










Food Forensics Risk Newsletter

June 2025

HIGHLIGHTS

-  Stone and soft fruit producers assess the impact of April's late spring frosts.
-  Severe hailstorms in May cause further damage to Spain's fruit crops.
-  UK is facing its driest spring since 1961, with early crop failures, low reservoir levels and growing pressure on water systems.
-  China's onion production set to reach new markets for prepared and frozen.
-  Late spring frosts in Turkey raise concerns for sultana and dried apricot supply.
-  Confirmed case of avian influenza H5N1 in Brazil results in export restrictions.
-  New UK and EU sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) agreement impacts both EU and non-EU suppliers.

Produce

Citrus

In North America, California's orange season is ending with strong demand and high-quality fruit, while South African oranges are beginning to arrive. Brazil expects a major production boost next season due to favourable weather and more productive trees. In Europe, demand and prices are strong. Italy and France report early season ends and high prices. Spain sees price hikes despite quality issues from weather. The Netherlands and Germany are transitioning to South African imports as Egyptian and Spanish supplies decline. Egypt ended its season early, with local markets and juice processing now prioritised over exports. Morocco, affected by drought and low export profits, is focusing more on domestic sales and soft citrus.

Brazil's 2025-26 orange harvest is forecast at a 36.2% increase from the previous season. Despite this growth, fruit drop is expected to increase to 20%, mainly due to citrus greening and a later harvest.

Top Fruit

The 2025 apple harvest in France is projected to decline by 10 to 30% due to severe infestations of the rosy apple aphid (*Dysaphis plantaginea*), with the highest pest pressure observed in recent weeks. Contributing factors include mild winter conditions and current warm, humid weather, which have intensified

aphid proliferation while reducing the efficacy of available biocontrol measures. Organic-approved treatments, such as mineral and neem oils, have been employed, they have proven insufficient. Beneficial insects are unable to mitigate the infestation adequately, and only limited post-flowering synthetic insecticide applications are permitted. Affected regions include the Centre-Loire Valley, Sarthe, and Limousin. Long-term impacts are expected, with reduced tree vigour potentially lowering yields in 2026. The French Apple Pear Association (ANPP) highlights regulatory disparities, noting that European competitors continue to use neonicotinoids such as acetamiprid.

As of April 1, 2025, European apple stocks fell by 7.1% year-on-year to 1.76 million tons, with major declines in Poland, Germany and Belgium. Poland saw the largest drop, down 126,000 tons. Despite some countries including Denmark, Switzerland and the UK reporting significant increases, overall regional stocks declined.

European pear stocks dropped 9.8% with steep declines in Spain (Catalonia), Poland, Germany and Italy. The Netherlands retained the highest stock volume despite a 14% decrease. While Switzerland, the UK and France posted strong gains, these were insufficient to reverse the broader downward trend across Europe.

Soft Fruit

Unexpected snowfall hit southern Serbia,

where most of the country's raspberries are grown, threatening the already fragile 2025 harvest. The snow fell on raspberry fields just weeks before the main harvest, which usually starts in mid-June. Early frost in April had already damaged up to half of the potential yield, and the new snowfall may cause further losses, with some farmers fearing total crop failure. This weather setback adds to similar challenges across Eastern Europe and is expected to lead to further shortfalls in production and higher prices for the 2025/26 raspberry season.

Late spring frosts caused severe damage to raspberries in Moldova. It has been estimated 45-50% of summer raspberry crops were lost, posing major challenges for raw material supply in the freezing industry. Additionally, a wet spring increased fungal disease risks, further threatening yields. Despite Moldova's own crop setbacks, freezing companies from Serbia and Poland are seeking to buy Moldovan raspberries having suffered similar damage to their own crops.

Stone Fruits

The severe late Spring frosts across Eastern Europe and Turkey have caused major losses to sweet and sour cherry crops, leading to sharply reduced harvests and higher prices. Ukraine, Poland, Turkey, Russia, Hungary, Romania and Moldova all suffered significant frost damage, with crop losses ranging from 30% to 90%. Turkey, a key cherry supplier, saw up to a 70% drop in production, pushing prices up. Other countries also expect

higher prices and increased reliance on imports. Efforts to replace Turkish cherries with Uzbek supplies face logistical and seasonal challenges. Overall, it is expected that cherry availability will be much lower and prices much higher across the region in 2025.

Turkey, the world's top apricot producer, is facing major supply disruptions following severe frosts in April 2025, which devastated crops. This has triggered a global ripple effect, with rising apricot prices anticipated across the EU, USA, Middle East and Central Asia until at least July 2026. Key importers including the U.S., France and Germany are now turning to alternative suppliers such as Spain, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Italy.

In Hungary, the late spring frosts devastated fruit crops, particularly apricots. Up to 90% of apricot, peach, cherry and plum crops were lost, with overall fruit production down by around 75%.

Severe hailstorms in May caused significant damage to Spain's stone fruit crops leading to expected shortages and rising prices. The hailstorms devastated apricots, nectarines, peaches, Paraguay (flat) peaches and cherries. Much of the damaged fruit is unusable even for processing and will be left unharvested.

Stone fruit producers in Greece have suffered substantial crop losses due to the severe frost in March followed by two consecutive days of hailstorms in late April. While the hail was not intense, its persistence compounded earlier frost damage, resulting in near-total yield loss in several crops. Estimated production losses include 100% in cherries, 80 - 90% in apricots and plums, and 40 - 50% in peaches and nectarines. Pear production has also been significantly impacted, with expected losses of approximately 50%, attributed to insufficient winter chilling, frost, hail and extreme diurnal temperature variations. These conditions have intensified fruit drop in pears. As a result, the region faces limited domestic supply, cessation of stone fruit exports, and potential price volatility during the harvest period.

The 2025 California cherry season is facing a projected 50% drop in yield due to irregular precipitation and warm temperatures disrupting bloom cycles.

Melon

A violent storm with heavy hail on 1st May 2025 devastated the watermelon crop in Morocco's Zagora region, destroying up to

70% of its production. Exporters estimate a loss of 4,000 to 5,000 tonnes, creating a 15 to 20 day supply gap and expected price spikes. Some areas were spared, but even surviving farms face access issues due to muddy roads, delaying any remaining deliveries.

Bananas

During ongoing workers protests in Panama, 450,000 boxes of bananas have been lost due to export disruptions and halted agricultural operations. It is warned that if the situation persists, the damage may become irreversible, jeopardising future exports and product quality. Bananas are Panama's top export.

Exotics

Costa Rica's pineapple industry is experiencing reduced supply due to extreme weather influenced by the El Nino - La Nina transition. The shortage has significantly raised export prices to Europe and the U.S. which are the highest in over a decade. The climatic impact is believed to have negatively affected fruit size, quality and volume. The U.S. (54% of exports) and Europe (40%) are the main markets, but rising costs raise concerns over consumer affordability. Meanwhile, Costa Rica is expanding into markets in Asia, the Middle East and Eastern Europe, supported by diversification into processed pineapple products (e.g., juices, jams, frozen forms) and premium air-shipped fruit.

Salad Crops

The 2025 summer European tomato season is facing delays due to persistent spring rains, particularly in France, Italy and Spain. These weather disruptions slowed planting, increasing the risk of a late and shortened harvest season, especially in September. Spain is expected to see a significant production decline from 2024 levels. Despite delays, official forecasts for France and Italy remain unchanged.

The Coordinator of Farmers' and Livestock Breeders' Organisations (COAG) has urged Spain's Ministry of Consumer Affairs to enforce the European Court of Justice's ruling requiring clear labelling of fruits and vegetables originating from Western Sahara. The ruling mandates that products from Western Sahara must be explicitly labelled as such, rather than generically as "Morocco". COAG highlighted a significant increase in imports that are labelled "Morocco" despite being produced in Western Sahara.

Imports of cheap Russian cucumbers to Poland surged in March to a four-year high, driven by low prices despite EU sanctions and political tensions. While Polish border inspections found shipments met EU standards, mislabelling was later discovered at wholesale level, prompting fines. A pesticide-contaminated Belarusian shipment was also rejected.

In Canada, Fusarium pepper wilt has become the most serious disease threat to Ontario's greenhouse pepper industry. The disease, which causes root and crown rot without vascular discolouration, has severely disrupted production and increased reliance on imports from British Columbia, the Netherlands and California.

Potatoes

Confirmed larvae of the Colorado beetle have been found in Kent. The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) warns the beetle could cause serious economic damage to the potato industry if not swiftly managed. The beetle and its larvae feed on the foliage of potatoes, tomatoes, aubergines and peppers, potentially defoliating entire plants. APHA stresses that ongoing surveillance and public cooperation are essential to prevent a resurgence. Beetles may arrive on imported vegetables and herbs. Identification guides have been issued by APHA to assist the public in detection.

The UK potato industry is facing dual pressures: low demand and surplus supply in the current 2024/25 marketing year, alongside growing concerns of a drought that could reduce yields for the 2025/26 crop.

Potato planting in North-western Europe advanced well in April 2025, helped by dry weather in Germany and the Netherlands, but a lack of rainfall has left soil moisture low in key areas like Poland and Denmark, causing worries about crop growth. Meanwhile, heavy rains in Portugal and Spain delayed planting, and cold weather in Romania disrupted early efforts.

Potato farmers in Sa Pobla, Mallorca, are facing a severe crisis due to a nematode infestation that drastically reduces yields and profitability making cultivation financially unviable. Farmers blame restrictive European regulations for denying access to effective treatments such as dichloropropene and metam sodium, which they claim had previously kept the pest under control. Despite an exceptional authorisation for Vapam and planned soil testing, farmers believe these measures are inadequate.

Sweet Potatoes

Sweet potato supply from North Carolina remains very tight due to a smaller 2024 crop in both size and yield. Domestic demand in the U.S. is strong, meaning very little is being exported, even though international demand and prices are favourable.

Onions

China's growing onion production presents strong export potential into new markets. Exports currently peak from February to June, primarily supplying peeled and frozen onions to Europe. Competitive sea freight rates to Europe, combined with favourable growing conditions and expanded planting areas resulting in high yields and lower prices, are enhancing China's export potential. Additionally, China's ability to offer value-added onion products supported by low labour costs makes these products especially appealing to markets requiring ready-to-use ingredients.

Ginger & Garlic

Ginger prices in India have plummeted to historic lows, primarily due to the recent escalation in India-Pakistan tensions disrupting cross-border trade. It is particularly affecting exports from India to Bangladesh. The closure of the India-Bangladesh border has led to a significant oversupply in domestic markets, causing ginger prices to drop dramatically.

Garlic supplies in the U.S. are tightening, with traditional imports from Mexico proving insufficient and Spain facing ongoing climate-related production challenges. In response, some businesses are increasingly sourcing garlic from Egypt.

Avocado

Kenya's avocado industry is under pressure as Red Sea shipping disruptions have increased delivery times to Europe. Tanzanian avocado exports have grown 74% in five years and are projected to keep rising. South Africa, unaffected by Red Sea issues and focused on premium markets, now leads the continent in export value and has entered the Indian market.

Spices

Black pepper prices have tripled since Jan 2023 as a result of climate issues, supply chain disruption and reduced planting.

Nuts

The French hazelnut sector, led by the French Hazelnut Producers Association and the Unicoque cooperative, is urging

Members of Parliament to reinstate a derogation for the insecticide acetamiprid, banned in France since 2018 but still allowed in the EU until 2033. The sector warns that the lack of effective pest control tools, particularly against the devil and balanin bugs, threatens its survival, especially after nearly 50% of the 2024 crop was destroyed, with 30% of the remainder deemed unfit for consumption. Acetamiprid is still widely used in major hazelnut-producing countries such as Italy, Spain and Turkey.

Turkish authorities have revised their 2025/26 hazelnut crop estimate with a 20% drop from the March forecast and a 22% decrease from the previous season. The downward adjustment follows frost and snow damage along the Black Sea coast in April. Some traders argue the projection is overly optimistic and does not account for shrink damage, which could render part of the crop unusable.

The Almond Board of Australia has revised down its 2025-26 season almond crop forecast for a second time due to adverse climatic conditions. The decrease is primarily attributed to hot, dry weather affecting kernel moisture in the high-value Nonpareil variety and frost events in September that damaged yields in some growing regions.

Cashew farmers in Gia Lai (Vietnam) are experiencing severe crop failures for the third consecutive year. Yields are down by 50-70%, and in some areas, entire harvests have failed.

Coconut

Coconut prices have surged to record highs in Vietnam, the Philippines and Thailand due to climate-related supply disruptions and pest infestations. In Vietnam, prices have more than doubled from last year with exporters struggling to meet demand. Similar trends are seen across the region, with prices in Thailand and the Philippines rising by up to 100% yoy. Extreme weather from El Nino and La Nina, along with pest outbreaks, have damaged crops, while strong demand from the U.S. and China continues to push prices higher.

Dried Fruit

The late spring frosts in Turkey raise concern for dried fruit supplies including sultanas and dried apricots with the INC World Nut & Dried Fruit Congress currently estimating significantly lower production for the 2025/26 season.

Cereals

Severe drought conditions are threatening wheat crops in China. Henan province, which is responsible for nearly a third of the country's wheat output, is experiencing extreme heat and dry winds during a crucial growth phase. Major wheat-producing regions are suffering from a 90-day rainfall deficit, potentially reducing yields despite irrigation.

GB is experiencing its driest spring since 1961 putting growing pressure on water systems. April saw only 56% of average rainfall and unusually high temperatures, which initially helped speed up spring cereal sowing but are now stressing crops, especially spring barley. Prolonged dry conditions in May could damage yield potential, and AHDB's latest report shows the percentage of winter wheat rated good or excellent fell from 67% in March to 60% in April, though still better than 2024 levels. Winter barley and oats also declined slightly, while oilseed rape improved modestly. Short stalks will also lead to straw shortages impacting higher welfare production as well as overwintered root crops.

Turkey is likely to increase international grain imports in 2025 due to a projected shortfall in domestic wheat production, caused by drought and earlier frost.

Flood damage to soy fields in Argentina has pushed soy bean prices up.

Despite an expected increase in oat acreage and production in Canada for 2025, exports will need to be reduced to maintain critically low ending stocks for the 2025-26 season, due to already tight opening stocks.

Coffee

Concerns over tight supplies and adverse weather in Brazil, the world's top producer of arabica coffee, has put pressure on prices. Limited availability of arabica coffee for new sales and expectations that newly harvested beans will not be exported until June have tightened the market. Forecasts of below-average rainfall in Brazil's key coffee-growing areas also added upward pressure on prices.

Cocoa

Supply concerns continue to support prices as Ivory Coast cocoa exports have slowed and processors report higher rates of defective beans in the mid-crop (5-6% vs 1% in the main crop). The drought in West Africa and delayed rains have further limited crop yields, with Ivory Coast's

mid-crop estimated to drop 9% year-on-year. Q1 global cocoa grindings were better than expected, showing smaller yoy declines, helping support prices. Ghana's lowered harvest forecast and the 2023/24 global cocoa deficit of 441,000 MT (the largest in over 60 years) further reinforced supply-side pressures. However, the ICCO projects a 2024/25 surplus and an 8% rise in production, signalling potential future relief for the market.

Tea

Kenya's tea output dropped 13.55% due to dry conditions, while inconsistent rains in India are threatening yields and farmer incomes. The risk of fraud and adulteration in the tea trade may increase. Suppliers may exploit shortages and price spikes by blending low-quality or contaminated tea into the supply chain.

Honey and Syrups

World Bee Day on May 20th highlighted the crucial role of bees in global food production and ecosystems. Pollinators are experiencing alarming declines, with nearly 40% of species at risk of extinction. Declining bee populations raises concerns for honey supplies and the potential for increased food fraud and substitution.

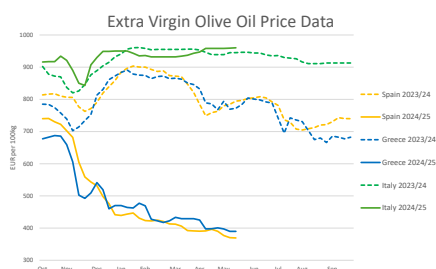
Sugar

Cuba is expecting only 26% of its sugar production harvest following challenges of poor organisation and fuels shortages among other challenges.

Olives & Olive Oils

Total EU olive oil production in 2024/25 is expected to be 16% above 5-year average with Spain contributing the largest market share. EVOO prices from Spain and Greece have stabilised at average levels but Italian EVOO is 68% above its 5 year average.

In Brazil's Southeast (notably Minas Gerais and São Paulo), olive oil production dropped by more than 50%, with some farms facing near-total crop failure, excessive rainfall and lack of winter chill have been blamed.



Protein

African Swine Fever (ASF)

The EFSA reported ASF outbreaks in domestic pigs in 2024 in the EU dropped by 83% compared to 2023 - the lowest since 2017. This sharp decline was mainly driven by fewer outbreaks in Romania and Croatia. The number of EU Member States affected also decreased, with Sweden declared free of the disease and no new countries reporting infections. Romania accounted for 66% of the total outbreaks, most of which occurred in small-scale farms with fewer than 100 pigs. Meanwhile, outbreaks in wild boar remained stable, with Poland reporting 30% of these cases.

Avian Influenza (HPAI H5N1)

Mandatory housing measures for poultry and captive birds in the UK, introduced to curb the spread of avian influenza were lifted on 15 May 2025. While birds may allowed outside access in most areas, strict biosecurity measures remain mandatory. Housing restrictions still apply in Protection and Captive Bird Monitoring Zones where outbreaks have recently occurred. In Northern Ireland, the measures will be lifted on 31 May 2025.

Blue-tongue virus (BTV-3)

During the 2024–2025 vector season, GB has recorded 260 cases of Bluetongue virus; 258 in England and 2 in Wales. There has been 1 case of BTV-12, detected in England. Currently, the UK is in a low-risk period for bluetongue transmission, as midges are active but unlikely to spread the virus. However, control rules remain in effect during this time.

Foot and Mouth Disease

The risk of FMD entering the UK is currently assessed as medium. There have been recent cases in Germany (January 2025), Hungary and Slovakia (March 2025). Restrictions remain on importing certain products from Hungary, Slovakia and Austria (due to case near Hungarian-Austrian border).

Lamb & Goat

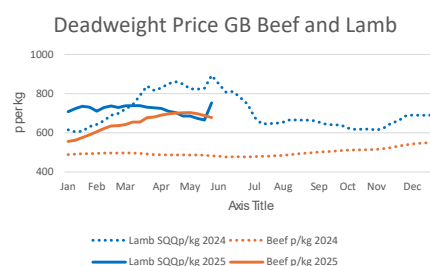
In the UK, a shrinking breeding flock and firm demand have tightened lamb supply. New season UK lamb caused a spike in SQQ to 753p/kg versus the old season SQQ of 660p/kg. Australia, a major exporter, is grappling with severe drought in the southeast and flooding in Queensland, disrupting livestock production and delaying lambs to market.

Dairy

UK Dairy (as well as beef and lamb) are all struggling following the driest Spring in over 70 years. The impact on reduced grass growth will be having a significant impact on milk production. In addition with more than one third drop in yield from the first silage cut could force farmers into compound feeding.

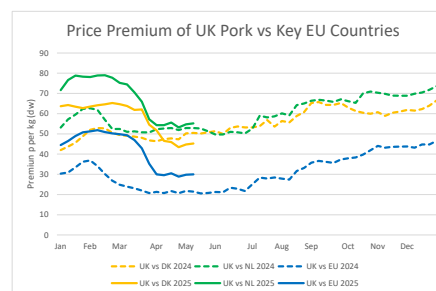
Beef

The price differential between beef and lamb has continued on trend resulting in beef achieving a price premium on lamb. Despite a gradual decline in the last month, beef prices remain on average 41% higher yoy.



Pig Meat

Warm weather will be increasing demand for BBQ products - sausages, chops and belly strips. While price differentials have reduced between UK and imported origins there is still a significant discount on key imported origins.



Chicken & Turkey

Brazil, the world's largest exporter of chicken meat, has confirmed its first case of highly pathogenic avian influenza (H5N1) on a commercial poultry farm. The outbreak has led to the death of approximately 17,000 chickens. Several major importers including China, the European Union and South Korea, are enforcing a 60-day nationwide ban on Brazilian poultry imports, as per existing sanitary protocols. Some nations, such as Japan, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, are implementing more localised restrictions limited to the affected state or municipality. Argentina has temporarily suspended all Brazilian poultry imports.

Egg Layer

U.S. consumer egg prices declined by 12.7% last month following a prolonged period of price inflation driven by a severe outbreak of avian influenza, which necessitated the culling of millions of egg-laying hens and disrupted supply chains. Although prices remain elevated compared to pre-outbreak levels (49.3% higher than a year ago) the current downward trend suggests market stabilisation.

Mackerel

The North Atlantic Pelagic Advocacy Group (NAPA) has reaffirmed that its members will shift to alternative fish species if Northeast Atlantic coastal states - Norway, the EU, UK, Iceland, Faroe Islands and Greenland, fail to resolve long-standing overfishing of mackerel. Despite fishers showing full compliance with quotas, the failure of coastal states to agree on science-based catch limits has led to catches exceeding recommendations by 40% over the past 15 years and a decade-long decline in mackerel stocks. NAPA has launched a campaign and policy fishery improvement projects (FIPs), warning that unless sustainable agreements are reached within 12 months, members will cease sourcing from unsustainable mackerel fisheries. Last month (April 2025), the Marine Conservation Society downgraded the environmental rating of Northeast Atlantic mackerel caught by mid-water trawlers from 3 to 4 in its 2025 Good Fish Guide, advising businesses against sourcing the species.

Salmon

Russia is expecting a weaker wild salmon harvest in 2025. The anticipated shortfall raises concerns about increased pressure on alternative supply sources and a heightened risk of product substitution or food fraud. In the past, such shortages have led to cases where less expensive or lower-quality fish were mislabelled and sold as wild salmon, particularly in international markets.

Icelandic Salmon faced significant biological challenges in Q1 2025, leading to an early harvest and a sharp drop in production in Q1 2024.

The FAIRR Initiative has warned that the salmon industry faces significant risks due to its heavy reliance on dwindling wild fish stocks for feed.

Sardines

California has imposed restrictions on commercial and recreational fishing of Pacific sardines due to elevated levels of domoic acid, a neurotoxin produced by marine algae. The toxin, which can accumulate in fish, poses serious health risks to humans, including vomiting, memory loss, coma and death.

Lobster

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission has officially repealed a proposal to increase lobster gauge and vent sizes after strong opposition from the U.S. lobster industry. Originally delayed until July 2025, the changes were fully repealed citing economic concerns for Gulf of Maine fishermen.

Shrimp

The U.S. shrimp industry, especially along the Gulf Coast, is facing widespread seafood mislabelling and a surge of cheap, imported farm-raised shrimp from Asia and South America, often misrepresented as local. Tests revealed mislabelling rates as high as 96% in some regions. States with labelling laws saw far lower inauthenticity rates than those without (34% vs. 78% respectively).

Fishmeal

Global fishmeal and fish oil production rose significantly in March 2025 according to IFFO. Fishmeal production was up 29% and fish oil output rose 34% compared to March 2024, primarily driven by increased production in Peru, along with strong performances in Chile, the U.S., Spain and parts of Africa. European countries were the only region to see a decline in fish oil output. Peru's recent anchovy fishery reactivation and a generous catch quota for the North-Central region contributed to this growth. Looking ahead, demand in China is expected to be strong due to its annual fishing moratorium, which increases reliance on imports for fishmeal and fish oil during peak feed demand. Rising farm-gate prices and expected growth in aquaculture and pig farming are also likely to sustain high demand and support feed costs through 2025.

Animal Food

Pet-food RASFF Alerts & Recalls

Salmonella typhimurium detected in Dog chews from Austria.

Mars Petcare is facing a proposed class-action lawsuit over claims that its

Pedigree Complete Nutrition Roasted Chicken & Vegetable Dog Kibble contains dangerously high levels of vitamin D.

The FDA issued warning letters to three companies for marketing unapproved animal drug products containing CBD and mushroom-based ingredients. The FDA found that these companies made claims on websites and social media suggesting their products diagnose, treat, or prevent diseases, classifying them as "new animal drugs". These products lack required FDA approval and are therefore illegal to market.

General

Environmental

In 2024, the world's tropical forests suffered record losses, primarily due to fires. The Amazon was hit hardest, driven by severe drought and climate change, raising fears it may be nearing an irreversible tipping point. The loss released an estimated 3.1 billion tonnes of CO₂, equal to EU emissions. In contrast, Southeast Asia showed progress, especially Indonesia, where strong political will and anti-burning laws helped reduce deforestation.

Climate

The UK is experiencing its driest start to spring since 1956, prompting the National Drought Group to convene amid concerns over a medium risk of summer drought. March was the driest since 1961, and April rainfall was significantly below average, particularly in northern England, though Northern Ireland saw above-average rainfall.

Farmers have started irrigation earlier than usual, increasing pressure on water storage. High sunshine levels have supported good crop growth, especially in the salad sector. April was the sunniest on record for the UK, contributing to dry conditions.

Illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU fishing)

South American countries including Peru have taken steps to combat IUU fishing, especially targeting China's distant-water fleet. Peru introduced an emergency decree requiring foreign vessels to carry an activated government satellite tracking device to enter its waters, which has significantly reduced Chinese fishing activity there. However, these vessels have now shifted south to Chile. Data shows several Chinese squid fishing vessels have arrived in Chilean ports since

Peru's restrictions came into effect, with more awaiting permission to enter Chilean shipyards.

Environmental NGOs ClientEarth and Oceana have filed a lawsuit against the Spanish government for allegedly failing to investigate and sanction Spanish-owned and -flagged fishing vessels suspected of illegal activities in West African waters, particularly off the coasts of Senegal and Guinea-Bissau.

Conservation

A report by Oceana UK revealed bottom trawling occurred for 20,000 hours in the UK's offshore marine protected areas (MPAs) in 2024, despite these zones being meant for conservation. Oceana UK is calling for a ban on bottom trawling in MPAs, citing a successful example from Lyme Bay where a decade-long ban led to a significant increase in fish populations and biodiversity, as well as higher earnings for local fishers using less damaging methods.

The U.S. House of Representatives voted to remove the endangered species status of the San Francisco Bay longfin smelt, a move driven by Republican lawmakers who blame California's water policies and associated environmental protections for contributing to the state's wildfire crisis. Conservationists highlight that the fish's population has plummeted by 99% since the 1980s due to water diversions that harm its freshwater-dependent habitat.

EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR)

The EU is preparing to designate only four countries—Belarus, North Korea, Myanmar and Russia—as high-risk for deforestation under its anti-deforestation law, the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR). The list is expected to be officially released in June 2025.

Worker's rights

Female Moroccan seasonal workers in Huelva, Spain, have formed the first trade union to represent their rights in the agricultural sector. The union was created to combat ongoing abuses such as wage delays, poor working conditions and physical or sexual exploitation. Its first action was filing a lawsuit against a Spanish agricultural company for unfairly dismissing Moroccan workers.

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE)

A single case of atypical Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) has

been confirmed on a farm in Essex. The UK's controlled BSE risk status remains unchanged, and beef exports are unaffected.

Tariffs

Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a landmark Free Trade Agreement (FTA) on May 6, 2025. Indian tariffs on UK goods will be significantly reduced, with 90% of tariff lines seeing reductions and 85% becoming tariff-free within a decade. UK spirits, especially Scotch whisky and gin, will see tariffs halved initially and further reduced over ten years. Increased exports of foods such as spirits, lamb, salmon, soft drinks, chocolate and biscuits are expected. The deal is expected to take a year to come into force.

USA

The Trump administration has withdrawn a proposed USDA rule aimed at reducing Salmonella contamination in raw poultry, sparking backlash from public health experts. The rule, developed under the Biden administration, would have mandated testing for Salmonella in products such as ground chicken and turkey parts, and banned those with dangerous strain levels from being sold. The withdrawn rule targeted six high-risk strains and set contamination thresholds, representing a science-based effort to curb foodborne illness. Its cancellation follows broader roll-backs in federal food safety oversight under the Trump administration, raising concerns about increased vulnerability to preventable outbreaks.

Packaging

Coca-Cola has agreed to modify recycling claims on its bottles following a legal complaint by the European Consumer Organisation (BEUC) and others, who argued that labels such '100% recycled' and '100% recyclable' were misleading. The issue stemmed from parts of the bottle, such as caps and labels, not being fully recycled or recyclable. In response, Coca-Cola will now clarify that these claims only apply to certain parts of the bottle. Authorities will monitor compliance and similar scrutiny may extend to other beverage companies. Critics warn that even revised messaging could still mislead consumers about the environmental impact of plastic bottles.

GB MRL Statutory Register

To meet the requirements of international trade and to accommodate new authorisations for plant protection

products, new MRLs have been set in the GB MRL Statutory Register for a number of active/commodity combinations. Details available [here](#).

New UK-EU SPS agreement

The UK and EU have reached a new sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) agreement aimed at easing post-Brexit trade by removing some checks on seafood, meat and other animal and plant products, allowing goods to flow more freely, including between Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The deal, linked to extended EU fishing rights in UK waters, is expected to reduce trade barriers, lower food prices and boost exports after significant declines since Brexit. However, many details remain to be finalised, and current border rules still apply.

The EU-UK trade agreement could reduce the competitive edge of non-EU suppliers which had benefited since Brexit with the UK's pivot away from EU sources due to added import complexities. With streamlined trade now resuming between the UK and the EU, European exporters may regain market share, increasing competition for non-EU suppliers.

The announcement leaves businesses uncertain whether to follow the original BTOM (Border Target Operating Model) plan or prepare for new rules. The UK's fresh produce industry is warning of major supply disruptions due to the border health checks due to start on 1 July 2025. The UK government has yet to confirm whether new border checks on medium-risk fresh produce imports will begin as planned, citing ongoing internal negotiations. Key crops including tomatoes and peppers would be affected but officials emphasise that final decisions depend on cross-government agreement.

National Food Crime Unit

As of May 1, 2025, the UK's Food Standards Agency (FSA) has granted the National Food Crime Unit (NFCU) in England and Wales new investigatory powers under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE). These powers allow NFCU investigators to apply for and execute search warrants, improving their ability to combat food fraud directly and efficiently. The move strengthens enforcement capabilities nearly a decade after the NFCU was established following the 2013 horse meat scandal. It is expected to reduce reliance on police and local authority resources, enabling faster response to food crime intelligence.

IN THE NEWS: May

Baby Food

A report by Healthy Babies Bright Futures found that all 145 rice samples tested across the U.S. contained arsenic, with over 25% exceeding the FDA's action level for infant rice cereal. Elevated levels of cadmium and lead were also found, particularly in some seasoned rice products. California-grown rice, Thai jasmine and Indian basmati had consistently lower heavy metal levels, though rising tariffs are expected to increase their cost.

Dairy

The Punjab Food Authority (PFA) discarded 1,700 litres of adulterated milk. Tests revealed the milk was diluted with water and had a low fat content. In another crackdown, 5,400 litres of adulterated milk mixed with water were discarded after 20 trucks were inspected.

Seafood

A joint investigation by DeSmog and The Guardian has revealed that the UK supermarket supply chain is indirectly contributing to severe food insecurity and ecological damage in Senegal. The country's small pelagic fish stocks, especially sardinella, a vital food source, are being rapidly depleted, partly due to fishmeal factories, which grind up edible fish to produce feed for the global aquaculture industry.

Meat

Cranswick has acquired Blakemans, a Staffordshire-based sausage manufacturer. Cranswick were in the news this month following an undercover investigation revealing animal welfare breaches at a Cranswick farm, which led to a 7% drop in its share price.

Lab Grown Meat

Nebraska has become the sixth U.S. state to ban lab-grown meat. The ban covers the production, sale, promotion and distribution of cultivated meat in the state.

Fruit

Biosecurity efforts are ongoing at a tomato farm in northern Victoria after a new detection of the Tomato Brown Rugose

Fruit Virus (ToBRFV) was found in incoming seedlings.

Fresh Del Monte has announced legal action following reports of illegal cultivation and harvesting of its proprietary pink pineapple variety in Nicaragua.

Nuts

Kenya's Agriculture and Food Authority has issued a warning regarding a forged letter falsely authorising the export of raw (in-shell) macadamia nuts.

Mineral water

A French Senate report revealed that the French government helped cover up consumer fraud by Nestle, allowing the company to use banned treatments, including ultraviolet light and prohibited filters, on its natural mineral waters, such as Perrier.

Tea

Thomas Robinson, trading as *The Wee Tea Plantation*, was found guilty of a £553,000 fraud for selling imported tea as "Scottish-grown" to luxury hotels and retailers, including the Balmoral and Dorchester. He also misled aspiring tea growers by selling imported plants at inflated prices, falsely claiming they were locally produced. His fabricated credentials and deceptive marketing misled clients and the media. A 2017 food standards investigation uncovered the scam, leading to his conviction. Sentencing is pending, with additional proceedings under the Proceeds of Crime Act.

Wines and spirits

A lawsuit has been filed against global spirits company Diageo in New York, alleging the company falsely labels tequila as 100% agave while adulterating it with cheaper cane alcohol. The suit also claims Diageo colluded with the Tequila Regulatory Council (CRT) to manipulate agave supplies and prices, harming small additive-free producers and rural farmers. It accuses the CRT of enabling fraud by issuing permits for fictitious agave fields, contributing to a collapse in agave prices and threatening local communities.

According to a recent report, the UK wine market is being inundated with sophisticated counterfeit versions of popular wines, particularly the Australian brand Yellow Tail. Organised crime gangs from Asia and Europe produce fake bottles using high-end digital printers and professional-grade replication methods.

Supplements

The former Director of Vietnam's Food Safety Authority and four other officials have been arrested for accepting bribes in exchange for certifying over 200 counterfeit health supplement products and issuing GMP certifications without proper inspection. The scheme used falsified documents to gain approvals, enabling mass distribution of fake supplements since 2016.

Cyber security

Peter Green Chilled, a small logistics firm supplying major UK supermarkets including Tesco, Sainsbury's and Aldi, has fallen victim to a ransomware attack. The cyber attack disrupted order processing and risks thousands of pounds worth of food going to waste. While the company says its transport operations continue, the incident highlights the vulnerability of smaller distributors lacking the resources of larger firms. Industry experts note a sharp rise in cyberattacks targeting the food distribution sector, with hackers exploiting its critical role in keeping supermarket shelves stocked. Many such attacks remain unreported due to the severe operational and reputational consequences.

SPS controls on EU fruit and vegetables

BREAKING NEWS: Defra has announced that the current easement on medium-risk fruit and vegetables from the EU, Switzerland and Liechtenstein will be extended until 31 January 2027. This means SPS (sanitary and phytosanitary) border checks will not apply to these products until that date unless a UK-EU SPS agreement is reached before then.

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Stay ahead of risks—start leveraging Knowledge Base Analytics this month! **Contact us** to arrange a demonstration.

Food Safety May

Country No of Alerts

France	93
United States	42
Belgium	33
Germany	31
Italy	29
Turkey	28
Poland	21
Spain	17
Canada	17
United Kingdom	17
India	16
Netherlands	16
Luxembourg	15
China	13
Denmark	12
Egypt	10
Peru	9
Australia	8
Switzerland	8
Czechia	7
Argentina	7
Iran	7
Austria	6
Finland	6
Sweden	6
Ecuador	6
Ukraine	5
Pakistan	5
Nigeria	4
Romania	4
Ireland	4
Morocco	4
Latvia	4
Slovenia	4
Norway	4
Iceland	3
Bangladesh	3
Hungary	3
Indonesia	3
New Zealand	3
Thailand	3
Georgia	3
Portugal	3
Greece	3
United Arab Emirates	2
Mexico	2
Kenya	2
Israel	2
Taiwan	2
Tunisia	2
Brazil	2
Croatia	2
Serbia	2
Sri Lanka	2
Vietnam	2
Nepal	1
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1
Benin	1
Lithuania	1
Albania	1
Uganda	1
Cambodia	1
Hong Kong	1
Dominican Republic	1
Tanzania	1
Honduras	1
Slovakia	1
Belarus	1
Syria	1
Jersey	1
Jordan	1
Unknown Origin	1
North Macedonia	1
Ghana	1
Russia	1

Total 587

SUMMARY

There were **526 Red**, **54 Amber** and **7 Green** totalling **587 safety alerts and product recalls*** in May

The majority of alerts were for bacterial pathogens and allergens (29.3% and 14.9% respectively). Natural contaminants were third with 12.4%.

172 Bacterial pathogen alerts (51% Salmonella, 33% Listeria); E.coli accounted for 9 % of which 80% were STEC.

88 Allergen alerts (27% undeclared wheat, 13% undeclared milk and 9% undeclared sulphites)

Top 3 alerts by commodity

- 1. Ingredients:** Nuts & seeds, herbs, spices & rice, pasta & noodles
- 2. Produce:** Fruit, vegetables and dried fruit
- 3. Prepared:** Sweets & desserts, ready meals, snacking.

Top 3 number of alerts by county of origin

- 1. France:** Pork, cheese, sausage.
- 2. USA:** Nuts & seeds, sandwiches and salads, breads.
- 3. Belgium:** Herbs and spices, sweets & desserts, cheese.

*Safety alerts & product recalls compiled from RASFF, FDA, AFSCA, CFIA, Rappel Consommateur, potraviny na pranyr, SFA, CFS, MPI, FSAI & Food Standards AU

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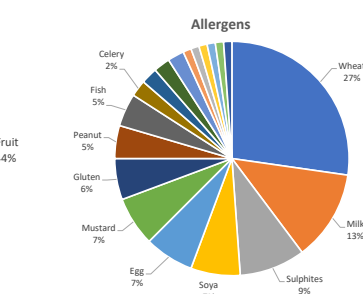
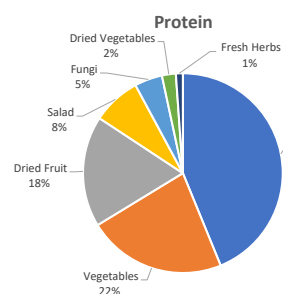
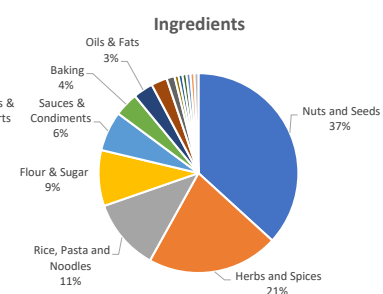
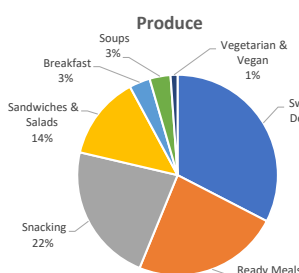
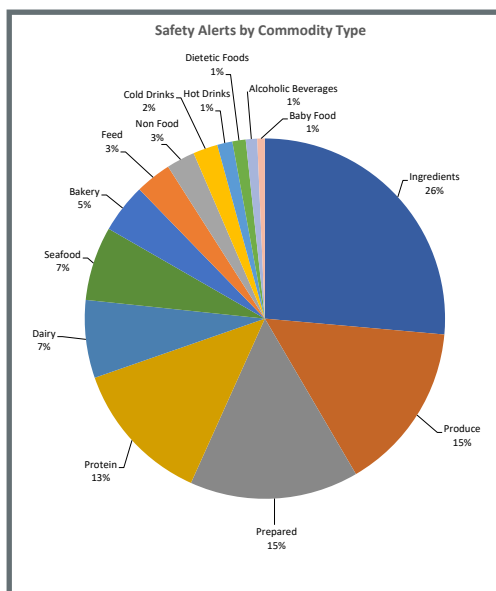
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For more information about Knowledge Base, Testing & other services.

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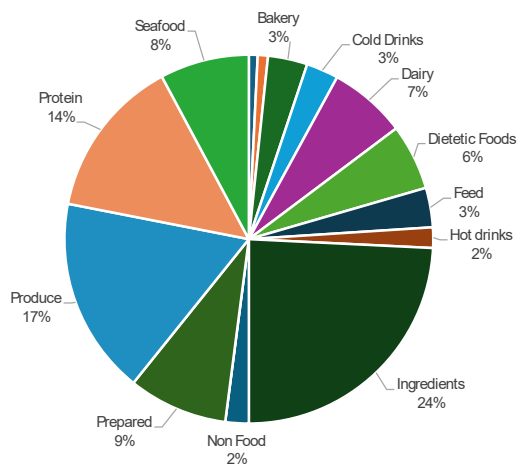
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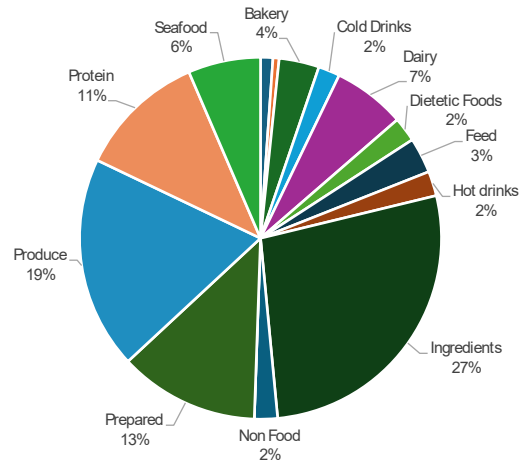


Knowledge Base Trends

Product Category Issues May 2024

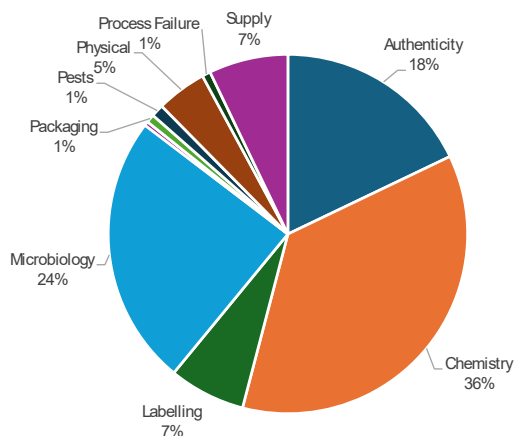


Product Category Issues May 2025

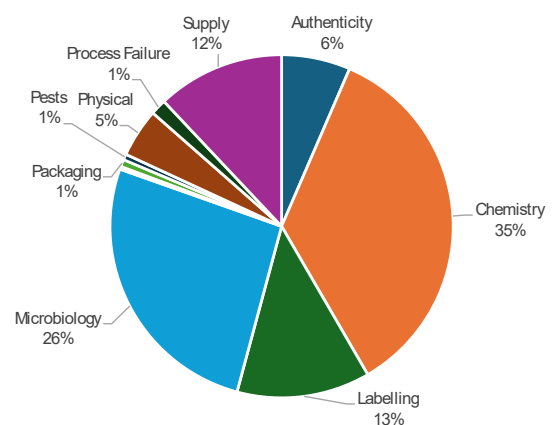


May 2025 has resulted in a similar product category profile to 2024. A slight increase in the proportion of issues reported in ingredients, prepared and produce. .

Category Reported Issues May 2024

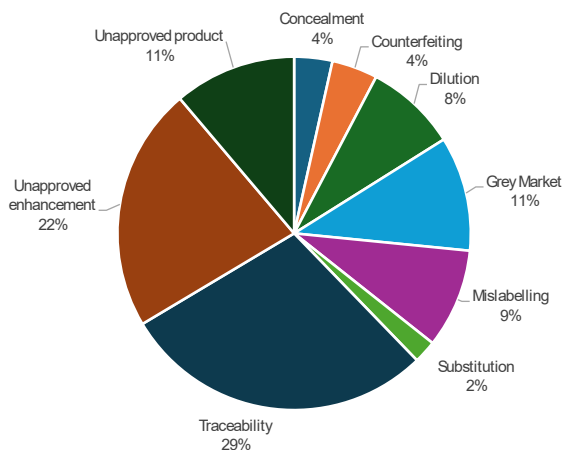


Category Reported Issues May 2025

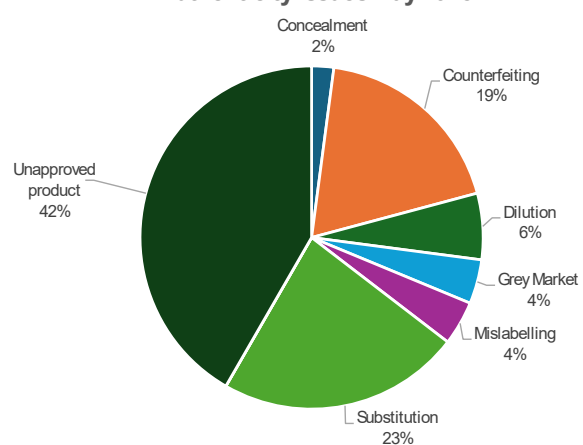


May 2025 has seen an increase in issues related to labelling, microbiology and supply., but a large decrease in reported authenticity issues.

Authenticity Issues May 2024



Authenticity Issues May 2025



The distribution of authenticity issues shows considerable differences between May 2024 and May 2025. Reports of unapproved product increased from 11% in April 2024 to 42% in April 2025 and substitution from 2% in May 2024 to 23% in May 2025.

This information comes from the on-line Food Forensics Knowledge Base platform. If you are interested in access to Knowledge Base and would like a (no pressure) 15 min demo please contact barry.hilton@foodforensics.co.uk or info@foodforensics.co.uk

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