EU limits on pesticide residues remains high, based on analysis of food samples collected in 2024 across Europe. Consistent with previous years, the EFSA's latest report indicates that the risk to human health from pesticide residues in food continues to be low.

The data did indicate that exceedances and non-compliance rates were three to four times higher in food imported from non-EU countries compared with products grown in the EU. Authorities note that a disproportionately high rate of MRL (Maximum Residue Limit) violations originate from specific food categories, in particular, pomegranates, lemons, and tomatoes imported from countries like

Türkiye, India, and Egypt.

France has announced that it will ban foods containing residues of pesticides prohibited by the EU. In practice, this will greatly restrict imports of products such as mangos, guavas, avocados, grapes, apples and citrus fruits, particularly from South America. French farmers are citing "unfair competition" from cheaper South American imports, particularly beef, poultry and sugar, which they argue do not meet strict European environmental or health standards. France has long been a critic of the upcoming Mercosur-EU trade deal, which will reduce trade barriers between Europe and many South American countries.



Belgium looks at changes to *Salmonella* rules

Belgium's Federal Agency for the Safety of the Food Chain (FASFC) has reviewed proposed amendments to its legislation on *Salmonella* control in poultry. The updates include revised control measures aligned with EU rules, clearer implementation guidance, and a change in cost sharing; reducing FASFC coverage of non-official testing to 50%, with farmers covering the remainder.

It is not clear if this is part of FASFC's need to reduce its budget by 24% by 2029, with more than half of these savings starting from 2026. Some are claiming that these substantial cuts could undermine food safety in Belgium, jeopardising consumer health and trust in the food supply chain.

Poland planning tighter import rules

👁 As reported above, France has imposed an import ban on certain foodstuffs from third countries since January 2026. The ban applies when residues of EU prohibited pesticides exceed the threshold values defined by the country of origin. This affects imports of products such as mangos, guavas, avocados, grapes, apples and citrus fruits, particularly from South America. French farmers citing "unfair competition" from cheaper South American imports.

Poland is now planning a similar ban, which will include even more far-reaching requirements. For importers, this would effectively result in a "zero tolerance" approach for specific residues.

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Snack firms fined €23.3m

Italy's antitrust authority (*Autorità Garante della Concorrenza e del Mercato* – AGCM) has fined three leading savoury snack producers a total of €23.3 million after finding they coordinated pricing and commercial strategies in tenders for private label products. The investigation, launched in September 2024, examined suspected anti-competitive practices such as customer allocation, price coordination, and possible long-standing non-competition arrangements in supplying own-brand snacks to retailers. This was described as a "single, complex and continuous" agreement that breached EU Competition rules.

Mineral water

👁️ A major food and beverage company is currently under judicial investigation over allegations that it has used water treatments to prevent contamination in its natural mineral water products. Under EU law, natural mineral water must remain in its original state and cannot be altered or treated in ways that modify its essential composition.

Retailer fined £750,000 over hygiene failings

⚠️ During a routine inspection at a Welsh store, officers found multiple hygiene breaches in the bakery, including poor cleanliness, unclean equipment, inadequate staff supervision, and failures in food safety management. The bakery was immediately closed for a deep clean. They identified 51 gaps in the store's food safety management system, which management had been aware of for over a month. The judge remarked that the case was not just about a couple of rogue employees; there were serious and systemic failures throughout all levels of the organisation.

Herb & spice authenticity

📌 The Seasoning and Spice Association (SSA) has issued updated Industry Best Practice Guidance on the authenticity of herbs and spices. This framework supports food businesses in strengthening preventative controls against adulteration, substitution, and supply chain risks, while also setting out detailed procedures for assessing vulnerabilities in culinary dried herbs and spices. The updated guidance can be found [here](#).

⚠️ EU plans to ban Brazilian meat imports

Brazil is not included on the EU list of countries approved to export food animals and animal products. Approved countries must meet the EU standards on antimicrobial use, which ban using drugs for growth promotion and prohibit those reserved for human medicine.

Rules on imports will start September 2026. The ban will not affect exports of Brazilian animal products.

Brazilian officials said they were surprised to be removed from the list and measures would be taken promptly to reverse the decision and ensure the continued sales of these products to the EU. If appropriate measures are taken, the EU said it will reinstate imports.

The European Union is not banning the overall EU-Mercosur partnership, the free trade partnership between the EU and the Mercosur bloc (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay) agreed earlier in 2026, instead it has specifically suspended imports of meat from Brazil.



Don't forget physical hazards

While less frequent than microbiological, allergen or chemical hazards, there have already been numerous alerts on physical hazards in food products this year. These include:

- Metal
- Plastic
- Glass
- Rodent contamination
- Over-pressure containers, with the result that bottle caps pop off

Physical food safety hazards in food often refer to the presence of unintended foreign bodies (extrinsic or intrinsic) that can cause harm to the consumer.

Physical hazards can also result from faulty, damaged, or poorly-designed packaging, or danger from breakage resulting from inadequately stabilised contents. Physical hazards pose an immediate and sometimes visible safety risk, potentially causing injury (e.g. cuts, choking, dental damage) and leading to product recalls, reputational damage, and loss of consumer trust.

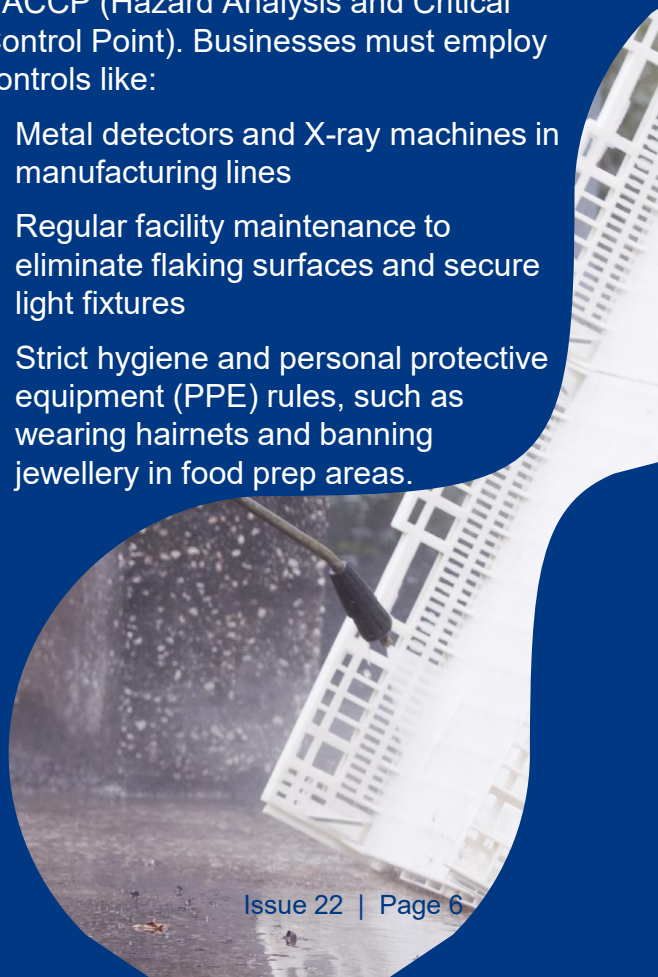
The risk typically arises from failures in raw material control, processing, equipment maintenance, or poor handling practices. In food manufacturing, inconsistent effectiveness of prerequisite programmes, in addition to failures at Critical Control Points, can lead to increased risk of physical hazards. Contamination can occur at any stage of the food chain from harvesting and processing to packaging and distribution.

Physical hazards in food can range from microscopic debris to larger foreign bodies, including those from:

- **Packaging:** Broken glass shards from jars, plastic pieces, and wood splinters from shipping pallets
- **Premises:** Flaking paint, rust, or loose plaster falling from ceilings and walls into food preparation areas
- **People:** Personal items like hair, jewellery, or bandages
- **Pests:** Droppings, insect parts, or webs
- **Plant/equipment:** Metal shavings, nuts, bolts, or lubricant from food processing machinery
- **Product:** Mineral and organic matter such as stones in bags of dry legumes, bones in boneless fish or meat, and fruit pits or stems.

To minimise the risk of contamination, food businesses are required to implement a strict Food Safety Management System (FSMS) based on HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point). Businesses must employ controls like:

- Metal detectors and X-ray machines in manufacturing lines
- Regular facility maintenance to eliminate flaking surfaces and secure light fixtures
- Strict hygiene and personal protective equipment (PPE) rules, such as wearing hairnets and banning jewellery in food prep areas.



June in brief | Enforcement, authenticity and tightening supply chain scrutiny

June highlights a clear shift towards stricter enforcement, tighter regulatory expectations and increasing scrutiny across both food safety and food integrity.

A series of high-profile enforcement actions and legal developments reinforce a move towards reduced tolerance for systemic weaknesses. Significant fines, serious hygiene failures and a landmark European ruling on pest control all underline a shift towards outcome-based accountability, where demonstrating effective control is critical.

At the same time, pressure is building on supply chains and imports. Scrutiny of mineral water practices, developments affecting Brazilian meat imports, and tightening approaches to pesticide residues across Europe all point to a more challenging landscape for globally sourced products. Alongside this, evolving national controls and cost pressures highlight a continued shift in responsibility towards industry.

Food crime and authenticity remain firmly in focus. Updated priorities from the National Food Crime Unit and new guidance on herbs and spices both emphasise the need for stronger preventative controls and continued vigilance in higher-risk supply chains.

Year-to-date RASFF data from January to April reinforces this picture, with sustained food fraud suspicions observed across a wide range of categories. Activity is particularly notable in dietetic and fortified foods, fruits and vegetables, confectionery, fish, meat and bakery products, demonstrating that integrity risks remain persistent and widespread rather than isolated.

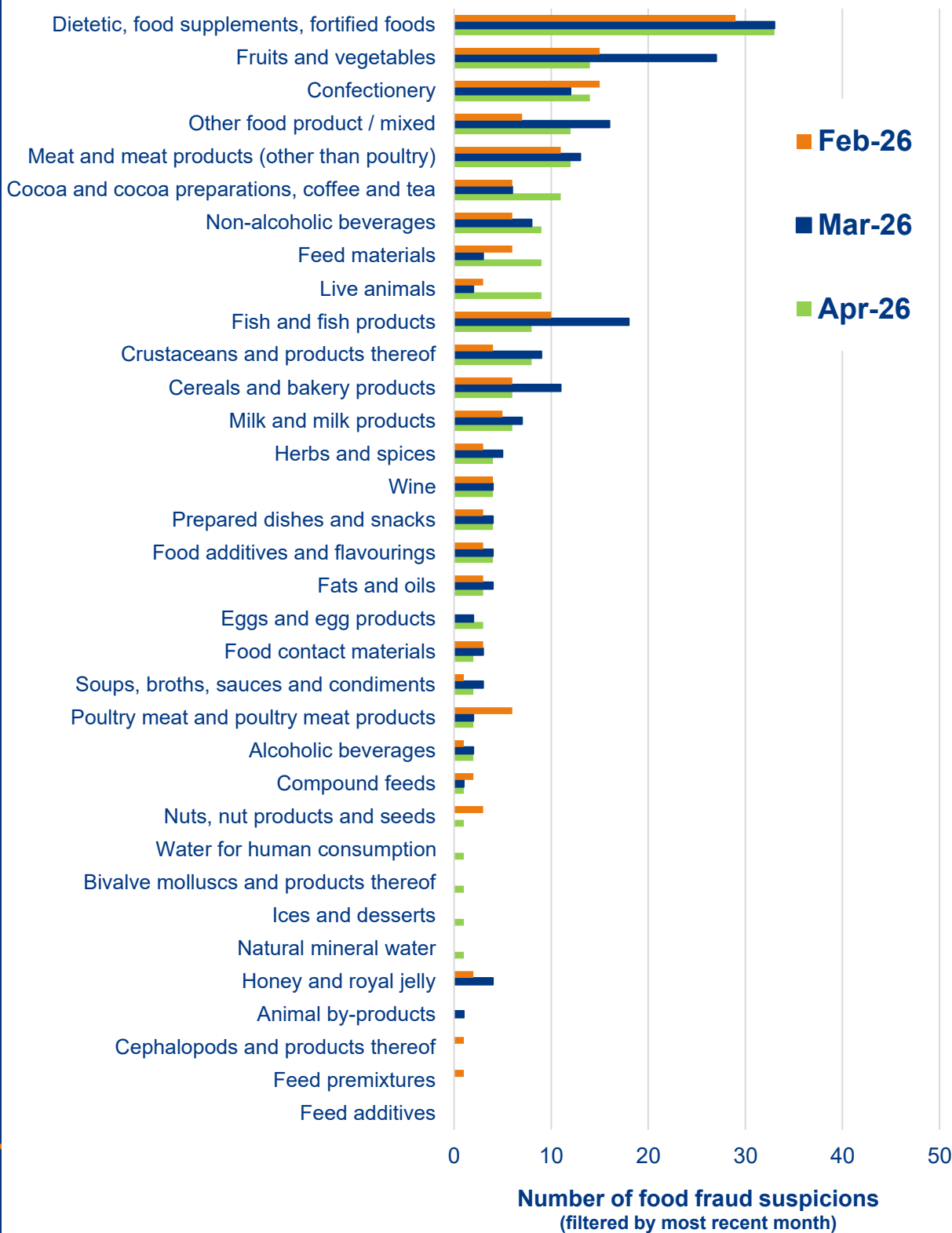
Overall, June's insights point to a consistent theme: expectations around compliance, authenticity and supply chain assurance are continuing to tighten. Businesses must ensure that controls are robust, proactive and fully embedded to remain resilient.

In an environment of tightening regulation and ongoing integrity risks, Eurofins Food Testing UK provides expert consultancy to help you identify emerging issues, strengthen supply chain assurance and maintain effective, risk-based food safety systems.



RASFF latest quarter's report

Summary of Food Fraud Suspicions





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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.



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