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Notifications of mycotoxins in the European Union in 2006

In 2006 the EU 'Rapid Alert System for Feed and Food' registered a total of 934 'alert notifications'. As in previous years, the vast majority of 877 'alert notifications' concerned mycotoxins. Ninety-one percent, 802 alert notifications concerned aflatoxins, of which 684 were due to contaminated nuts and nut products.

In 2005 the total number of mycotoxin-notifications was 996, 119 more than in 2006.

'alert notifications'
Whenever an EU Member States detects a food or feed product which presents a health hazards to animals or humans, it issues an 'alert notification' with details of the incriminated product to the other Member States, which can then react by withdrawing the product from the market.

An overview of the notifications in 2006 is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Overview of EU-alert-notifications regarding mycotoxins in feed- and food products in 2006

Product	Mycotoxin				
	Aflatoxins	Fumonisins	Ochratoxin A	Patulin	Zearalenon
Feedstuffs	4	0	0	0	1
Cereal products	5	14	11	0	0
Coffee and cocoa	1	0	12	0	0
Baby food	0	1	0	1	0
Vegetables and fruit	69	0	27	1	0
Herbs and spices	37	0	4	0	0
Fruit juices	0	0	0	5	0
Nuts/nut products	684	0	0	0	0
Total	800	15	54	7	1

Nuts and nut products. Aflatoxins in nuts and nut products were by far the principal cause of alert-notifications. Most aflatoxin notifications concerned pistachio-nuts! In 2006 there were 276 alert-notifications concerning pistachio-nuts, of which 234 with regard to pistachio-nuts from Iran.

Peanuts and peanut products. In 2006 there were 257 alert-notifications concerning peanuts and peanut products. The peanuts originated from China (69), Argentine (45), Brazil (24), Ghana (20), Egypt (17), United States (15), Sudan (10), Israel (8), Vietnam (7), South-Africa (7), India (6), Nigeria (5) and Paraguay (5).

Hazelnuts. There were 85 alert-notifications due to contaminated hazelnuts and hazelnut products in 2006, of which 79 notifications concerning products from Turkey.

Almonds. With 37 notifications almonds paid a fair contribution to the number of alert-notifications due to mycotoxins. All notifications concerned almonds produced in the United States.

Source:
The Rapid Alert system for Food and Feed (RASFF). Annual report 2006. (ISSN 1830-7302)
http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/rapidalert/report2006_en.pdf

Editorial note: The three main legislations with regard to mycotoxins are:
1) Commission Regulation (EC) No 401/2006 with regard to methods of sampling and analysis.
2) Commission Regulation (EC) No 1881/2006 setting maximum levels for eight mycotoxins in foodstuffs.
3) Council Directive 2002/32/EC on undesirable substances in animal feed

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