



# HOT SOURCE

Global food integrity issues and emerging risks

January - March 2019

Q1



Original thinking... applied

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Seeing Food Clearly

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HorizonScan  
Food Safety at Your Fingertips

The logo for HorizonScan features a stylized white silhouette of a factory or industrial building with a chimney, set against a dark background. Below the silhouette, the company name 'HorizonScan' is written in a bold, sans-serif font, with the tagline 'Food Safety at Your Fingertips' in a smaller font underneath.

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## Dear Reader

### Is the world big enough?

Two, four and eight billion people is the extraordinary doubling and redoubling of the world's population that will occur in slightly less than a century. World population which had grown to 2 billion by 1927, doubled to 4 billion by 1974 and will reach 8 billion by around 2023. The world population is predicted to grow from around 7.5 billion people today to 9.1 billion people by the year 2050 and with the shift from rural to urban life predicted to be place an increase demand for future food-stocks and shorter, more efficient supply chains, businesses need to have all the available tools to hand to cope with this forecasted expansion.

Food production will continue to be vulnerable to the impacts of rising global temperatures, with water stress and drought becoming more common. The promise of new levels of food manufacturing efficiencies to counter declining production forecasts provide hope for the future of food production. Advances in technology and open access is fuelling an explosion of business model innovation as we have seen with our very own HorizonScan now having its own API (Application programming interface). Allowing you to gain access to the raw data from hundreds of Global Official Sources collected daily for the last 15 years covering over 500 Commodities, 180 countries, 22,000 suppliers and hazards, from Food Fraud to Allergens and Microbes.

This data powers our global food safety issues tool, Horizonscan supporting our clients avoid potential issues every day.

In recent times many changes have occurred, one particular trend is the popularity of plant-based diets of vegans, vegetarians and flexitarians (those wanting to increase their intake of plant-based meals without completely eliminating meat) has skyrocketed rapidly since 2016, in UK and Europe. Interestingly, there are over 20,000 species of edible plants in the world yet fewer than 20 species now provide 90% of our food, with these being dominated by rice, maize, wheat and soybean. So, we are seeing increasing attention to those forgotten or orphan crops – crops like tef, finger millet, yam, roots and tubers that tend to be regionally important, often highly nutritional. These adaptable crops will feature more in our everyday diets. That means food security will be more important than ever and having that visibility at a touch of a button will become even more vital.

Why not trial HorizonScan and see the difference it can make in your business?

Contact [HorizonScan@foodchainid.com](mailto:HorizonScan@foodchainid.com)  
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# Food fraud issues:

- Doubts have been raised over the purity of natural honey in India following the independent testing of 10 well-known brands by Consumer Voice. Only one brand was found to contain added sugars (C4 sugars) at levels within the new standards set out by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India, 7%. One brand was found to contain 12.27% of C4 sugars and the other 8 brands did not show the existence of proteins on the basis of which C4 sugars can be detected which signifies the honey may not be pure.
- A study carried out by Consumer Voice in India has raised concerns over the adulteration of oils in the country. Adulteration was found in 8 major varieties of oil, namely mustard, sesame, coconut, sunflower, palm olein, soybean, groundnut and cottonseed oil. Coconut oil was found to be the most adulterated with 85% of samples found to be adulterated, closely followed by cottonseed oil (74.07% adulterated), sesame oil (74% adulterated) and mustard oil (71.77% adulterated).
- Researchers in China have developed a method to identify the geographic origin of rice. The method was tested on 15 blind samples of commercially packaged rice were used from supermarkets across 4 areas of China and it was found that 40% of the samples had a different origin to that declared on the packaging. The method is also able to pick up cadmium contamination in rice.
- Polish police are investigating a Polish abattoir suspected of illegally trafficking sick animals. Footage filmed at the abattoir shows the slaughter of visibly sick cows, carried out at night to avoid detection. Other abattoirs in the region are being checked following this discovery. Poland was the seventh largest producer of cow-meat in the EU in 2017.
- A US importer is recalling over 55,000 pounds of frozen catfish products from Vietnam as the products were not presented for imports re-inspection.
- A study carried out by the University of Guelph, in collaboration with the Canadian Food Inspection Industry (CFIA), has raised concerns over the mislabelling of fish in Canada after it was found that 32% of fish products examined were mislabelled. The study revealed that mislabelling is happening before the fish are imported into Canada, but that the issue intensifies as the samples move through the supply chain.
- A famous Chinese health brand has been banned from making honey and fined 14,000,000 yuan after being caught repackaging expired honey and re-selling it as a premium label product.
- Food Safety Administration inspectors in Slovenia have uncovered and stopped an illegal operation in the North-West of the country which saw sport horses being illegally slaughtered and processed for human consumption.
- Following previous HorizonScan highlights regarding the illegal slaughter of sick cows in Poland, it appears that some of the meat in question has been found in luxury restaurants in the Czech Republic disguised as prime Argentinian steaks. Officials are currently investigating the meat to see if it is contaminated and if any contamination is found a full ban on Polish beef in the country may result.
- Fishmongers and fish and chip shops in the UK may be selling endangered shark meat to the public. Researchers at the University of Exeter found some fish being sold under generic names such as huss, rock, flake and rock salmon were actually spiny dogfish, and endangered species in Europe. They also found shark fins being sold by a British wholesaler belonged to the globally endangered scalloped hammerheads as well as shortfin mako and small eye hammerheads.
- Europol and the Italian NAS Carabinieri have dismantled a criminal network producing counterfeit trademarks and labels of a winery in Florence and adding them to cheaper, lower quality wine. At least 11,000 bottles of red wine have been seized.
- Food experts have warned that 2019 may see a rise in fraudulent olive oil hitting the market. This follows bad weather and the spread of a bacteria killing olive trees in Europe which has resulted in years of bad harvests, with this year being particularly devastating. For instance, Italy has seen around 50% of its crop destroyed. Meanwhile Brazil's Ministry of Agriculture reported that 60% of olive oil products it tested were not true to what was declared on the label, with some brands found to be 85% soybean oil.

- A major Italian fraud investigation named 'Operation Global Wine' has uncovered large-scale fraud within the balsamic vinegar sector in Italy. Fraudsters are suspected of using lower-grade grapes to produce vinegar which was then passed off as authentic balsamic. £12.9 million worth of grape must and wine products were seized along with numerous documents showing provenance and authenticity credentials were falsified.
- La Guardia Civil in Alicante have discovered and shut down a laboratory producing adulterated saffron. 87kg of saffron with a market value of between €696,000 and €870,000 was seized. The lab was found to be mixing pure saffron threads with the stamen of other flowers not classed as a food product.
- French fraud investigators have uncovered a £5,000,000 scam in which Italian kiwis were being incorrectly labelled as more expensive French-grown kiwis. It is believed 15,000 tonnes of the fruit were fraudulently labelled over 3 years, with 12% of kiwis stamped as being of 'French origin' actually being from Italy.
- 14,000 pieces of ham have been seized following investigations by the Guardia Civil in Spain. A criminal network was found to be falsely labelling hams as Iberian, with over 30 companies believed to have been involved. Some of the hams were also found to be rotten and infested with fly larvae.



## Emerging issues:

- An emerging issue has been picked up by HorizonScan following the release of a RASFF report and several recalls and alerts from individual countries for undeclared sulphites in concentrated lemon juice from Italy which has been distributed to the following 30 countries; Albania, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Czech Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Hong Kong, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Netherlands, Philippines, Poland, Romania, South Africa, Spain, Suriname, Switzerland, United Kingdom and the United States.
- An emerging issue has appeared regarding the possible presence of *Mycobacterium bovis* (bovine TB) in raw milk cheeses from Ireland. The cheeses were made using unpasteurised milk from a herd in which animals tested positive for tuberculosis (TB) and as such have been recalled by the producer.
- An emerging issue involving undeclared milk in chocolate confections has become apparent in New Zealand. Since the 19th of February 9 recalls have been issued by different companies within the country. As well as chocolate products being recalled, 2 alerts have also now been released for biscuits containing chocolate (chocolate chip cookies and maple and choco biscuits) due to undeclared milk.
- Following the release of a RASFF report an emerging issue has been picked up in HorizonScan concerning the presence of the unauthorised novel food ingredient cannabidiol (CBD) in oil drops from Switzerland.

## Increasing issues:

- Salmonella Poona outbreak linked to rice milk formula continues to grow, with 26 infections now being investigated in France. The Spanish factory implicated in the current outbreak was also the source of a 2010/2011 Salmonella Poona outbreak which saw 289 infants sickened. The Salmonella Poona strains in the two outbreaks are genetically related.
- An increasing issue has been picked up in HorizonScan concerning the presence of Salmonella in black pepper from Brazil. Since the beginning of 2019, 17 RASFF alerts have been released by Spain, Germany, Austria, Greece and the United Kingdom. Brazil was the largest importer (by quantity) of black pepper into the EU in 2018, importing 22,571,000 kg.
- Further to the highlight of 29th of January 2019 regarding the trafficking of sick cows in Poland, the issue continues to escalate. It has now become apparent that meat from the sick cows has been distributed around Europe, with a RASFF report listing 13 distribution countries, including Poland itself.
- Following the HorizonScan highlight of the 5th of March 2019 regarding a Salmonella Agbeni outbreak in Norway, further cases have been reported (total of 32 confirmed cases and 7 possible) and a source has now been suggested. A possible link to dried fruit snack mixes from Italy has been made after the detection of Salmonella Agbeni in several samples of the products. As such a recall for the affected products has been released and expanded as the investigations continue.



# Q1 results 2019

|   |   | Quarter change<br>from Q4 2018 | Annual change<br>from Q1 2018 |
|---|---|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
|    | Poultry & poultry products                  | ↓ 25.2%                        | ↑ 7.0%                        |
|    | Seafood                                     | ↓ 4.2%                         | ↑ 45.7%                       |
|    | Milk & dairy products                       | ↓ 2.7%                         | ↑ 32.9%                       |
|  | Meat & meat products<br>(excluding poultry) | ↓ 25.4%                        | ↑ 23.2%                       |
|  | Herbs & spices                              | ↑ 57.1%                        | ↑ 35.6%                       |
|  | Fruit & vegetables                          | ↑ 0.4%                         | ↑ 9.7%                        |
|  | Nuts, nut products & seeds                  | ↓ 14.2%                        | ↓ 28.5%                       |



# Herbs & spices

Main issues reported during Q1 2019

## Total of 99 issues

| Key | Commodity                     | %    | Main issues                                  |
|-----|-------------------------------|------|--|
| ●   | Pepper, black, pink and white | 24.2 | <i>Salmonella</i>                            |
| ●   | Ginger                        | 20.2 | Pesticides, benzo(a)pyrene or other PAHs     |
| ●   | Spice mixtures & curry powder | 16.2 | Undeclared sulphite, Aflatoxins or colours   |
| ●   | Coriander leaves (cilantro)   | 9.1  | Pesticides                                   |
| ●   | Paprika and chilli powder     | 8.1  | Other processing issues or <i>Salmonella</i> |
| ●   | Oregano                       | 6.1  | Other natural toxicants                      |
| ●   | Nutmeg whole and ground       | 4    | Aflatoxins                                   |
| ●   | Fennel seed                   | 3    | Colours for use in food                      |
| ●   | Other herbs - fresh           | 3    | Pesticides                                   |







## KEY

'%' relates to the number of issues concerning that commodity in its group, for example 28.4% of all issues concerning nuts, nut products and seeds involved pistachios.

'Main issues' reflects the majority of issues reported for that commodity, but does not include every minor issue, for example, most reported issues concerning chicken meat were either the presence of *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter* or *Listeria*.

'Issues' relates to food recalls, border rejections and other such notifications at a global level collated from over 90 official government and other additional reliable sources around the world.



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