

Issue | March 2026



# NEWS LETTER

## Dear Safefood-Online users,

In March 2026, the EU Rapid Alert System recorded 487 new notifications. The evaluation can be found under point 1 in this newsletter.

Under "Latest news on residues and contaminants" (point 2), we report on a proposal regarding changes for maximum levels of pesticides.

We also provide information on new developments regarding maximum levels of mineral oil aromatic hydrocarbons and present a study on the risk assessment of toxic trace elements in the transition from animal-based to plant-based foods.

News around food safety and food fraud can be found under point 3.

Topic of the month (point 4) is the Pesticide Maximum Residue Level (MRL)-Tracker published by AGRINFO.

### **The veggie burger may continue to be called a burger – for now**

In October, the European Parliament decided that terms such as 'burger', 'schnitzel' or 'sausage' would no longer be permitted for plant-based alternatives (see [Safefood Online Newsletter 10/2025](#)). A **compromise proposal** has now been put forward as part of the trilogue negotiations (between the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Council of the Member States). Under this proposal, the use of terms such as 'pork', 'beef' or 'lamb', as well as terms for cuts such as 'breast', 'leg' or 'loin', would no longer be permitted. However, 'burger' or 'sausage' would still be allowed. The proposal still needs to be adopted by the European Parliament and the EU Member States.

We hope that also this issue of the Safefood-Online Newsletter is interesting for you and we are of course looking forward to your opinion.

Your Safefood-Online Team

# 1. RASFF Notifications March 2026

The number of new RASFF-notifications in March was significantly higher than in the previous two months:

- **March 2026:** 487
- February 2026: 362
- January 2026: 369

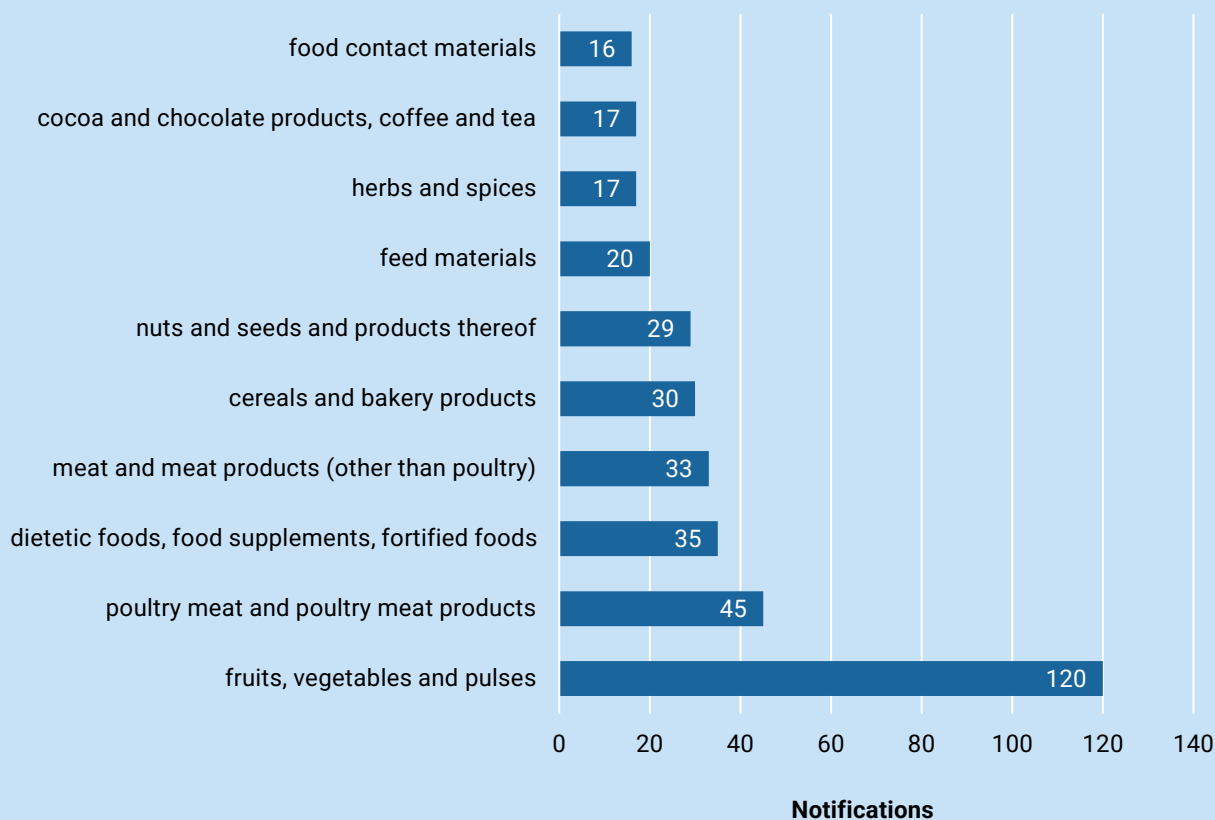
The RASFF-notifications are divided as follows:

- Alert notifications: 115
- Border rejections: 139
- Information messages: 233



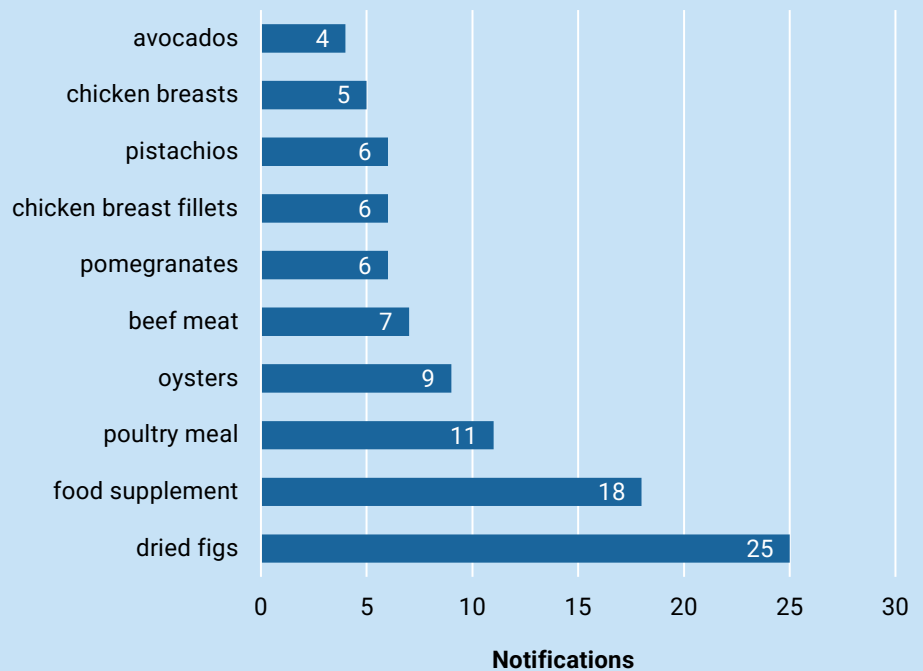
In the analysis of notifications by product category, fruit, vegetables and pulses ranked first with 120 notifications. Within this category, there were 25 notifications concerning dried figs due to ochratoxin A and aflatoxins. In 24 cases, the dried figs originated from Türkiye. With a significant margin, the product categories poultry meat and poultry meat products and dietetic foods, food supplements and fortified foods are in second and third place with 45 and 35 notifications:

## RASFF-Notifications March 2026: Top product categories



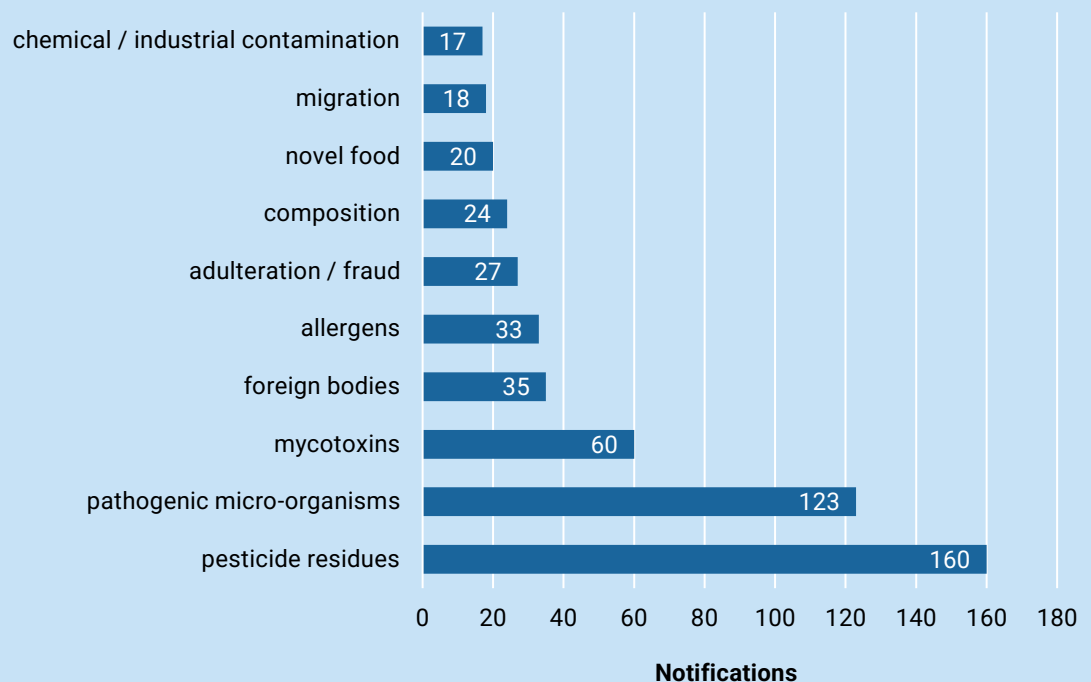
By product, dried figs are on the top with 25 notifications followed by food supplements and poultry meal with 18 and 11 cases. The poultry meal in question was animal feed that originated, in all cases, from the UK and contained salmonella:

### RASFF-Notifications March 2026: Top 10 products



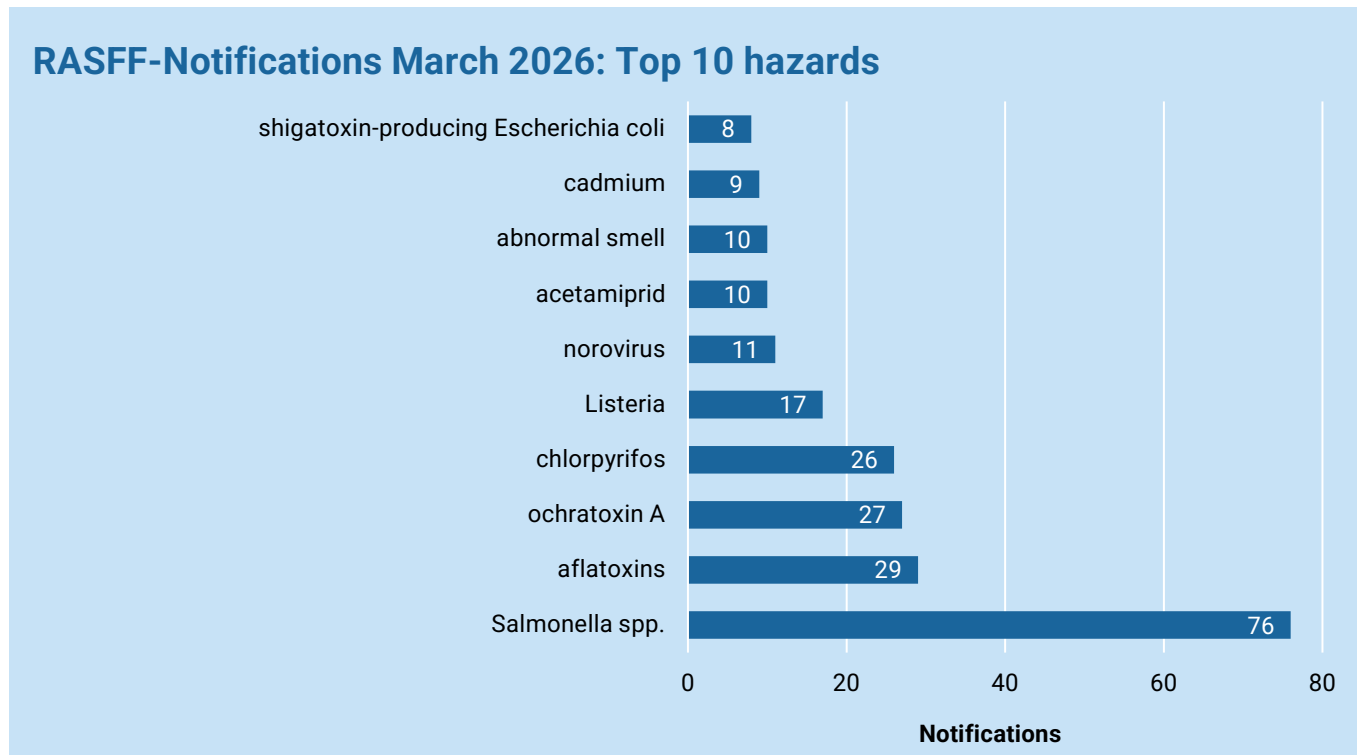
By hazard category, pesticides ranked first with 160 cases of maximum residue levels being exceeded or unauthorised pesticides being detected. Pathogenic micro-organisms followed in second place with 123 notifications. The highest number of detections (23) was recorded in three notifications for wine leaves. In two cases, 10 pesticides were found:

### RASFF-Notifications March 2026: Top 10 hazard categories



# 1. RASFF Notifications March 2026

In terms of hazards, salmonella ranks first with 52 notifications, followed by aflatoxins in second place with 29 notifications. Ochratoxin A is in third place with 27 notifications:



Finally, the evaluation according to the country of origin of the products:



45 of the notifications concerned products from Türkiye. More than half related to dried figs (24 notifications) and pomegranates (5 notifications). China and Poland are following with 36 and 32 notifications.

## 2. Update on pesticides and contaminants



### Risk assessment of toxic trace elements in animal and plant protein sources under various scenarios for the transition of protein supply

Plant-based alternatives to meat and dairy are increasingly being consumed across the EU. Using substitution models, a recent [study](#) simulated a shift in diet from animal-based to plant-based foods and concluded that replacing meat and dairy leads to increased exposure to cadmium, aluminium, nickel, arsenic and chromium.

### Draft EU-Commission Regulation as regards maximum residue levels for pesticides

The European Commission has adopted a proposal for a regulation amending Annexes II, III and V to Regulation (EC) No 396/2005 as regards maximum residue levels for [carbofuran](#), [imazalil](#), [mandipropamid](#), [propquizafop](#), [quizalofop-P-ethyl](#) and [quizalofop-P-tefuryl](#). See also [Annex](#) and amendments to [Annex II](#), and [Annex V](#).

### New proposal at EU level for maximum levels of mineral oil aromatic hydrocarbons (MOAH)

The EU has notified the WTO SPS Committee, within the framework of the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, of its intention to set maximum levels for mineral oil aromatic hydrocarbons (MOAH) in certain foodstuffs. The planned limits can be found in the [draft regulation](#) and the [annex](#) to the draft regulation. The new maximum levels are expected to apply from 1 January 2027, except in the special cases listed in the annex, where a later application date applies. Further background information on the proposed measures can be found in the AGRINFO guide: '[Mineral oil hydrocarbons in food: An introduction to the planned EU-regulations](#)'.



## Food Safety

- 🕒 EFSA and FAO have signed a three-year programme to strengthen cooperation on food safety and science-based regulation
- 🕒 EU-Commission: The cost of PFAS pollution for our society
- 🕒 More than 80 people are sick in the United Kingdom in a Salmonella outbreak linked to a brand of dry-cured meat
- 🕒 EU agrees on ban for plant-based food names: Veggie “Burger” and “Sausage” saved
- 🕒 US: Foodborne illness wastewater monitoring continues with new FDA funding
- 🕒 The EU is temporarily stepping up official controls and introducing emergency measures on imports of arachidonic acid oil originating in China (Implementing Regulation (EU) 2026/459)
- 🕒 Two people have died and 10 others have fallen ill in a Listeria outbreak in France linked to meat products
- 🕒 How Rapid Microbiology and AI Are Transforming Modern Food Safety Laboratories
- 🕒 EU: authorising the placing on the market of products containing, consisting of or produced from genetically modified soybean DBN-09004-6
- 🕒 Genetically modified foods and human health: a comprehensive review and cross-national time-trend analysis
- 🕒 Continued resistance to EU deregulation of new genetic engineering
- 🕒 Balancing food safety and sustainability: trade-off risk assessments and predictive modeling
- 🕒 German BfR: Study on preservatives and cancer has shortcomings
- 🕒 Will climate change affect nutrient, micronutrient and bioactive bioavailability?
- 🕒 France Nature Environnement: Deregulation of new GMOs is without scientific basis
- 🕒 The EU is simplifying the labelling and production rules for the marketing of low-alcohol wines
- 🕒 FSAC 2023 annual report: Foodborne illness source attribution estimates for Salmonella, Escherichia coli O157, and Listeria monocytogenes



## Food Fraud

- 🕒 [EU Agri-Food Fraud Report January 2026](#)
- 🕒 [Fake honey in Spain: why beekeepers are protesting – and what shoppers can do](#)
- 🕒 [UK: Metropolitan Police seize 67.000 bottles of counterfeit wine](#)
- 🕒 [Pakistan: Food adulteration reaches alarming proportion](#)
- 🕒 [The European Commission recently launched Trace-Map. This AI-powered tool is designed to help authorities detect and trace food fraud, contaminated products and foodborne disease outbreaks more quickly](#)
- 🕒 [Experts warn food fraud in Malaysia is widespread, risking health, trust and halal integrity across supply chains](#)
- 🕒 [How the industry is fighting food fraud in 2026](#)

## AGRINFO pesticide maximum residue level (MRL) tracker

AGRINFO is a programme funded by the European Union and implemented by COLEAD (Committee Linking Entrepreneurship-Agriculture-Development).

AGRINFO has launched the **Pesticide MRL Tracker**, a new tool that displays the latest changes over the past two years as well as upcoming changes to maximum residue limits (MRLs). Once the time period and products have been selected, the relevant maximum residue limits are listed:

Filter by product(s)	MRL changes in the last:	Showing	Last data update from EU database:
0120000 - Tree nuts (All)	3 months 6 months <b>1 year</b> 2 years	1-10 of 12 products	Mar 9, 2026 05:34
<b>Almonds</b>	Recent: MRL changes since 03 2025		
Amygdalus communis; syn: Prunus dulcis			
7 changes since 03 2025			
17 MRL(s) under discussion			
PREVIOUS MRL (mg/kg)	CURRENT MRL (mg/kg)	NEW MRL (mg/kg)	
0.02*	0.01*	-	EU Database
27 Jun 2018	06 Jul 2025		
<b>Fosetyl</b>			
1500		-	EU Database
18 Aug 2022	29 Apr 2025		

Note:

The Pesticide MRL Tracker does not provide an overview of all maximum residue levels by product or by active substance. You can find this information using the **EU Pesticide Database**:

Product Code	Products to which MRLs apply
0100000	FRÜCHTE, FRISCH ODER GEFROREN; SCHALENFRÜCHTE
0110000	Zitrusfrüchte
0110010	Grapefruits
0110020	Orangen
0110030	Zitronen

### Feedback

Please forward your suggestions, questions and requests regarding this newsletter directly to:

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