

Annual Report of Incidents 2013

This report presents numbers and types of incidents, reported to the Food Standards Agency (FSA) during 2013, that had the potential to impact on the safety of food. This report adopts a broad definition of such incidents, in terms of their character, severity and the channel via which they are reported. This report acts as a public record of incident levels for reference purposes. The report includes breakdowns of the number of food incidents, reported incidents by incident category, notifier, country of origin and food commodity type.

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Executive summary

In 2013, the Food Standards Agency was notified of and investigated 1,562 food and environmental contamination incidents in the UK, similar to last year (1,604).

- In 2013, the Food Standards Agency was notified of and investigated 1,562 food and environmental contamination incidents in the UK, similar to last year (1,604).
- Of these, four incidents were classified as 'high' level incidents. The majority of incidents (58%) were classified as "low", as they are considered minor, with localised effects and few, if any, food safety implications. Appendix 1 provides more details about how the FSA classifies an incident.
- The three largest contributors to the total number of recorded incidents in 2013 were:
 - Microbiological contamination (21%)
 - Environmental contamination (15%)
 - Natural chemical contamination (9%)
- **Microbiological contamination:** This was the only category of incidents that have been consistently increasing over time, from 147 in 2006 to 322 in 2013. In 2013, over 30% of microbiological contamination incidents were due to *Salmonella*.
- **Environmental contamination:** The source of almost three-quarters of environmental incidents in 2013 was fire. Most of the remainder were caused by spills and leaks.
- **Chemical contamination:** Aflatoxins, found mainly in peanuts and groundnuts, accounted for 56% of natural chemical contamination incidents in 2013. Most of the other natural chemical contamination incidents were related to algal toxins in shellfish

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- More than half of the incidents in 2013 were reported by local authorities (359), border inspection points (270), and Fire Services (177).
- In 2013, 56% of incidents originated in the United Kingdom, including almost all of the environmental contamination incidents. About 39% of incidents were related to foods imported from outside the EU.
- Action taken to protect consumers in relation to food safety included issuing 108 alerts and information notices to local authorities. The FSA also sent 327 notifications to the European Commission, via the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF).

What is an incident?

In 2013, the FSA was notified of and investigated 1,562 incidents, which is slightly fewer than last year. Overall, incident frequency has increased over the last eight years. Since 2010, there has been an average of 1,596 incidents per year, up from an average of 1,291 per year over the period 2006-2009.

Figure 1: Incidents notified to the UK Food Standards Agency, 2006 – 2013



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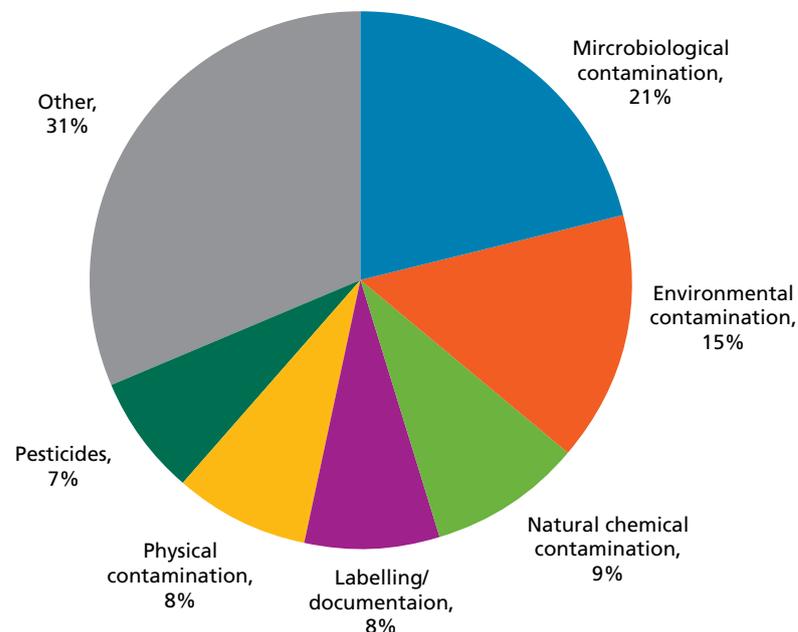
The incidents for 2013 included that were classified as 'high' level. High level incidents are defined as severe, complex and widespread incidents which are likely to generate a high level of concern in the public and media perception of the issue. These incidents were:

- Investigation into horse and pig DNA in beef products
- DNP (2,4-Dinitrophenol) fat burner incident (3 fatalities in 2013)
- Two *E. coli* O157 outbreaks linked to watercress
- Caribbean soft fruit drink contaminated with cocaine (1 fatality).

Incidents by incident category

The most common incidents were those related to microbiological contamination. They accounted for around a fifth (21%) of all incidents notified in 2013. This is the only category where the number of incidents has increased each year since 2006.

Figure 2: Incidents by incident category – UK, 2013



The next largest is “Environmental contamination”, which accounted for 15% of all incidents in 2013. This category shows the greatest variability in incident frequency over time, mainly due to large year-on-year differences in the number of notified fires.

Table 1: Incidents by FSA category – UK, 2006 – 2013

Category	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Allergens	61	86	84	86	79	114	129	91
Animal feed contamination ¹	9	10	13	10	8	28	27	16
Biocides	2	0	1	2	2	0	3	4
Counterfeit products	6	3	6	7	11	11	9	23
Environmental contamination	376	226	186	211	342	356	235	239
Food contact materials	15	26	35	50	37	40	49	29
Illegal import / export	16	17	7	14	16	9	6	36
Irradiated ingredients	14	23	10	6	7	4	13	0
Labelling / documentation	93	82	126	77	95	120	127	132
Microbiological contamination	147	163	186	218	271	281	317	322
Natural chemical contamination	169	215	230	150	228	285	213	147
On-farm	99	160	139	144	122	134	107	87
Pesticides	20	35	16	28	55	102	120	114
Physical contamination	139	123	110	56	116	93	107	118
Process contamination	15	21	14	19	9	4	16	31
Radiological	11	14	6	7	4	7	4	3
TSE ²	10	8	4	9	9	10	14	11
Use of an unauthorised ingredient	52	46	66	70	59	67	83	82
Veterinary medicines	78	45	47	36	31	47	24	75
Water quality	12	9	12	8	4	2	1	2
Total	1,344	1,312	1,298	1,208	1,505	1,714	1,604	1,562

1. Refers to animal feed on the market.

2. Transmissible spongiform encephalopathy

Key movements for individual incident categories

The overall number of incidents in 2013 was close to the figure for 2012, being only 42 incidents fewer. However, in most categories, the numbers of incidents differ considerably from year to year. This section summarises the key changes for individual incident categories in 2013.

Some of the largest changes are in the number of environmental and natural chemical contamination incidents. Both categories are likely to be influenced by the weather, particularly environmental contamination incidents, which are mainly fires.

The number of food incidents notified is affected by a number of other factors. Many types of incidents occur sporadically and so tend not to spread evenly across time. Also changes in the number of notifications can be a reflection of changes in the amount of testing/ investigation being carried out. The number of notifications therefore may not be a reliable indicator of the underlying level of food risk and is more a measure of the FSA's caseload.

Microbiological contamination

The annual number of microbiological incidents has been increasing each year, more than doubling (from 147 to 322) between 2006 and 2013. Since 2011, the largest contributor has been paan leaves contaminated with *Salmonella* spp. mainly from Bangladesh.

A small part of the increase in 2012 and 2013 is due to changes in reporting shellfish incidents. UK shellfish beds are regularly monitored for *E. coli* contamination. (In this context, high *E. coli* counts indicate poor hygienic conditions rather than the presence of a pathogenic strain.) Since 2012, elevated levels in Scotland have been recorded as incidents.

Pesticide residue contamination

Since 2009, the number of pesticide residue incidents has increased substantially. In the last three years the main contributor has been the increased testing of okra leaves at border inspection points.

Counterfeit products

The frequency of counterfeit product incidents in 2013 is over three times that over the period from 2006 to 2012. In 2013, over two-thirds of incidents were related to meat, whereas in 2012, most related to alcoholic beverages. This may be due to greater investigation of the meat supply chain in response to horsemeat being found in beef products early in the year.

Veterinary medicines

The frequency of veterinary medicine incidents in 2013 is almost double that from 2007 to 2012. However, the higher numbers in 2013 are not dominated with any particular medicine (unlike 2006 where two-thirds of incidents were of nitrofurans in shellfish). Like 2012, about half of incidents related to non-poultry meat. Instead, it appears to be the result of more incidents being reported by DARD in Northern Ireland, Veterinary Medicines Directorate, Defra, and EU Member States.

Detailed analysis for individual incident categories

Allergens

Four potential allergens accounted for over half of allergen incidents in 2013. They were peanuts, sulphites, milk and cereals containing gluten.

Table 2: Allergen incidents by allergen of concern – UK, 2013

Allergen	Number of incidents
Peanuts	17
Sulphites	13
Milk	13
Cereals containing gluten	7
Soya	7
Eggs	6
Nuts (not peanuts)	6
Lupin	3
Mustard	2
Shellfish	1
More than one allergen	4
Uncategorised	12
Total	91

Animal feed contamination

Five of the 16 animal feed incidents in 2013 were due to contamination by dioxins and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs).

Counterfeit products

Of the 23 counterfeit product incidents in 2013, 14 were related to meat and meat products other than poultry, of which 7 were associated with horsemeat.

Environmental contamination

Over two-thirds (167 out of 239) of environmental contamination incidents in 2013 were due to fires. They present potential risks to food safety through contamination to crops or food stores by exposure to polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). PAHs are produced as by-products of the combustion of organic and fossil fuels and are potentially carcinogenic.

Spills and leaks were responsible for another 44 of environmental contamination incidents in 2013.

Only 14 environmental contamination incidents in 2013 were related to food from outside the United Kingdom. Most were related to heavy metal contamination.

Food contact materials

Of the 29 incidents involving food contact materials in 2013, 21 of these referred to imports from Asia (including 16 from China). As in previous years, incidents relating to formaldehyde and primary aromatic amines (PAAs) (10 and 8 incidents respectively) were the largest contributors to this category.

Incidents relating to incorrect labelling and documentation

As in previous years, general labelling violations accounted for the greatest proportion of incidents in this category.

Table 3: Incidents relating to incorrect labelling and documentation by type – UK, 2013

Incorrect labelling / documentation type	Number of incidents
General labelling violation	66
Documentation incorrect	23
Unauthorised premises	20
Date coding incorrect	13
Fraud	5
Uncategorised	5
Total	132

Microbiological contamination

Bacterial incidents accounted for 72% of microbiological contamination in 2013, which included *Salmonella* (31%) indicator and pathogenic strains of *E. coli* (18%) and *Listeria monocytogenes* and other *Listeria* species (14%).

Table 4: Incidents of microbiological contamination – UK, 2013

Microbiological contaminant	Number of incidents
<i>Salmonella</i> spp ¹	101
<i>Escherichia coli</i> ²	57
<i>Listeria</i> inc. <i>monocytogenes</i>	46
Other specified bacteria	27
Viruses	18
Yeasts & moulds	16
Algae	4
Fungi	1
Parasites	1
Other ³	51
Total	322

1. Includes two incidents where *Listeria monocytogenes* or *E. coli* were detected along with *Salmonella*

2. Including *E. coli* O157 & other shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* (STEC)

3. Includes incidents involving poor hygienic state and high colony counts

Contamination of paan leaves, mainly from Bangladesh, India and Thailand accounted for 41 of the 101 *Salmonella* incidents.

UK shellfish monitoring uses *E. coli* as a hygiene indicator. This detected 37 of the 57 *E. coli* incidents in 2013. Most of the non-shellfish *E. coli* incidents relate to pathogenic STEC-producing strains.

Of the 46 *Listeria* incidents in 2013, at least 37 were associated with the pathogenic species *L. monocytogenes*.

Natural chemical contamination

Aflatoxins accounted for 56% of natural chemical contamination incidents in 2013. Just under half of them are related to nuts, mainly peanuts, groundnuts and products thereof. Most of the other natural chemical contamination incidents were related to algal toxins. These incidents referred to shellfish poisoning or the detection of high concentrations of the biotoxins that can cause it, as a part of regular monitoring of shellfish beds in the UK.

Table 5: Natural chemical incidents by contaminant – UK, 2013

Natural chemical contamination sub-category	Number of incidents
Aflatoxins	84
Other mycotoxins	8
Algal toxins	49
Scombrototoxin/ Histamine	2
Other	2
Uncategorised	2
Total	147

On-farm contamination

Almost two-thirds of on-farm contamination incidents in 2013 were related to the heavy metal poisoning of animals. Lead poisoning can result from the ingestion of paint and parts of dumped car batteries. Copper poisoning incidents can be caused by mistakes in the preparation of feed mixtures produced 'on-farm'.

The other main cause of on-farm incidents is *botulism*. It is usually cattle and sheep that are affected, with the source of contamination often being poultry litter.

Table 6: On-farm contamination incidents by type – UK, 2013

On-farm contamination sub-category	Number of incidents
Metal – Lead	41
Metal – Copper	13
Metal – Cadmium	1
Botulism	25
Other	3
Uncategorised	4
Total	87

Pesticide residues

Almost all (108 out of 114) incidents in 2013 involving pesticides residues referred to food from outside the EU. The range of pesticides involved remains very diverse with over 30 agents being detected. The most common pesticide mentioned was dichlorvos, whose residues were found in beans from Nigeria in 17 incidents. Another 39 incidents involved okra from India which was contaminated with pesticide residues such as the insecticides acephate, acetamiprid and monocrotophos.

Physical contamination

In 2013, 23 of the 118 physical contamination incidents were caused by pests. Contamination by plastic, metal and glass was recorded in 19, 12 and 10 incidents respectively. However, the type of contamination cannot be identified for the majority of the other incidents in this category.

Use of unauthorised ingredients

About a quarter of unauthorised ingredient incidents in 2013 were related to benzoic acid. This issue was mainly restricted to non-alcoholic beverages.

Table 7: Use of unauthorised ingredients by ingredient type – UK 2013

Unauthorised ingredient type	Number of incidents
Benzoic acid	20
Dietetic food supplements	18
Colours	14
Novel foods	7
Preservatives	7
Aluminium salt leavening agents	6
Genetic modification	3
Sweeteners	2
Carbon monoxide	1
Lead	1
Uncategorised	2
Total	82

Veterinary medicines

Over 30 different veterinary medicines caused incidents in 2013. The most common medicine was Chloramphenicol, a wide-spectrum antibiotic, which was found in 13 incidents. Residues of the parasiticide closantel were found in 11 incidents, mainly in sheep and cattle liver. Six incidents related to phenylbutazone residues, of which all but one were found in horses.

Incidents by hazard type

Incidents by hazard type

It is also possible to group incidents by the Hazard classification used by the European Commission's Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF). Some Hazard types are very similar to Incident categories. For instance, the hazard types "Pesticide residues", "Foreign Bodies" and "Allergens" are very similar to the "Pesticides", "Physical contamination" and "Allergens" categories.

A fifth (20%) of incidents are related to pathogenic micro-organisms. Almost all of these incidents fall within the "Microbiological contamination" and "On-farm" incidents, as is the case for the "non-pathogenic micro-organism" hazard category.

The next largest hazard category is "Chemical concentration (other)", which accounts for 15% of incidents in 2013. Of these, 87% fall within the "Environmental contamination" incident category.

Table 8: Incidents by RASFF hazard category – UK, 2013

Category	Number of incidents
Pathogenic micro-organisms	307
Chemical contamination (other)	241
Pesticide residues	114
Foreign bodies	105
Labelling absent / incomplete / incorrect	97
Allergens	89
Mycotoxins	88
Heavy metals	75
Residues of vet med products	75
Adulteration / fraud	63
Biotoxins (other)	52
Food additives and flavourings	52
Poor or insufficient controls	34
Not determined / other	32
Migration	29
Non-pathogenic micro-organisms	26
Industrial contaminants (other)	20
Composition	18
Feed additives	11
GMO / Novel Food	10
TSEs	10
Organoleptic aspects	5
Parasitic infestation	4
Radiation	4
Packaging defective / incorrect	1
Total	1,562

Incidents by notifier type

The number of incidents notified by EU Member States and the European Commission has risen over time. In 2013 there were 197 incidents, 22% higher than the average over the period 2010 to 2013 (161).

Table 9: Incidents by notifier type – UK, 2006 – 2013

Notifier	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Agency Survey	5	4	7	16	14	7	4	1
Ambulance Service	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Animal Health / Veterinary Laboratories Agency	79	110	93	82	68	115	80	76
Border Inspections Posts	203	254	232	201	233	426	397	270
DARD	6	39	33	34	6	7	25	38
DEFRA	26	19	22	27	35	28	5	16
Department of Health	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Environment Agency	26	23	20	20	20	15	10	16
EU Member States & the European Commission ¹	98	98	127	126	166	155	163	197
Fire services	263	158	129	136	223	246	179	177
FSA Operations Group	3	5	3	7	5	12	15	24
General public	14	12	9	5	13	14	16	23
Government Offices of the Regions ²	3	0	0	0	0	7	1	–
Health Protection Scotland	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	3
Health & Safety Executive ³	0	0	0	0	0	8	10	–
HM Revenue and Customs	1	1	1	2	0	0	1	1
Industry	104	132	163	109	95	113	139	119

Notifier	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Laboratories ³	7	8	19	42	97	91	93	–
Local authority ⁴	267	259	347	246	376	297	346	359
Marine Management Organisation	–	–	–	–	0	0	0	7
Maritime & Coastguard Agency	5	4	4	0	4	3	0	0
National Health Service (NHS)	5	1	2	2	5	1	2	4
Nuclear Power Stations	5	6	4	1	3	1	1	1
Police	12	10	8	7	7	7	2	14
Public Health England (PHE) ⁵	18	20	0	15	26	21	15	18
Scottish Agricultural College	21	15	13	8	12	5	6	4
Single Liaison Body	121	103	28	69	83	85	71	31
Third country	0	0	0	0	3	1	6	1
Veterinary Medicines Directorate	46	26	12	7	9	5	8	19
Water companies	0	0	0	0	0	28	5	6
Other	6	5	22	46	2	14	4	133
Total	1,344	1,312	1,298	1,208	1,505	1,714	1,604	1,562

1. Includes RASFF notifications

2. Now abolished

3. Now recorded under Other

4. Including 6 incidents from Port Health Authorities (PHA) in 2013

5. Formally Health Protection Agency

“–” indicates a period where this notifier was not in existence

Incidents by country of origin

In 2013, over half of incidents originated in the United Kingdom. In particular, 'on-farm' and 'environmental contamination' incidents are almost entirely of UK origin. This is because many of such contamination events are local and only occasionally have wider consequences.

About 30% of incidents in 2013 were related to foods imported from outside the EU. Three-fifths of import incidents were notified by border inspection posts, but this differed with the type of incident. About 90% of pesticide incidents were related to issues with imports that were reported by border inspection posts.

In 2013, the country of origin could not be identified or was not recorded for 71 incidents.

Table 10: Incidents by country of origin – UK, 2013

Incident category	UK	EU	Non – EU	Unknown	Total
Allergens	62	14	11	4	91
Animal feed contamination ¹	8	2	5	1	16
Biocides	4	0	0	0	4
Counterfeit products	11	9	1	2	23
Environmental contamination	225	3	10	1	239
Food contact materials	7	0	21	1	29
Illegal import / export	15	5	15	1	36
Labelling / documentation	63	26	30	13	132
Microbiological contamination	161	36	103	22	322
Natural chemical contamination	70	11	66	0	147
Not determined	2	0	1	0	3
On-farm	85	1	1	0	87
Pesticides	3	3	108	0	114
Physical contamination	62	35	11	10	118
Process contamination	11	4	14	2	31
Radiological	1	1	0	1	3
TSE ²	11	0	0	0	11
Use of unauthorised ingredients	22	6	43	11	82
Veterinary medicines	50	8	16	1	75
Water quality	2	0	0	0	2
Total incidents	873	164	455	70	1,562
As a proportion of total	56%	10%	29%	4%	100%

1. Refers to animal feed on the market.

2. Transmissible spongiform encephalopathy

In 2013, the reported incidents related to food from over 70 countries. India was the largest contributor with 107 incidents, accounting for 17% of incidents from outside the UK. Pesticide issues made up 42% of these 107 incidents.

China and the United States were the next biggest contributors (58 and 44 incidents respectively). For China, the most common category of incidents was food contact materials (28%) whereas for the United States it was use of unauthorised ingredients (45%).

Incidents by food type

Incidents are associated with a wide variety of foods. The three highest food commodities accounted for about a third of all food incidents in 2013.

Over three-quarters (78%) of “Meat and Meat Products (other than poultry)” incidents were associated with food from the UK as were almost all “Bivalve Molluscs and products thereof” incidents.

In contrast, the majority of “Fruits and Vegetables” and “Herbs and Spices” incidents were from India and other Asian countries.

About 17% of incidents were not attributable to a specific commodity type. Most were due to fires and events potentially contaminating areas of food production. Also, the presence of food contact materials in cooking and eating utensils can affect a wide range of foods.

Table 12: Incidents by food commodity type – UK, 2013

Food commodity type	Number of incidents
Meat and meat products (other than poultry)	235
Fruits and vegetables	177
Bivalve molluscs and products thereof	107
Herbs and spices	75
Cereals and bakery products	67
Nuts, nut products and seeds	67
Non-alcoholic beverages	61
Poultry meat and poultry meat products	59
Prepared dishes and snacks	56
Dietetic foods, food Supplements, fortified foods	51
Confectionery	51
Feed for animals	49
Fish and fish products	49
Milk and milk products	46
Other food products / mixed	40
Soups, broths, sauces and condiments	20
Crustaceans and products thereof	16
Eggs and egg products	11
Cocoa and cocoa preparations, coffee and tea	8
Water for human consumption	8
Honey and royal jelly	6
Wine	6
Ices and desserts	6
Cephalopods and products thereof	6
Food additives and flavourings	4
Pet food	3
Alcoholic beverages	3
Fats and oils	1
Gastropods	1
Incidents not attributable to a specific food	273
related to environmental contamination	(216)
related to food contact materials	(26)
for other reasons	(31)
Total incidents	1,562

Food alerts and information notices

The Food Standards Agency may, in the light of the information received, issue a food alert to local authorities, who enforce food law. Only a small proportion of food incidents will lead to a food alert. These alerts are used during incidents where, for example, the distribution of a product is wide and will potentially involve many local authorities.

- Food Alerts for Action (FAFA) are issued when an incident requires enforcement action by Local Authorities.
- Recall Information Notices (RIN) are issued to inform consumers and local authorities that a food product should be 'recalled' (when customers are asked to return the product).
- Withdrawal Information Notices (WINs) are issued to inform consumers and local authorities that a food product should be 'withdrawn' from sale (taken off the shelves).
- Allergy Alerts are issued in cases where foods have to be withdrawn or recalled, if there is a risk to consumers, because the allergy labelling is missing or incorrect or if there is any other food allergy risk.

In 2013, the Agency issued a total of 108 alerts and information notices of which 13 were updates. This compares to 118 alerts and information notices (including 11 updates) recorded in 2011. About half of the alerts and notices were allergy alerts, due chiefly to undeclared presence of allergens or incorrect allergen labelling.

Table 13: Food Alerts and Information Notices by Alert Category, UK 2013¹

Alert category	Food Alert for Action (FAFA)	Recall Information Notice (RIN)	Withdrawal Information Notice (WIN)	Allergy Alerts (AA)	Total Number
Microbiological ²	3	16	0	0	19
Foreign Bodies	0	9	0	0	9
Chemical	1	2	1	0	4
Other	6	8	2	0	16
Allergens	0	0	0	47	47
Total	10	35	3	47	95

1. Excluding updates

2. One RIN was issued for both Microbiological and Other reasons.

The FSA will also inform the Commission and other member states of matters that they need to act on. The information is passed on using the European Commission's RASFF System. In 2013, the FSA issued a total of 327 RASFF notifications comprising 24 rapid alerts, 239 border rejection notifications and 64 information notices (source: RASFF Portal, accessed 02/04/2014).

Appendix 1

What is an incident?

An incident is defined by the FSA as:

'Any event where, based on the information available, there are concerns about actual or suspected threats to the safety or integrity of food and feed that could require intervention to protect consumers' interests.'

Incidents fall broadly into two categories

- Incidents involving accidental and deliberate contamination of food or animal feed in the processing, distribution, retail and catering chains. These incidents may result in action to withdraw the food from sale and, in certain circumstances, to recall, alerting the public not to consume potentially contaminated food.
- Environmental pollution incidents, for example, fires, chemical/oil spills, radiation leaks, which may involve voluntary or statutory action (such as orders made under the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985).

Appendix 2

Who tells the FSA about incidents?

Food business operators

Food business operators have a statutory obligation to report incidents. European legislation¹ specifies the general principles and requirements of food law, establishing the European Food Safety Authority and lays down procedures in matters of food safety.

Food business operators are required, under Article 19 of Regulation No. 178/2002, to inform the competent authorities where they have reason to believe that a foodstuff that they have imported, produced, manufactured or distributed is not in compliance with food safety requirements. In the case of the UK, the competent authorities are the Food Standards Agency and the food authorities (local and port health authorities). Both industry and local authorities can report incidents online. The online report form is available on the FSA website at: <https://incidents.foodapps.co.uk/IncidentReportForm/login.aspx>

Local authorities

Under the Food Law Code of Practice², local authorities have a requirement to notify the FSA of food incidents. The code of practice provides instructions and criteria that food authorities should have regard to when engaged in the enforcement of food law. Food authorities must follow and implement the provisions of the code that applies to them.

Local authorities regularly undertake inspections of premises and sample products from wholesale or retail outlets. Where breaches of food safety requirements are identified, the authority will contact the Incidents Branch using our incident report form. Local authorities provide information to the FSA under the Single Liaison Body (SLB) system. The Food Standards Agency are the SLB for the UK as designated under Article 35 of Regulation (EC) No. 882/2004.

¹ Regulation (EC) No. 178/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 January 2002 ('the Regulation')

² Food Standards Agency publish this document, which provides instructions and criteria to which local authorities should have regard to when carrying out their food law regulatory and enforcement duties

The Single Liaison Body

- assists and coordinates communication between EU member states on food issues
- forwards complaints and requests for information to member states
- receives incoming requests for assistance and directs these to the appropriate originating authority (local authority)
- resolves difficulties in communication and liaison.

The European Commission

The European Commission operates the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF). The RASFF is a network of member states, the European Commission and the European Food Safety Authority. Whenever a member of the network has any information relating to the existence of a serious direct or indirect risk to human health, this information is immediately forwarded to the Commission using a rapid alert form. The Commission then immediately transmits this information to the members of the network. Likewise when the Food Standards Agency finds an issue that affects or could affect other member states or third (non-EU) countries, they notify the Commission through the RASFF system.

Members of the public

Occasionally, the Food Standards Agency will receive notification of food incidents and quality issues from members of the general public, although the Agency stress that the public should always contact their local authority first. To find your nearest food enforcer, use the search facility on our website at: www.food.gov.uk/enforcement/enforceessential/yourarea/

Regarding food complaints from consumers who may have suffered food poisoning, or found food on sale past its use-by date, investigation of isolated complaints of this kind is the responsibility of local authority food enforcement officials. The Food Standards Agency promptly forward any complaints they receive to the relevant local authority to investigate.

Emergency services

Notifications are regularly received from the police, fire service and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency. These notifications usually relate to fires, oil or sewage spills or chemical leaks where there is the potential for contamination in the food chain.

Other government departments/agencies

Notifications may be received from many government departments or agencies; for example, the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Environment Agency, Public Health England and the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency. The Food Standards Agency receives notifications from Public Health Wales, and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development for Northern Ireland.

Border inspection posts (BIPs)

BIPs are EU-approved entry points for products of animal origin, originating in countries outside the EU. UK BIPs routinely sample incoming consignments of foodstuffs to ensure compliance with legislation. Adverse results are notified to the FSA and action is taken to ensure that the incoming consignment is destroyed or re-exported where permissible. Border Rejection Notifications are sent by the FSA to the European Commission via RASFF for circulation to all member states. Information circulated in this manner is used by BIPs to determine which incoming consignments to sample. Following the rejection of a consignment at a BIP, the responsible manufacturer or exporter can expect to have further consignments sampled to ensure compliance with legislation.

Miscellaneous organisations and facilities

Groups such as the Anaphylaxis Campaign, Coeliac UK and Allergy UK will notify the FSA if they become aware of any issues relating to food allergies. Nuclear Power stations the Scottish Agricultural College and independent laboratories will also notify the Agency of incidents.

Appendix 3

How can you get in touch with us?

We seek to continuously improve our publication and welcome feedback from you. If you have any feedback on the publication please send comments to the Incidents Branch at the email address below.

Incidents Unit

Incidents Branch

The Incidents Branch acts as the central hub for food and feed incidents work. It maintains the official audit trail for the investigation, co-ordinating the logging, collation and distribution of information required during the investigation. The Branch arranges the issue of food alerts to local authorities, other government departments, trade organisations and other interested parties and RASFF notifications to the Commission.

Contact details for the Incidents Branch:

Incidents Branch
Food Standards Agency
Aviation House
125 Kingsway, London
WC2B 6NH

tel: 020 7276 8448

fax: 020 7276 8788

email (all incidents): foodincidents@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

Food Incidents should be reported using an incident report form located at:
<https://incidents.foodapps.co.uk/IncidentReportForm/login.aspx>

Out of office hours contact should be made through the Defra Duty Room:

tel: 0845 051 8486

fax: 020 7270 8487

The Defra Duty Room will contact the appropriate officer 'on-call' in the Incidents Branch.

Food Fraud Team

The Food Fraud team are committed to providing local authorities with support when tackling food fraud, which includes any deliberate illegal activity relating to the supply of food or feed. The team provide the resources to all UK local authorities when tackling known or suspected food fraud:

Contact details for the Food Fraud Team:

Food Fraud
Food Standards Agency
Aviation House
125 Kingsway, London
WC2B 6NH

tel: 020 7276 8242

fax: 020 7276 8788

email: foodfraud@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

Local authorities are asked to submit intelligence on a '5x5x5' Information/Intelligence Report form. This is a standard format used by enforcement agencies for managing the evaluation, the source and the origin of information, and the way in which it should be handled and disseminated. The form can be found at:

www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/worddocs/nffdintelligencereportform.doc

Out of office hours contact should be calling the Food Fraud Hotline (answerphone) on 020 7276 8527.

The Food Standards Agency have offices in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland which take responsibility for co-ordinating incidents and food fraud investigations in their areas. Any issues relating to food in these areas will be led by the devolved office concerned.

Radiological team

email: radiation@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

FSA in Scotland

6th Floor, St Magnus House
25 Guild Street, Aberdeen
AB11 6NJ

tel: (01224) 285 138/196

email: scottishincidents@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

Out of hours telephone: 07881 516867

FSA in Wales

11th Floor, Southgate House
Wood Street, Cardiff
CF10 1EW

tel: 029 20 678961

email: wales.foodincidents@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

Out of hours telephone: 07789 926573

FSA in Northern Ireland

10a–10c Clarendon Road
Belfast
BT1 3BG

tel: 028 9041 7700

email: incidents.ni@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

Out of hours telephone: 07884 473022

Appendix 4

Glossary of terms

AA	Allergy Alerts
BIP	Border Inspection Post
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
Defra	Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic acid
DNP	2,4-Dinitrophenol
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
FAFA	Food Alert – For Action
FSA	Food Standards Agency
PAA	Primary aromatic amines
PAH	Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons
PHA	Port Health Authority
PCB	Polychlorinated biphenyls
PHE	Public Health England
RASFF	Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed
RIN	Recall Information Notice
SLB	Single Liaison Body
TSE	Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy
UK	United Kingdom
WIN	Withdrawal Information Notice

For further information and advice about food, or to download this publication, visit the Food Standards Agency's website:
food.gov.uk

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