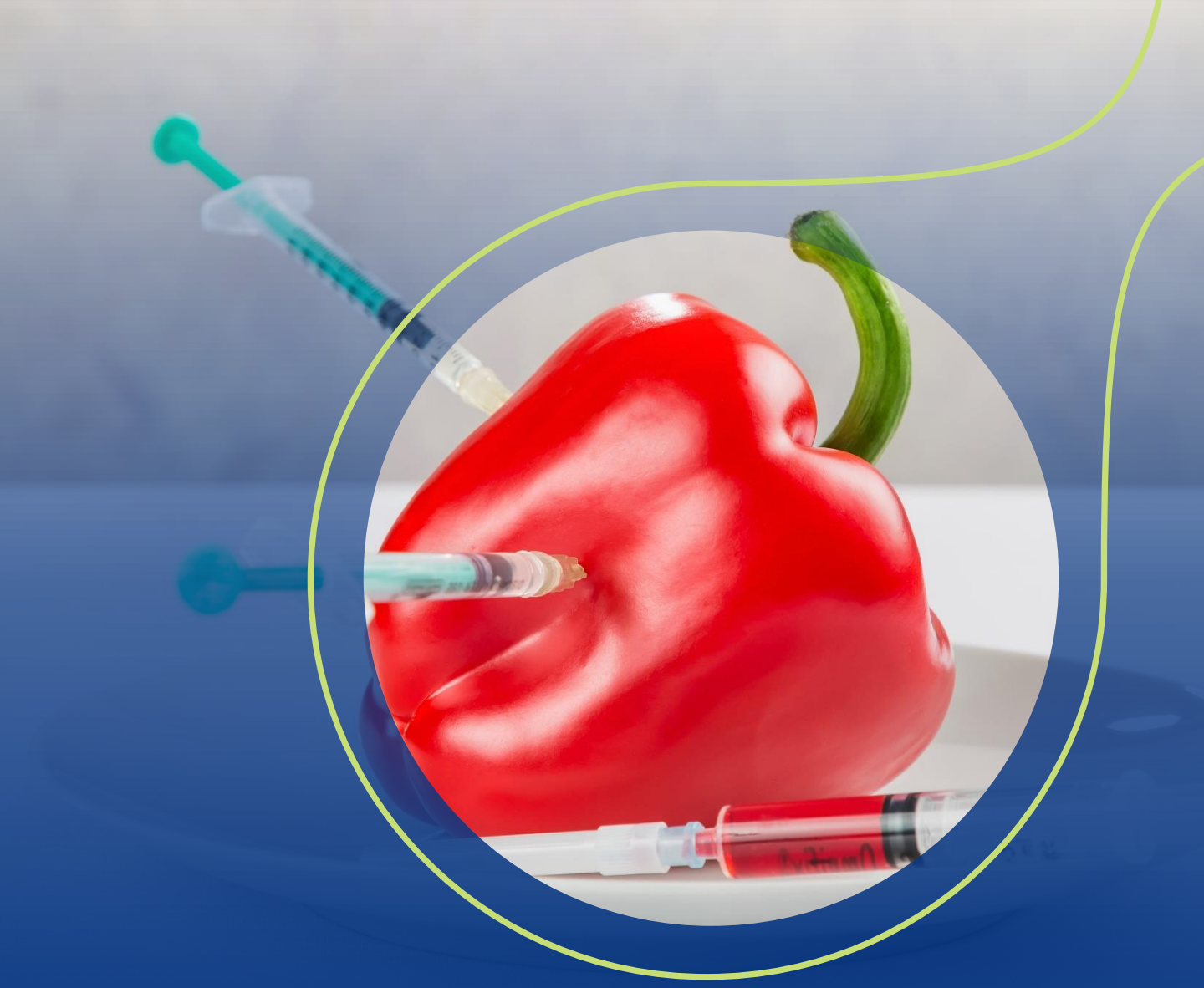

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Risk Insights
Food Newsletter

Eurofins Food Testing Ireland Ltd

Issue 12 | August 2025

In Focus

Emerging issues, trends and legislative changes

Welcome to the August 2025 food risk insights from the Eurofins Compliance and Risk Management Team which includes FSA reports, foodborne illnesses and food safety concerns.

We are here to offer expert advice and support to help you manage the ever-evolving risks faced by food businesses.

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FSA report emphasises complexity and severity of issues increasing

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) reported that while overall incident notifications for 2024 to 2025 remained steady at around 1,825 (a slight decrease from the previous year), there has been a notable rise in the proportion of medium to high priority incidents. This is reflective of the growing complexity of today's food supply chains. The FSA further mentioned an increase in intricate investigations, pointing out that managing them demands more specialised resources and expertise. These investigations involving pathogens, allergens, veterinary drug residues, novel foods, and poorly controlled imports, require multi- disciplinary teams and often international collaboration.

Pathogens topped the list of hazards, with *Salmonella* leading the 436 recorded microbiological incidents. Novel food incidents (like those involving CBD/THC products) increased by about 38%, and incidents tied to poor import controls climbed by 45% compared with the previous year. These trends underscore a growing strain in food safety responses, compounded by Local Authorities resource pressures and evolving trade rules posing new regulatory challenges. Food crime, including fraud, remains a concern and the need for transparent supply chains was emphasised. To exercise due diligence and manage the risks, businesses must remain vigilant, cautious and proactive.

Consumers are increasingly worried about food prices, prompting companies to strike a balance between healthy offerings and affordability. Additionally, the report discusses how innovation like precision-bred organisms and cultured foods are advancing, and notes that regulatory frameworks are adapting to support these emerging technologies.

Mechanically separated meat (MSM) update

⚠ The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has released updated guidance to help food businesses in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland comply with clarified legal definitions of mechanically separated meat (MSM) following a recent High Court and Supreme Court rulings. MSM is defined as meat recovered using mechanical processes that alter or damage muscle fibre, typically from bones or poultry carcasses, and must now be correctly classified and labelled separately from overall meat percentage claims to ensure transparency for consumers.

The guidance outlines hygiene, safety, and labelling requirements, reiterating that MSM must be explicitly declared as an ingredient and does not count towards the meat content percentage. The FSA acknowledges the need for businesses to adapt and has pledged to provide support and time for implementation in line with the clarified definition

To read the new guidance in full, please **click here**.

Safety of eggs

Belgian authorities are investigating a serious *Salmonella* contamination at a Geel-area egg producer. During a routine inspection in January, the Federal Agency for the Safety of the Food Chain (FASFC) found *Salmonella* in one of the farm's poultry houses. Although the company was initially restricted to supplying eggs solely to heat-processing facilities, evidence later emerged that contaminated eggs had been sold directly to consumers possibly even via vending machines, with falsified stamps on the packaging. Prosecutors have now initiated an investigation, issued search warrants and recalled some free-range and barn-laid eggs. This probe is part of a broader national rise in *Salmonella*-related recalls; around 70 human cases have already been linked to egg consumption earlier this year, prompting the FASFC to intensify monitoring efforts.

The Food Standard Agency (FSA) has previously published a comprehensive risk profile identifying 22 key hazards associated with imported shell eggs and egg products. These include microbiological threats like *Salmonella* Enteritidis, *Salmonella* Typhimurium, *Campylobacter spp*., and *Listeria monocytogenes*, as well as chemical contaminants such as mycotoxins, veterinary residues (e.g., fipronil, chlorate), pesticides, heavy metals, persistent organic pollutants, and feed additives.

These hazards originate both internally (via contaminated feed or infected flocks) and externally (through processing contamination and environmental exposure).

EFSA opinion on silver as food additive

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has raised concerns about the safety of the food additive silver (E 174), commonly used in confectionery, coatings, fillings, and spirit drinks. Following a 2016 assessment highlighting insufficient data on its safety, a recent update reaffirmed these concerns, particularly regarding its toxicity, genotoxicity, and the release of ionic silver.

A call for additional data was issued, but only one submission was received, which failed to address the key issues.

Due to these ongoing data deficiencies, EFSA cannot confirm the safety of E 174, and the European Commission will decide soon whether to ban its use across the EU.

EFF-CoP publishes first newsletter

The European Food Fraud Community of Practice (EFF-CoP) project aims to transform the fight against food fraud and improve transparency in food supply chains by building a sustainable, research-driven innovation ecosystem grounded in sociological principles. It brings together a diverse group of stakeholders including scientists, regulators, businesses of all sizes, the organic sector, and existing networks, with over 4,200 members, a unified "network of networks" to form the European Food Fraud Community of Practice.

Commenting in the newsletter on the most surprising or worrying trends affecting food fraud, Eric Jamin, Authenticity Business Unit Manager, Eurofins Analytics France said: "The most surprising and worrying trend affecting food fraud nowadays is that it tends to be massive in terms of proportion of adulterants / substituents used in counterfeited products. While there had been a trend towards more sophisticated frauds 'playing with limits' in the previous decades, more and more recent cases appear as obvious and deliberate food tampering".

You can find out more **here**.

Food type plays a role in *Listeria* survival

Researchers have examined how different ready-to-eat foods (brie cheese, smoked salmon, and cooked non-fermented sausage) affect the survival and virulence of *Listeria monocytogenes* as it travelled through a simulated gastrointestinal tract. Although all three food types supported bacterial growth during a seven-day refrigeration at 10 °C, it was cheese and fish that offered the strongest protection during digestion, whereas sausage led to significantly greater bacterial reduction. Notably, *Listeria* that passed through the salmon food matrix showed the highest invasion efficiency into intestinal epithelial cells, potentially due to its fatty acid profile.

Gene expression analysis revealed that both stress-response and virulence genes were increased during passage, with patterns varying by food matrix. The buffering capacity and nutrient composition of cheese and fish, particularly their fat content, appeared to enhance bacterial survival and pathogenic potential compared to sausage.

The study highlights how interactions between food matrices and nutrients can significantly impact *Listeria's* survival, virulence, and gene expression within a simulated gastrointestinal environment.

The original publication can be found here.

Parasites: The rising concern in food safety

Parasites may not always grab headlines like bacteria such as *E. coli* or *Salmonella*, but they pose a significant and rising threat to food safety.

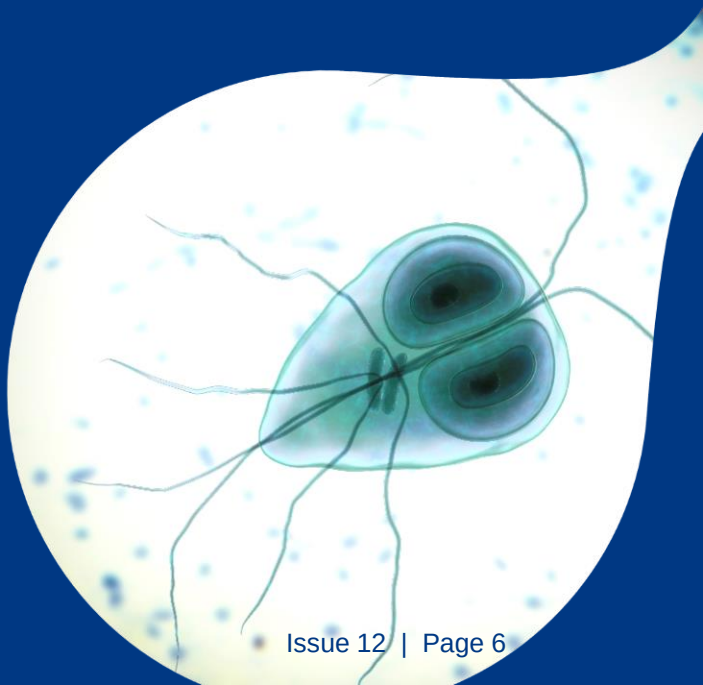
The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) recently convened an expert meeting in Rome to address the global public health threat posed by foodborne protozoan parasites, such as *Cryptosporidium, Giardia, Cyclospora, Trypanosoma*, and *Toxoplasma*. These parasites are responsible for approximately 30% of foodborne illnesses worldwide, particularly affecting vulnerable populations like young children, pregnant individuals, and those with weakened immune systems. The meeting focused on reviewing the latest scientific data, assessing global disease burden, and evaluating current detection and control strategies. Key findings highlighted the high-risk nature of certain foods, including fresh produce, shellfish, dairy, and ready-to-eat items, where parasites can withstand harsh conditions, and even low doses can cause illness.

Experts emphasised the need for improved detection methods and standardised testing, noting that current approaches suffer from inconsistencies and limitations. They also highlighted the importance of enhanced hygiene and robust processing practices to mitigate risks.

In related news, researchers in Europe have tested produce for the presence of *Toxoplasma* in ready-to-eat (RTE) salads with findings showing more information is needed to help put mitigation measures in place, particularly as the consumption of RTE salads is growing. Currently there is no mandatory surveillance for foodborne parasites in fresh produce.

Why parasites are a growing concern

- **Global food trade & travel:** International trade in raw and minimally processed food has increased the risk of spreading parasitic diseases. Travelers may introduce or bring back parasites from endemic regions.
- **Changing diets:** There is a rise in the consumption of raw or undercooked foods like sushi, ceviche, and unpasteurised products, which can harbour parasites like *Anisakis* or *Giardia*.
- **Climate change**: Warmer temperatures and changing rainfall patterns favour the survival and spread of many parasites in water, soil, and animals.
- **Intensive farming practices**: High-density animal farming can facilitate the spread of parasitic infections, especially when biosecurity measures are inadequate.
- **Antiparasitic resistance**: Similar to antibiotic resistance, some parasites are becoming less responsive to traditional treatments, complicating control and eradication efforts.



Seasonal increase in campylobacteriosis

Swedish public health officials have noted a predictable uptick in *Campylobacter* infections across Sweden as summer sets in. From early June through the week starting June 23, weekly case counts rose from around 30 to roughly 70. This seasonal increase is tied to higher prevalence of *Campylobacter* in chicken flocks, which correlates with rising human infections. In 2024, approximately 6.4% of broiler flocks from major producers and nearly 49% from smaller operations tested positive, contributing to the estimated 5,440 human cases (slightly down from 5,675 in 2023). Infections were most common among adults aged 50–69 and slightly more frequent in men, with most domestic cases emerging in July and August. To reduce health risks, Health authorities including Livsmedelsverket (Swedish Food Safety Authority) urge robust food safety measures, thorough cooking of chicken, strict separation of raw poultry from other foods, and diligent hand washing.

Illnesses traced to food handler

A recent report highlights a foodborne illness outbreak in New Zealand which has been tied to transmission by a food handler. Health authorities, through detailed epidemiologic tracing, identified the individual as the common link among multiple cases of gastroenteritis caused by norovirus, prompting urgent intervention measures. Contamination appears likely to have occurred during food preparation, underscoring the critical importance of strict hygiene practices, especially thorough hand washing, proper use of gloves, and exclusion from work when ill.

Officials have since reinforced risk-reduction guidelines for all food service establishments, emphasising regular staff training and monitoring. The investigation serves as a stark reminder of how a single infected handler can trigger widespread outbreaks, and highlights food-safety vigilance as vital to public health.

Estragole as an emerging issue

The European Commission asked the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) to assess fennel seed products for infants after concerns from German authorities. EFSA found that fennel seeds contain estragole, a genotoxic and carcinogenic compound.

Due to limited data, the EFSA could not define a safe exposure level and warned that fennel seed preparations may pose health risks, especially for vulnerable groups like infants, children, and pregnant or breastfeeding women. However, products where estragole has been removed or is undetectable are not considered risky.

The EFSA is inviting public feedback on its draft opinion until 17 September 2025.

FSA retail surveillance report

This project, conducted for the Food Standards Agency (FSA), involved targeted surveillance of 822 retail food samples from 24 commodity types across England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. The goal was to detect emerging food safety risks and improve FSA intelligence. Samples were sourced from physical and online retailers and tested in collaboration with five official laboratories.

Foods were classified into three categories: 1) Frequently consumed foods; 2) surveillance foods; 3) science and research foods. Most samples complied with relevant food regulations.

Key findings included:

- **Allergens**: 96% compliance; 4% had undeclared allergens, mainly milk.
- **Authenticity**: 94% compliance; issues included Basmati rice adulteration and non-pork meat in pork sausages.
- **Unauthorised ingredients**: 93% compliance; problems involved illegal sweeteners and colouring agents.
- **Composition**: 87% compliance; discrepancies included lower meat content and incorrect fat levels.
- **Contaminants**: No concerning levels of mycotoxins or heavy metals were found, though some oregano samples had foreign bodies.
- **Labelling**: 21% of products had labelling issues, mostly technical, such as allergen format errors and incorrect nutritional data.

Overall, the project showed a high level of compliance but highlighted areas for continued monitoring and improvement.

2025 quarter one report on foodborne illness in Ireland

Health officials in Ireland reported that the first quarter of 2025 (January–March) saw a significant foodborne **hepatitis A** outbreak, with 29 cases reported. The outbreak included a cluster of 17 cases linked to a suspected food source. Year-on-year increases in campylobacteriosis, norovirus, and shigellosis cases were also noted. The foodborne hepatitis A outbreak highlights the need to investigate sources of hepatitis A and reinforce prevention strategies.

Campylobacter reached its highest seasonal level since 2020, with 852 cases (up from 733 in Q1 2024), while listeriosis, salmonellosis, hepatitis E, and STEC / *E. coli* infections remained steady compared to the previous year.

Salmonella notifications held at 63 cases (similar to 65 previously), with most infections domestically acquired, and four family-based *Salmonella* outbreaks were reported.

There were 110 **Shiga Toxin-producing *E. coli* (STEC)** cases reported in the first quarter of 2025, compared to a similar 112 cases during the same period in the previous year. 40 people were hospitalised from these outbreaks, including 4 cases of Haemolytic Uremic Syndrome (HUS).

Cryptosporidiosis declined slightly, as did listeriosis (two cases), while shigellosis nearly doubled to 91 cases, partly due to a 38-person international travel-linked outbreak. Overall, these data highlight rising domestic pathogen transmission.

Recall of dietary supplement

A dietary supplement called **Advanced Vitamin X** from Erix Elite Sport (lot 251268) has been linked to elevated vitamin D levels causing illnesses in Spain's Balearic Islands. Since May and June 2025, at least 15 otherwise healthy individuals have been hospitalised with symptoms of hypercalcemia, acute kidney injury, and arrhythmias after using the supplement, which contained far more vitamin D than indicated on the label. Users experienced nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, frequent urination, and in severe cases, critically high blood calcium, up to 17.8 mg/dL (normal upper limit ~10.2 mg/dL), prompting urgent medical care and sometimes intensive treatments.

Spanish authorities, including the Agency for Food Safety and Nutrition (AESAN), have issued a national alert, conducted inspections, recalled and immobilised the affected batch, and advised people not to consume the product. Alerts were also issued via Europe's RASFF and through healthcare networks to detect further cases.

Initial investigations point to a formulation error during manufacturing. The incident highlights the serious risks posed by unregulated or mislabelled dietary supplements with excessive vitamin D levels.

Issues identified with UK dairy controls for EU

An audit of UK dairy controls carried out for the EU in November 2024 identified several issues, including that the certification of milk and dairy products has been carried out without meeting all the requirements for EU export.

A potential public health risk was identified in one instance where milk previously rejected at the border for being at ambient temperature was subsequently re-exported as under refrigerated conditions after being returned to the supplier and a new export certificate and lot numbers issued.

The auditors found that the levels of control were inadequate, as serious shortcomings in food safety practice had gone unnoticed by the authorities in the UK. Planned inspection frequencies were not met, the standard of inspection report varied widely, with some inspection reports being very short, the inspections were almost always announced well in advance, and it was noted that some Local Authorities struggled to meet inspection and sampling schedules with EHO posts unfilled.

By contrast the audit of Irish controls in January and February 2025 reported that the control plan was well organised, and the system of official controls was robust.

Market data watch

Brazil nuts

Extreme weather conditions in the Amazon region linked to climate change have resulted in a smaller than usual 2024/2025 harvest of Brazil nuts. The shortage has been exacerbated by the impact of political unrest in Bolivia on logistics due to protests, roadblocks and regional lockdowns.

Prices for spot purchases have soared due to the supply issues, and while there are cautious hopes for a better harvest in 2025/2026, we note that demand for Brazil nuts has increased due to growing consumer demand for plant-based products.

Potential food fraud and mycotoxin concerns have been raised if the supply chain is vulnerable to old or poor quality Brazil nuts being used to bridge gaps in supply.

Cow's milk

Recently published research shows that climate change affects not just crops, but also products of animal agriculture. The study examined data from 12 years of daily milk yields from around 130,000 dairy cows in Israel, along with records of heat and humidity, and showed that milk yields fell by as much as 10% on hot humid days. The effect on milk yield also persisted for days after direct exposure to conditions of high heat and humidity, and particularly in the most productive animals. Significant reductions in yield were seen even where cooling technologies were adopted to mitigate the heat stress.

Rising temperatures due to climate change increase heat stress of dairy cattle and thereby may threaten global milk supply.

Cinnamon

Reports of lead in cinnamon exported from Vietnam have increased during the second quarter of 2025. Cinnamon may become contaminated with lead from environmental sources, for example from the growing of cinnamon trees in contaminated soil, or from adulteration during processing such as addition during grinding to increase the weight of product.

Turmeric

Detection of unauthorised colours in turmeric coming from India has been noted as an increasing issue. Spices are vulnerable to food fraud often due to their value and the complexity of supply chains.

Adulteration with unapproved colours such as textile dyes is a relatively common food fraud which is done to make the spices appear fresher and higher quality, and thus of higher value. Lead chromate, Metanil Yellow, Acid Orange 7, Sudan Red G , Sudan I and Tartrazine are amongst the colours which have historically been added to turmeric.

Saffron

The UK National Food Crime Unit issued an alert on 11th July 2025 stating that adulterated saffron had been identified on the UK market containing undeclared synthetic colours. Issues were also discovered of saffron not meeting the grade for colour intensity stated on labelling. Adulteration with colouring agents can give spices such as saffron the appearance of being higher grade and more valuable.

Apricots

Reports of detection of the mycotoxin ochratoxin A in dried apricots from Turkey have increased, with Finland, Germany, Poland and The Netherlands recording incidents.

EFSA pesticides in organic products report

The European Commission asked the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) to prepare a technical report on 21 active pesticide substances not authorised in organic farming but frequently detected in organic food, feed, and apiculture products between 2021 and 2022.

The report examines possible sources of these residues using diverse data, including scientific outputs, monitoring data, and expert inputs from EU agencies.

None of the substances occur naturally, and various origins for residues were identified, such as unauthorised use, environmental contamination, or drift from nearby conventional crops.

The report recommends thorough investigations when residues are found, including soil and irrigation water analysis, and assessment of pesticide use around organic farms to distinguish between deliberate use and contamination. Transfer from industrial emissions is considered unlikely.

August's issue | Are you ready for what's next?

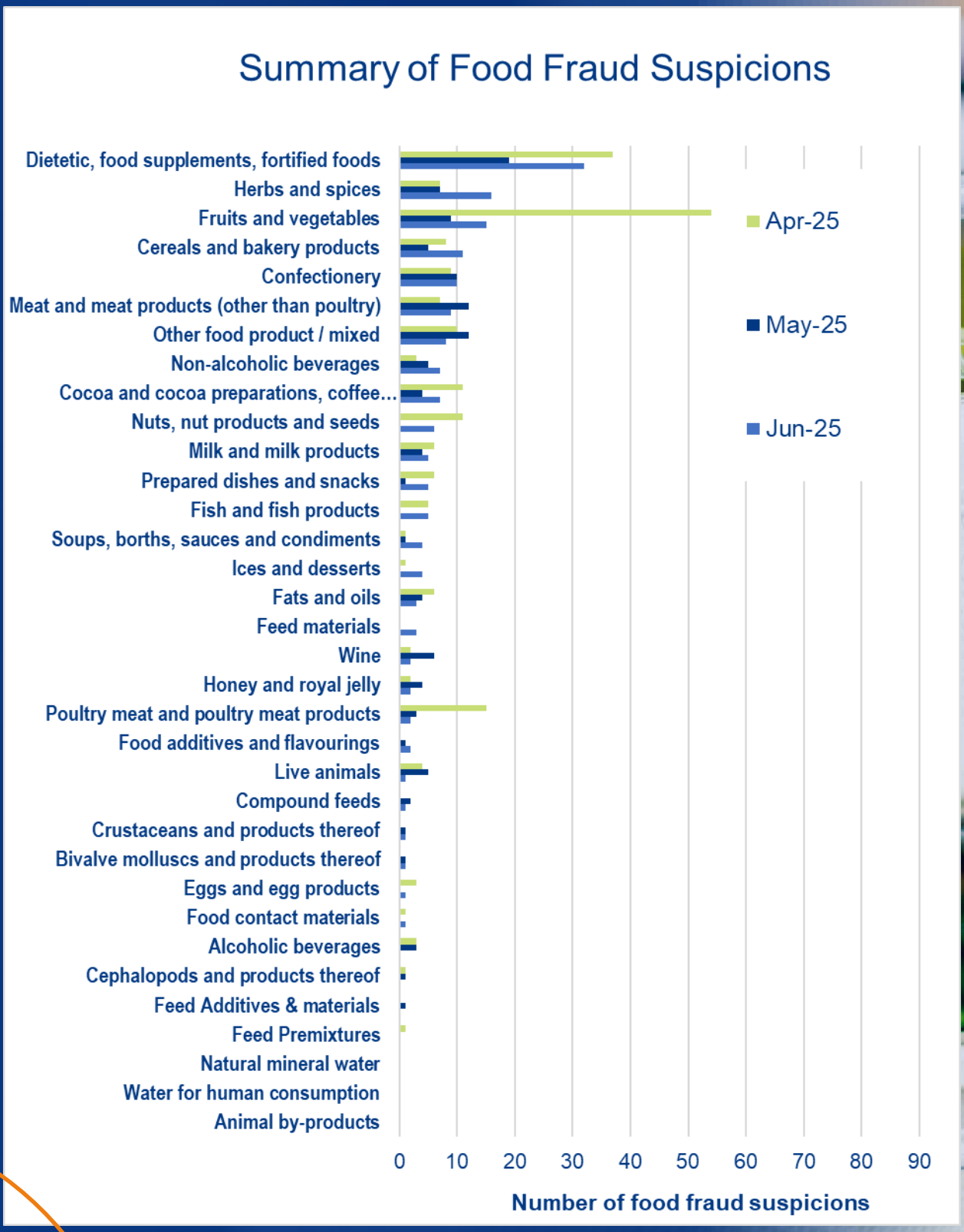
From shifting food safety priorities to increased regulatory scrutiny and supply chain vulnerabilities, this month's insights highlighted several critical areas for attention:

- **High-priority incidents** involving pathogens, novel foods, and poor import controls are placing new demands on regulatory compliance and traceability system**s.**
- **Egg safety and *Salmonella* outbreaks** across Europe have prompted intensified monitoring, with fraud cases linked to mislabelled or contaminated products.
- **Foodborne parasites** like *Toxoplasma* and *Giardia* are emerging as global threats, with rising detection in ready-to-eat produce and seafood.
- **Market pressures and fraud risk**s continue to affect spices, dried fruits, and Brazil nuts, with concerns over mycotoxins, synthetic dyes, and adulteration.
- **New EFSA assessments** call for deeper testing of pesticide residues in organic food and challenge the safety of additives like silver and estragole.

At Eurofins Food Testing UK, we help you stay ahead of these evolving risks through accredited microbiological, chemical and authenticity testing, supply chain fraud detection, and expert consultancy across food safety, labelling and regulatory compliance.

Whether you're monitoring high-risk ingredients or preparing for emerging legislation, our insight-led services support confident, compliant decision-making.

RASFF latest quarter's report



Source: https://food.ec.europa.eu/food-safety/acn/ffn-monthly_en

Risk Insights
Food Newsletter

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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