









Risk Newsletter

Food Forensics

November 2024

HIGHLIGHTS



-  Cadmium contamination in peppers and tomatoes is a concern
-  An abrupt end to the UK tomato and pepper crops puts pressure on Spain, parts of which have experienced horrific weather impacting supply
-  Fraudsters posing as wholesalers for a French supermarket have stolen cheese and salmon this month
-  Cocoa smuggling from the Ivory Coast and Ghana into neighbouring African countries is increasingly attractive
-  Prolonged dry spells in Brazil threaten the 2025 Arabica coffee harvest
-  The olive oil harvest in Spain and Greece is strong but, Italian yield expectations remain low

Produce

Citrus

Florida's citrus production faced significant losses due to fruit drop, branch damage, and flooding, with concerns over long-term tree mortality following hurricane damage.

Orange juice processing in Brazil's Sao Paulo state is progressing well for the 2024-25 season. Harvesting and processing rates for later varieties, such as Valencia and Natal, are increasing due to a higher share of fruit from the first blossoming - 64% this season, compared to a maximum of 36% in previous years. This trend may lead to an earlier slowdown in processing than usual.

The urgency in harvesting is driven by Huanglongbing (HLB) disease, known as citrus greening, along with above-average temperatures and dry weather, which have prompted producers to harvest early to mitigate losses from early fruit drop. Brazilian orange juice stocks are unlikely to recover, potentially ending the 2024-25 crop at zero. Despite anticipated improvements in industrial yield and limited exports, the overall volume of fruit processed is declining.

South African fruit is coming to an end but due to vessel delays there has been a bottle necking effect with the early Spanish so there is a temporary abundance of product. The Spanish season has started with a very strong demand although again, rains have

hampered availability. Flash flooding in Valencia is likely to have an impact but it is too soon to understand the potential losses. Harvesting will be delayed by at least another week as many fields remain too flooded to access. Persimmons are likely to be one of the most affected crops, if the rainfall continues humidity is likely to result in more challenges.

Egypt will start packing in November and will have an increased presence in the UK as they continue to improve on quality whilst challenging Spanish values.

Turkish citrus is expected to be lower than last season. Spanish mandarin crops are also expected to be 20% down on last season.

Top Fruit

Polish apple exporters may face a challenging season due to high prices and uneven quality resulting from early harvesting. Not all growers harvested their Gala variety apples on time, potentially affecting quality. As the harvesting season progresses, some growers have finished, while others are still picking, leading to significant variability in the crop. This year's apples are larger than usual, with many needing to be sold to the processing industry, as most buyers prefer apples below 95mm in size. High demand for processing apples has driven prices up. There are concerns that lower-quality apples at cheaper prices could enter the market. The predicted shortage of Jonagold apples later in the season, along with high retail prices, may reduce

domestic sales and promotional activities in supermarkets.

Apple production in Kashmir, India, has dropped by at least 30% for the second consecutive year, primarily due to climate change and erratic weather patterns. Adverse conditions during the critical fruit set season, including high temperatures, cool and wet weather, and recent hailstorms, have severely impacted both the quantity and quality of apples. Farmers report struggling to afford necessary pesticides and fertilizers to combat diseases exacerbated by these weather fluctuations.

Turkish apples are expected to be down 25% as a result of unfavourable weather.

Soft Fruit

The Moroccan raspberry harvest has started in Agadir. As a result of large crop volumes of vegetable and fruit to be harvested in the region there is a labour shortage delaying the harvest.

Stone Fruit

The French prune sector is projected to harvest only 29,000 tons in 2024, reflecting a 30% decline from the 40,000 tons produced in 2023 and the historical average. Adverse weather conditions, including hailstorms and excessive rainfall (40% above normal since autumn 2023), have severely affected fruit quality, leading to an estimated 20% of the crop being downgraded and unsellable as snack fruit. This is an increase from 12% in 2023 and 11% in 2022.



Grapes

The arrival of overseas grapes in Europe coincides with a significant shortage of local produce due to heat waves in Italy, Spain, and Greece, which have led to reduced harvests. Prices for grapes have sky-rocketed. This price increase is dampening sales, as high costs and limited volumes prevent retailers from running promotions.

The Spanish grape season is coming to a swift end after a tricky season for both quality and availability. Rains in Murcia over the past few days will be catastrophic for any fruit left on the vines.

Greece has had a very poor season in terms of availability with many vineyards up to 40% down on kilos / hectare. This was due to variable weather during bloom resulting in the abortion of berries and generally poor fertility.

The Italians have had a better season in terms of quality and availability but have also had huge demand with the shortfalls in Spain and Greece.

Avocado

Lack of water in Ecuador has resulted in smaller avocados.

Exotics

A pest affecting various kiwi varieties in Chile, particularly the widely planted Hayward, has raised concerns. The pest's symptoms typically emerge between August and September, manifesting as red sap exudation associated with pruning cuts, broken branches, and wire wounds.

As the Malaysian durian season ends, some Singapore durian vendors are misrepresenting Thai and Filipino durians as premium Malaysian varieties like Mao Shan Wang and Black Thorn, often sold at high prices.

The supply of papayas from Mexico is currently very limited due to hot, dry weather affecting fruit development, with recent storms further complicating conditions. This shortage is widespread across Mexico, not confined to a single region.

Argentinian researchers have detected a virus that affects papaya causing the disease meleira. Genetic analysis corroborated the presence of a new virus.

Vietnamese durian prices have doubled as demand outpaces supply. Exporters are looking for off-season supply in Western provinces but poor weather has delayed

the off-season harvest. Supply looks to remain tight until this supply comes on-line.

Cranberry

Drought conditions in New Jersey are causing concern for the Cranberry harvest. Reservoirs are low so water is being pumped from wells to flood the crop for harvest. High fuel costs will increase the cost of production for this season. The EU has increased its Cranberry imports from North America by ~30% so far this year.

Cadmium contamination

Four reports of high cadmium in tomatoes from Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Italy as well as spinach from Belgium and red peppers from Bosnia and Herzegovina over the last two months is unexpected. There are no reports of this issue in tomato crops previously. Initially flooding contamination was considered a possible source. However, there has been a shift in the source of phosphorus fertilizer. Before the Russian invasion of Ukraine a significant proportion of phosphorus fertilizer was sourced from Russia. Russian phosphorus is mined from igneous rock - low in cadmium. Following sanctions against Russia phosphorus has been sourced from alternative locations. Much of it is coming from North Africa, mined from sedimentary rocks - high in cadmium. It would be worth monitoring for cadmium in crops that may accumulate cadmium - such as lettuce, spinach, brassicas, tomatoes and peppers. Where high values are seen consider the fertilizer source as part of the investigation.

Salad Crops

In Spain the weather has changed in last 10 days, autumn/winter weather patterns have arrived, cooler, lower light. UK & the Netherlands finished abruptly around 2 weeks early and Spain is only just starting, later than usual. Big gaps in the premium production crops (Cherry vine, cocktail, colours) due to early finish and late start. It is raining in Spain this week so adding to the late start and likely to compromise quality.

No issues from Morocco on round, cherry, baby plum – the inter-planting is so far working in reducing risk of Rugose.

Tomato shortage in India leads to higher prices. The price hike stems from unexpected weather impacts: heavy rains damaged crops, and sowing fell below targets. Extreme heat last year pushed farmers to switch to maize, a hardier crop, further reducing tomato supply. Tomatoes,

prone to bacterial and viral diseases, also have high production costs, leading many farmers to abandon them. The current shortage is exacerbated by tomato's limited growing season.

A severe hail storm in El Ejido, Spain has damaged 13,000 hectares of greenhouses. Much of the production is damaged. There are concerns for the pepper crop which was just beginning.

Potatoes

EU potato production has experienced notable declines, with only 35% clearance reported in Northern France and just 15% in Normandy due to heavy rain. While retail sales and domestic consumption remain stable, the progress in crop lifting is hindered by extremely late plantings, particularly in Donegal, where conditions are challenging. In Holland, lifting progress is at 20%, but storage lifting in Belgium is slow. Additionally, yields in the U.K. are disappointing compared to last year.

Parts of Pennsylvania are reporting issues with potato production (for chips/crisps) as a result of warming weather. Potato production elsewhere in North America looks to be delivering large crops.

Lamb Weston has reported a supply-demand imbalance in the North American market resulting in the closure of a facility in Washington.

Onions

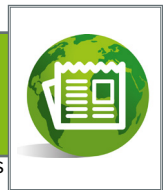
Spain's onion acreage has increased by 20%, leading to higher yields. However, due to oversupply in Europe, demand has dropped, causing a significant decline in onion prices. Many new producers, lacking supply contracts and proper packing facilities, harvested early and unplanned, exacerbating the market glut. Despite this, Spain remains one of the few European countries capable of offering large-calibre onions, which may help offset some losses.

Pumpkins

Pumpkin growers in the East Midlands, UK, are facing lower yields due to cold and wet spring weather, resulting in failed or diminished crops.

Brassicas

Hurricane Helene has impacted cabbage production with supply currently limited from affected regions. Processing cabbage is also in short supply in the USA. The impact of Hurricane Helene on cabbage production in Georgia and western North Carolina is expected to further strain



supplies as the market transitions from November to December.

Mushrooms

There are some concerns in New Zealand and Australia over consolidation in the sector. New Zealand's commercial producers have reduced from 13 to 3 and Australia from over 100 farmers down to 42 since 2001.

Northern Ireland's mushroom industry faces a significant decline due to Brexit-related labour shortages and high costs associated with the UK's Seasonal Workers Visa scheme. This visa costs farms up to £8,000 per worker every six months, causing financial strain.

Spring Onions

Growers of German spring onions are struggling to sell their product as the market has been flooded with imported Egyptian spring onions.

Ginger & Garlic

The current Argentinian garlic season faces challenges due to strong competition and rising logistics costs. While Spain experienced a good harvest, increasing freight costs have affected competitiveness in international markets.

The Chinese ginger harvest is expected to increase by 10% compared to last year despite higher than average temperatures delaying harvest by ~ a month.

Coconut

Hawaii is fighting the spread of Coconut rhinoceros beetles - endemic in Africa, China and Southeast Asia but an invasive species in Hawaii. They have the ability to kill coconut trees, palms and other tropical crops by boring into them.

Drought and pest infestations in Thailand are worrying coconut growers.

Spices

Cardamom farmers in Idukki, Kerala, are still awaiting government compensation after suffering severe losses due to a six-month drought and extreme heat waves earlier this year. The drought, which hit major cardamom-growing areas like Peermade, Udumbanchola, and Devikulam taluks, caused large-scale damage to crops.

Nuts

California's walnut harvest in San Joaquin County faces significant losses due to extreme heat, with growers reporting that up to 20% of early varieties are damaged.

Heat waves in July and October forced increased water use to prevent further crop deterioration, resulting in smaller nut sizes and reduced yields. The USDA predicts a 19% state-wide drop in walnut production, costing over \$100 million, though reduced supply could boost demand. Additionally, local prices are impacted by cheaper imports from Chile and China, complicating market conditions for U.S. producers.

Ukraine's peanut yield is lower than global averages, reaching only 0.5 to 1 ton per hectare compared to 2 to 4 tons internationally. The harvest process is currently underway and complicated by the lack of specialized harvesting equipment, requiring manual labour. This season's yield is further impacted by severe drought, which has affected the quantity and quality of the peanuts.

Greece's chestnut production reduced by an estimated 90% on the back of the extreme weather, heat and drought.

The carry-in of almonds for the 2024 crop was expected to be more than 36% down compared to last year. In September shipments into the EU from California reduced by 34% compared to the same time last year. Yields in California are below expectations. Spanish almond consumption increased by 32.6% in 2023.

Cereals

Early forecasts suggest the 2025 Russian wheat crop could be close to 2024 levels, and below the five-year average.

UK reduced wheat supply for 2024/25 outweighs the estimated reduction in demand as a result of ~21% reduction in the crop compared to last year. There is expected to be an increase in barley for 2024/25 season as a result of a 3% increase in production. Barley consumption is expected to increase, particularly in animal feeds.

There are concerns that Russia will try to send wheat into Kazakhstan to enter the European market avoiding sanctions.

The US has reported winter wheat crop conditions as lower than last year and below that expected. This has been driven by lack of rainfall. This could be linked to an emerging La Nina weather event.

Corn

Maize imports into the UK were up in July and August compared to the 5 year average, driven by the sharp reduction in domestic wheat production. Supply is

plentiful, the US has seen its second largest harvest on record - prices reflect this. Increased maize use in animal feed is likely.

Soya bean

Good harvest in the USA and strong plantings in Brazil are weighing heavy on prices. This is also keeping oilseed pricing down. Concerns over the forthcoming US election is fuelling concerns over potential export tariffs. As a result, exporters are shipping early.

Rice

Japan's 2024 rice shortage has been reported to be the result of Government policies that limit rice production to maintain prices, combined with a refusal to release stockpiles. Following a normal production year unseasonal weather and Covid have increased demand.

Flooding in June and July in Goa, India has compromised rice plants. Further rains in September impacted flowering and pollination leading to lower yields. Significant reductions in crop productivity are expected.

Rapeseed

Rapeseed demand remains high particularly following the lower harvest estimates for 2024. Rapeseed is trading at an increasing premium to soya-bean oil. The USDA estimates EU production down 13% and the UK down 28%.

Coffee

December arabica coffee futures rose despite concerns about a longer-term supply shortage due to Brazil's erratic weather. Though short-term prices may fluctuate, prolonged dry spells in Brazil threaten the 2025 harvest and could increase the risk of fraudulent labelling to meet demand. Robusta coffee prices remain resilient, while volatile coffee markets reflect a growing need for authentic sourcing as climate uncertainties impact global coffee production and could lead to shifts in trade policies and supply chain strategies.

Cocoa

Recent cocoa crop failures in West Africa have spiked global prices, raising concerns about supply and authenticity. As a result, Indian cocoa farming is expanding, with Andhra Pradesh and Kerala leading production. The growth of Indian cacao aims to reduce import reliance and help meet increasing demand amid global shortages.



More recently cocoa prices have dipped as better weather in the Ivory Coast and Ghana eases supply fears. There are reports of concerns that payments to farmers in the Ivory Coast are significantly below global prices, leading to commodities traders gaining major profits at the expense of the farmers. Cocoa smuggling from the Ivory Coast (and Ghana, which is experiencing the same issue) into neighbouring African countries where higher prices are paid is increasingly attractive.

Wine

French winemakers warn of a significant shortage in the 2024 vintage due to extreme weather, including frost, hail, heavy rain, and mildew outbreaks. These harsh conditions have caused crop losses, notably a 60-65% reduction at Domaine Roland Lavantureux, and will impact both wine quality and quantity. The unpredictable climate has led to changes in acidity and maturity, raising concerns about wine authenticity. Producers are struggling to maintain quality amid these challenges, with potential risks of fraud as scarcity increases.

Sugar

The global sugar market is looking like it may be at a surplus in 2024/25.

Honey

Drought in Mexico has hit local bee-keepers hard with bees dying in large numbers as a result of the lack of wild flowers. Lack of food is driving bees into crop fields where herbicides are killing the bees as well as pest species.

Olives & Olive Oils

Spain is expected to provide a bumper crop (1.5 million tonnes est.) for 2024/25 after a wet winter and mild spring. The European Union estimated crop is estimated at 2 million tonnes (last season was 1.53 million tonnes). Greece and Portugal are expected to see increases in production but Italy is forecasting a drop of one third.

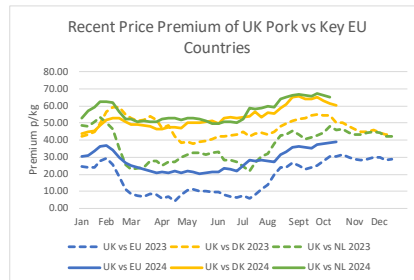
Protein

African Swine Fever (ASF)

ASF in western Germany continues as deaths of wild boar continue to be reported. Ukraine reported a recurrence of the disease in Odessa. There were also reported outbreaks in South Africa, Korea, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Moldova and Poland between the end of August and the end of September.

Pig Meat

Pork production in the UK is expected to decline by 0.5% in 2024 with small additional reductions in 2025. EU production has increased, in the main, driven by increases in Poland (9%), Hungary (8%) and Germany (0.9%). UK pork is still trading at a significant (~60p/kg) premium over key EU pork suppliers.



Avian Influenza

The US has reported 36 cases of H5 flu in humans since April 24 following the multi-state outbreak of H5N1 avian influenza in dairy cows and poultry. Avian flu has been detected in a number of wild birds in GB this autumn. The risk level has been increased from low to medium.

Chicken

EU broiler meat price is higher than last year. Brazilian prices remain less than half the price of EU and US broilers. Broiler chick placings remain strong as a result, forecast production is showing increases compared to previous years.

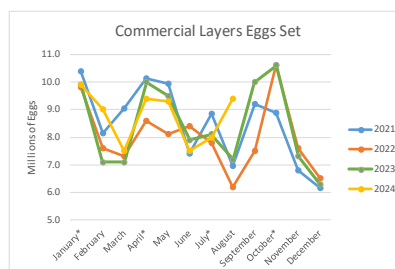
Egg Layer

Eggs and egg products recalled in Poland, the Netherlands, Spain and France due to salmonella contamination. The outbreak reported in the USA has been declared over.

There have been several reports of antibiotic residues in eggs from China.

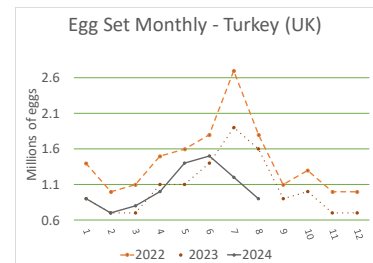
EU imports of eggs have increased into the UK (8.3%). Exports of UK eggs into the EU has also increase by 40%.

UK egg set usually increases in October but this year the increase clearly started in September.



Turkey

Turkey egg set numbers in the UK are well below last years number, which in turn, were well below 2022. Either the expectation is for low turkey demand for Christmas or there will be a reliance on imported birds to fill demand.



Dairy

EU Butter prices continue to climb to their highest levels for more than 14 years. Production is down 2.2%. Imports to China of skimmed milk powder, whole milk powder, lactose and whey powder are all below last years volumes.

Beef

GB cattle prices are trading at a ~97p/kg premium over Irish cattle. High availability has resulted in higher slaughter numbers in Ireland (up 10% on the same period last year). Carcass weights have reduced by about 10kg as a result of poorer grass growing conditions - suggesting supply will begin to tighten and quality may reduce during the final quarter of 2024 and into the start of 2025. EU beef is expected to decline by 0.5% following a shortage in slaughter animals, this decline is expected to increase into 2025.

Lamb & Goat

EU sheep production is expected to fall by 5% in 2024 and by a further 1% in 2025. Disease in Western Europe is impacting animal availability for slaughter. There has been a recovery in production in Australia and New Zealand, which may result in an increase in imports into Europe.

Blue-tongue virus (BTV-3)

The East and South East of the UK are largely within restricted or infected zones. There are still reports of new outbreaks. It is spreading quickly across Europe making animal imports a risk. Farmers are being urged to be vigilant.

Cod & Haddock

The market remains short on Atlantic and Pacific cod and pollock with prices rising in line with short supply. Icelandic haddock harvests are running 27% ahead of the same period last year, this is more



than compensating for a jointly managed Russian/Norwegian haddock fishery that is currently about 10% behind last year. Norwegian fishermen are reported to have stopped fishing for haddock, using the remaining quota for by-catch.

Salmon

According to the Atlantic Salmon Stock Assessment for 2024 by the Environment Agency (EA) and Cefas, Atlantic salmon stocks in England have reached alarming lows, with 90% of major salmon rivers classified as "at risk" or "probably at risk". This decline is indicative of broader environmental issues, including agricultural pollution and climate change, which are damaging salmon habitats. Internationally, the trend is similar, with declines reported in countries such as Ireland, Iceland, and Canada, but the UK has experienced the most significant drops.

The high sea temperatures as a result of the El Niño weather pattern has resulted in a huge increase in sea lice. This has resulted in poorer quality salmon. Norway and to a certain extent, Scotland, have been experiencing this issue. Production in Chile is struggling following fast expansion up to 2020, production is now expected to contract by ~7% in 2024.

Crustaceans

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) delayed the implementation of Addendum 27, which would increase the minimum lobster gauge size, to July 2025 after concerns that the size restrictions could expedite industry decline.

Fishmeal, Fishoil

In the first seven months of 2024, global fishmeal and fish oil production saw a significant increase, primarily driven by a robust anchovy season in Peru. Fishmeal production rose by nearly 36% compared to the same period in 2023, while fish oil production grew by 10%.

Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported fishing (IUU)

A Canadian led high seas mission found illegal harvesting of shark fins and "dark vessels" in the North Pacific.

Peru's congress has approved "the legitimate use of force" by its armed services to combat illegal maritime activities.

Animal Food

Pet-food RASFF Alerts & Recalls

Ambrosia Artemisiifolia (Ragweed) in complete food for parakeets from Hungary.

Dr Bassleer Biofish Food recalled due to Matriline.

Salmonella in raw petfood from the Netherlands.

Horse Lung Pet Food from the brand Real Nature recalled due to Salmonella.

Salmonella spp. in dog chews from Germany.

Metal piece in petfood from Belgium

General

Modern Slavery

There is increased focus on products that may have originated from Xinjiang in China. Xinjiang produces ~50% of the world's poly silicon, 25% of its tomatoes and 20% of its cotton.

Migrant workers contracted to sites in Saudi Arabia franchised by French retail giant Carrefour were deceived by recruitment agents, made to work excessive hours, denied days off and cheated of their earnings, according to Amnesty International. They claim the abuses suffered by some of the contracted workers likely amount to forced labour including human trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation, yet neither Carrefour Group nor its partner Majid Al Futtaim, which operates the franchise in Saudi Arabia, took adequate action to stop them or offer redress to workers.

Environmental

The deforestation regulation has already been in force since 29 June 2023 and its provisions are to be applied from 30 December 2024. However, the Council agreed to the Commission's proposal to postpone the application date of the regulation by one year to December 2025.

The protected planet report 2024 emphasizes that to meet the 30% conservation target by 2030, land and ocean protected areas must expand significantly. While marine protection has advanced, especially in national waters,

coverage in international waters remains low. The effectiveness and equitable governance of these areas are under-assessed, with gaps in biodiversity representation and protection often missing high-priority areas. Indigenous and traditional lands contribute to conservation, covering 13.6% of global land, yet connected and fully protected areas are limited, and many critical ecosystems remain unprotected.

Packaging

The Material Change Index research suggests 51% of supermarket food and drink is packaged in unnecessary plastic. Their analysis of packaging materials in 25 of the most popular supermarkets across six European markets: UK, France, Germany, Italy, Spain and Poland, showed that the UK is the most reliant on plastic packaging, with 70% of all food and drink items on British shelves containing plastic - compared to Spain (67%), Italy (66%), Germany (66%), Poland (62%) and France (59%).

Wrap has called for a government ban on fruit & veg plastic packaging. The recommendation is for a packaging ban on 21 fruit and veg items, to be developed via a formal consultation process. The 21 items are: Apples, aubergines, avocados, bananas, broccoli, cabbages, carrots, garlic, ginger, lemons, limes, mangos, onions, oranges, parsnips, pears, peppers, potatoes, squash, swede and salad tomatoes.

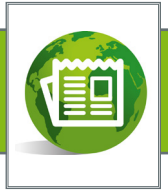
A campaign group accused two major retailers of misleading consumers over front-of-store plastic recycling schemes. Their investigation found most of the returned plastic is burned.

Shipping

Freight shipping costs remain at double the price of late 2023 following the ongoing issues with the Red Sea, Suez Canal and Panama Canal.

USA

Hurricane Milton caused an estimated \$1.5 to \$2.5 billion in damage to Florida's agriculture, heavily affecting citrus, dairy, green beans and other crops. Citrus production faced significant losses due to fruit drop, branch damage, and flooding, with concerns over long-term tree mortality. Other crops like cotton, peanuts, rice, and tropical fruits also suffered damage, ranging from minor to catastrophic. Infrastructure damage to dairy and cattle operations disrupted



milk production, and widespread power outages worsened the impact. The scale of the destruction raises concerns about potential fraud and authenticity issues in the food supply as markets respond to shortages.

Central America - Locust warning

The International Regional Agricultural Health Organization (Oirsa) has issued a warning about the Central American locust and giant grasshopper infestations, which threaten crop security in El Salvador and neighbouring countries. These pests, capable of consuming 100 tons of crops daily, endanger staple grains, vegetables, and fruit crops across Central America. Due to recent extreme climate conditions - shifting from prolonged drought to intense rains - the region faces increased risk, as these locusts can migrate over 150 kilometres daily, affecting hundreds of plant species. The locust threat has previously impacted the region, with a noted presence in 2020.

Bangladesh

Heavy rains in Chandpur have devastated crops, infrastructure, and homes, particularly affecting Aman paddy and vegetable

fields, which faced significant water-logging and damage. The Department of Agricultural Extension reports that 60% of these crops have been severely affected. Of note is the impact on early-variety beans.

India

Continuous heavy rainfall in Nashik has damaged crops across over 45,000 hectares, affecting around 73,350 farmers. Key crops like maize, soybean, rice, onions, grapes, and pomegranates have suffered, causing widespread hardship. Maize, typically resilient in low water conditions, was severely impacted by water-logging, especially in Satana, Malegaon, and surrounding talukas. Onions, which had shown promising returns, are now at risk of rot. Fruit crops, particularly grapes and pomegranates, are also in jeopardy, with vineyards facing disease risks like downy mildew.

Peru

The Association of Agroindustrial Producers of Piura raised concerns about a severe water deficit in northern Peru, threatening 50,000 hectares of export agriculture, including grapes, mangoes, and avocados. The Poechos reservoir

currently holds only 115 million cubic meters of water due to an unprecedented drought, risking the cessation of agricultural water supply.

Sicily, Italy

An extreme weather event caused severe flooding in the Licata area of Sicily, where 100 to 150 mm of rain fell in just a few hours, leading to the overflow of the Salso River. Approximately 2 square kilometres of agricultural land, including artichoke, courgette, and pepper crops, were submerged.

Weather

Forecasters are favouring an La Nina weather event later this year -through to November. Probabilities are lower so it is likely to be weak event. Currently neutral conditions prevail.

Peanut Alert

The precautionary withdrawal of products linked to the peanut in mustard issue continue. This has now expanded to include some spice products. The total number of products seems to change daily but has involved well over 130 products.

IN THE NEWS: October

Protein

Large quantities of substandard items, including 300 kg of unhealthy meat and liver, dead chickens, as well as fake honey were seized in Pakistan during a crackdown on food fraud and unsafe food.

A major food fraud scandal has erupted in Turkey after the government revealed widespread mislabelling of products. Pork and horse-meat were found in foods labelled as beef or chicken, violating labelling laws.

Dover Port Health Authority reported seizing 6 tonnes of illegal Products of Animal Origin in September.

A fire at Gressingham Foods site in Redgrave, Suffolk, damaged the packing plant. Gressingham Foods are major suppliers of duck into the UK market.

>100kg of adulterated meat and fish of unidentified origin were seized by authorities in Kuwait.

Dairy

The Punjab Food Authority (PFA) seized and disposed of 3,400 litres of adulterated milk, arresting key operators

in a milk adulteration scheme. During the operation, the PFA discovered that fabricated milk contained harmful additives such as vegetable ghee, whey powder, and chemicals to artificially enhance thickness and fat levels. These contaminants pose significant health risks, potentially causing gastrointestinal diseases. Additionally, the production facility was found in unsanitary conditions, with fungus, insects, and cobwebs present. Similar small seizures were also made.

Margarine was reported to have been added to cheese in Turkey.

Fraudsters have stolen 22 tonnes of high value cheddar cheese. The fraudsters posed as legitimate wholesalers and received 950 clothbound truckles before the company, Neal's Yard Dairy realised the deception. It seems this may not be the first time these fraudsters have struck after a smoked salmon company in Suffolk were duped in an almost identical scam earlier this month in which the buyer posed as a representative of a French Supermarket.

Fake paneer made with second-grade milk powder, harmful chemicals such

as sodium formaldehyde sufoxide and poor quality soybean was used in the production in the fake paneer factory in Bulandshahr, India.

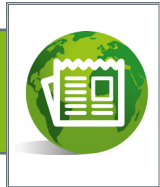
Adulterated ghee and stale paneer was seized from a manufacturing unit in Greater Noida, India.

Gujarat's Food and Drug Control Administration, in collaboration with the Special Operations Group, uncovered a milk adulteration operation in Amreli, seizing adulterated milk packaged for distribution and arresting a suspect.

Fish & Seafood

The owner of P.J's Seafood in Coden, Alabama, faces potential prison time for illegally buying and selling fish, specifically speckled trout and redbfish, across state lines. Collier pleaded guilty to conspiring to violate the Lacey Act, which regulates the trade of fish and wildlife in the U.S. The illegally harvested fish had a market value between USD 250,000 and USD 550,000.

The South African National Parks department have raised concerns over illegal harvesting of abalone in the country, smuggling the illicit harvests into



the Asian markets.

California has become the second US state to ban octopus farming.

At two adjacent Mowi Scotland fish farms, over a million salmon have died, raising significant concerns regarding aquaculture practices.

Produce

Potato's were seized in India after being artificially coloured.

25,000 kilos of onions seized in the Philippines which were illegally imported from China.

CBP seized over 14,000 pounds of fresh hog plum and fresh passion fruits. The paperwork claimed fresh lime and chayote.

Spain seized 13 tons of cocaine hidden in a consignment of bananas from Ecuador.

A new disease - olive knot (or olive tuberculosis) is affecting olive trees in southern Syria.

A truck load of off-season mangoes was stopped and seized trying to enter India from Nepal. Police suspect the fruit to be of Chinese origin, trucked through Nepal to avoid scrutiny.

Cordyceps (*Ophiocordyceps sinensis*) is highly valued yet prone to frequent adulteration due to its rarity and cultivation challenges. The Botanical Adulterants Prevention Bulletin recommends that both DNA and chemical analyses are used for verifying the authenticity of cordyceps in raw materials and finished products, especially as it is often substituted or contaminated by other fungal species. Despite traditional morphological quality assessments, cordyceps high cost makes it susceptible to fraud.

Authorities in Saharanpur, India, seized 800 kg of fake tomato sauce from an unregulated factory, revealing a serious food safety issue. The counterfeit sauce, made with synthetic red dyes and arrowroot powder, contained no real tomatoes or natural ingredients.

Beverage

Six individuals were accused of running a European wine fraud ring, selling counterfeit French wine for up to \$16,000 per bottle. Italian police seized counterfeit labels, wine, and machinery used to reseal bottles. The fake wine, produced in Italy, was exported globally through legitimate wine traders. Authorities confiscated \$1.5 million in electronic equipment and over \$100,000 in cash during the investigation.

Blauburger Austrian Red Wine recalled as it was not made from the grapes indicated on the label.

Hyderabad's Central Zone Task Force (India) seized 300 kg of adulterated tea dust, 200 kg of coconut shell powder, chemicals, and other ingredients from a warehouse run by Konark Tea Powder Sales and Suppliers. Three were arrested for mixing low-quality tea dust with coconut shell powder, toxic chemicals, and flavoring agents, selling the spurious product at a marked-up price. The proprietor had previously been arrested for similar offenses, continued his operations despite prior charges. The raid underscores ongoing issues with food fraud, particularly in the tea industry, with potential health risks from toxic additives.

Oil

Turkey reported olive oil adulterated with cheaper oils and dyes.

3 dead from consuming mustard oil adulterated with toxic argemone mexicana seeds in India.

Spices

A consumer report in India found 12 brands of cinnamon powder spice blends had high levels of lead.

700kg of adulterated chilli powder was seized in Vadodara, India.

Europe

There have been several recalls for the presence of Muscimol in mushroom products and sweets. Muscimol is a psychoactive compound found in Amanita muscaria and other related mushrooms.

The EU is pushing for stricter honey authenticity and origin labelling to address widespread honey adulteration, often involving sugar syrup. A study by the German Professional and Commercial Bee-keepers' Association found that 25 of 30 supermarket honey samples were adulterated with cheap syrups. Despite new EU rules requiring clear country-of-origin labelling, consumer protection groups argue these steps are insufficient. Only 30% of Germany's honey demand is met domestically, with the rest imported from countries such as China and Turkey, increasing the risk of fraud. Enhanced border controls and unified testing methods are planned to combat honey adulteration more effectively.

Further afield

Cases of adulterated buckwheat flour, or "kuttu ka atta" have surged in Uttar Pradesh, with over 120 people hospitalized due to symptoms like vomiting and diarrhoea after consuming contaminated flour. Buckwheat flour, commonly used during Navratri fasts for its gluten-free, nutrient-rich profile, was linked to widespread food poisoning earlier this year as well. Authorities have collected samples for testing and shut down shops suspected of distributing tainted flour.

Try Our New Paperless Sample Submission App when submitting samples for testing to Food Forensics

We're thrilled to introduce you to our new, paperless sample submission solution—the Food Forensics mobile app, designed for both iOS and Android. This intuitive, easy-to-use app makes sample submissions faster, more accurate, and more sustainable than ever.

Why Switch to the Food Forensics App for Sample Submissions?

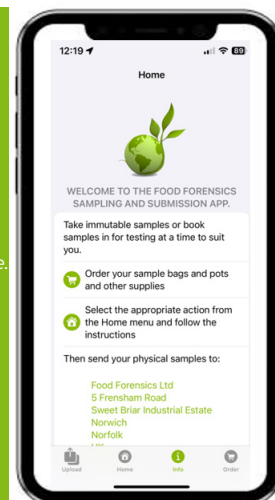
Using our app to submit samples for testing brings a host of powerful advantages:

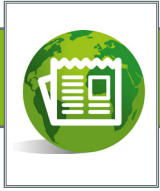
- **Streamlined Submissions:** Log samples anytime, anywhere—no need to be at a workstation.
- **Save Time & Reduce Errors:** Quickly choose from pre-populated test options, or manually add additional requirements.
- **Easy Documentation:** Snap a photo of your sample, input details like PO numbers, and keep records accurate and complete.
- **Instant Confirmation:** Receive a confirmation email upon successful submission, offering you peace of mind.
- **Eco-Friendly:** Reduce paper waste and support sustainability goals with our fully digital solution.

The app is ready for you to start using today! To set up your account, simply email us at appsupport@foodforensics.co.uk, and we'll get you and your team started. Need access for others in your organisation? Just share their email addresses, and we'll include them, too.

For any questions or additional guidance, our team is here to help. We also offer a quick 10-minute demo via Teams—just let us know if you'd like to see the app in action.

Click here <https://youtu.be/9677v1cpl6A> to view a quick app explainer video that showcases how easy it is to use.





FOOD SAFETY: October

Country No of Alerts

France	111
Turkey	41
Belgium	36
Italy	35
United States	34
Poland	28
Germany	28
China	26
India	26
Spain	22
United Kingdom	17
Czechia	15
Canada	13
Netherlands	13
Denmark	11
Pakistan	11
Vietnam	9
Ireland	9
Mexico	9
Ukraine	9
Norway	8
Egypt	8
New Zealand	8
Austria	7
Sweden	7
Argentina	6
Hungary	6
Romania	6
Switzerland	5
Australia	5
Brazil	5
Latvia	4
Finland	4
Israel	4
Thailand	4
Ecuador	3
Morocco	3
Nigeria	3
Indonesia	3
Afghanistan	3
Iceland	3
Greece	3
Albania	3
South Africa	2
Bangladesh	2
Luxembourg	2
Serbia	2
Peru	2
Lithuania	2
Colombia	2
Singapore	2
Iran	2
Algeria	2
Senegal	2
Kenya	2
El Salvador	2
Bulgaria	1
Madagascar	1
Philippines	1
Saudi Arabia	1
Tanzania	1
Malta	1
Portugal	1
Fiji	1
Chad	1
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1
Bolivia	1
Uzbekistan	1
Cambodia	1
South Korea	1
North Macedonia	1
Sudan	1
Guatemala	1
Russian	1
Japan	1
Montenegro	1
Moldova	1
Cameroon	1

SUMMARY

- There were **541 Red**, **86 Amber** and **34 Green** for a total of **661 safety alerts and product recalls*** in October.
- The majority of alerts were for bacterial pathogens and pathogens (31.7% and 16.3% respectively). Allergens dropped to third with 9.2%.
- 210 Bacterial pathogen alerts (53% Salmonella, 35% Listeria): E.coli accounted for 10% of which 71.5% were STEC.
- 108 Pesticide alerts (26% Chlorpyrifos, 8% Thiamethoxam and Acetamiprid at 7%)

Top 3 alerts by commodity

- Ingredients:** Herbs & spices, nuts & seeds, rice/pasta/noodles
- Produce:** Fruit, vegetables, dried fruit
- Protein:** Chicken, pork, sausage

Top 3 number of alerts by county of origin

- France:** Cheese, pork, fish
- Turkey:** Fruit, dried fruit and spices
- Belgium:** Cheese, ready meals, vegetables

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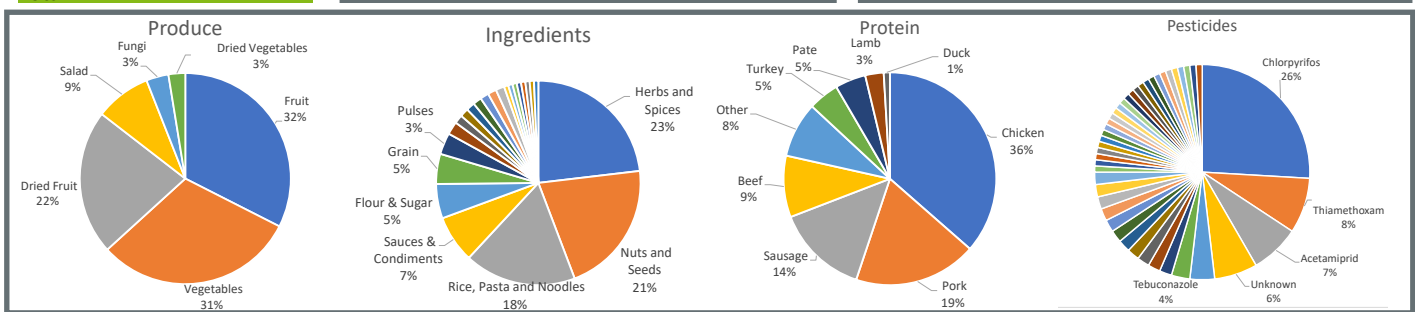
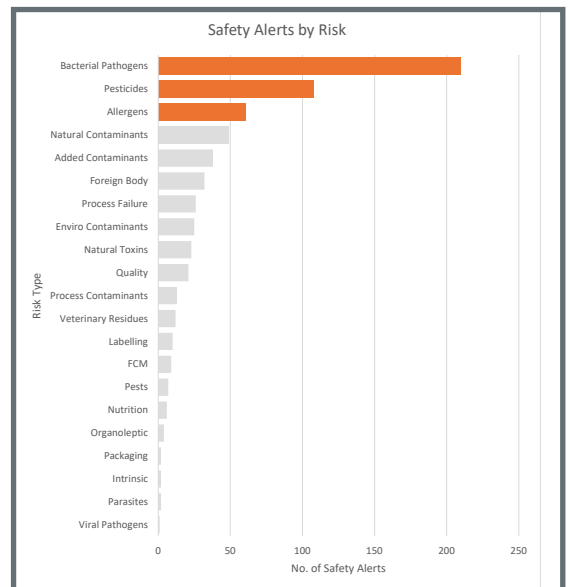
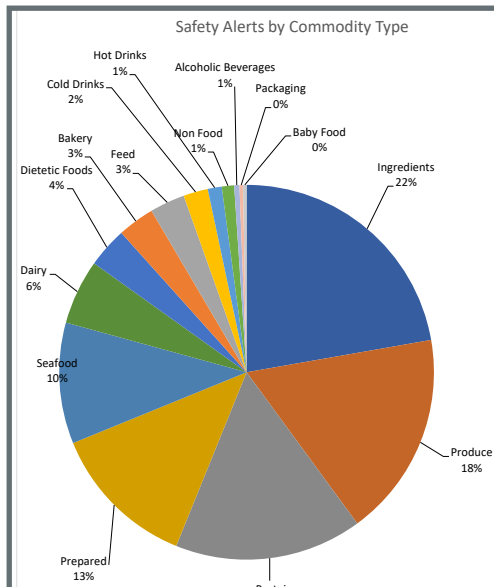
For more information about Knowledge Base, Testing & other services.

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<https://www.foodforensics.co.uk/>

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

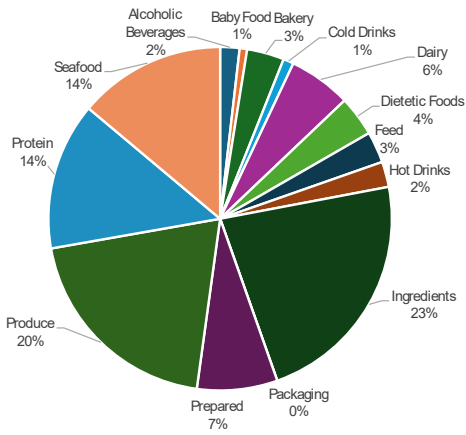


Total 661

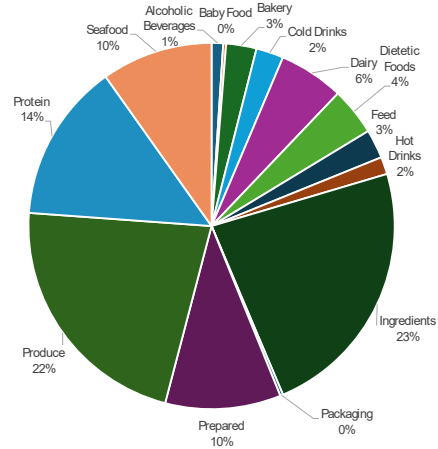


Knowledge Base Trends

Sector Reported Issues October 2023

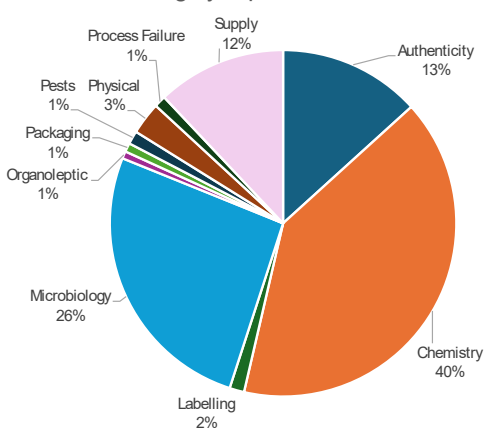


Sector Reported Issues October 2024

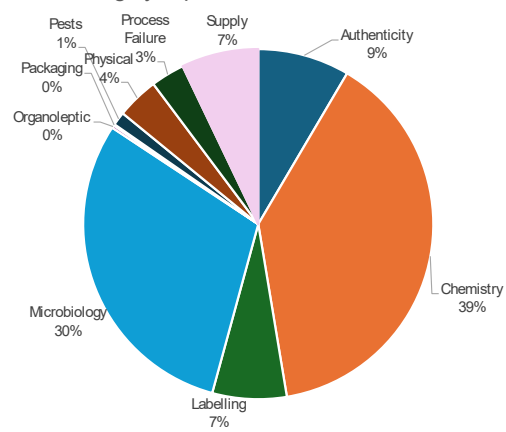


The increase in the prepared sector was driven by allergen recalls. Produce issues were a combination of pesticide residues and supply issue (largely as a result of weather challenges).

Category Reported Issues 2023

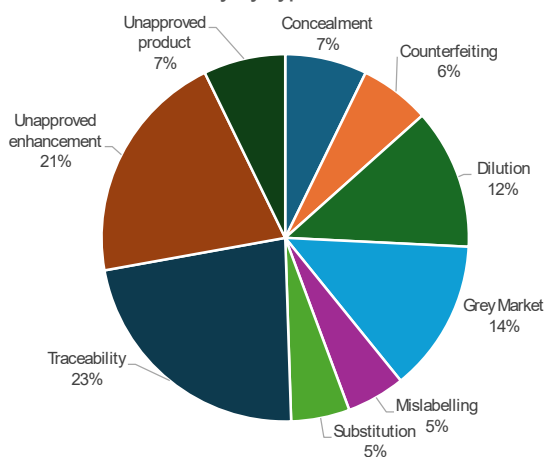


Category Reported Issues October 2024

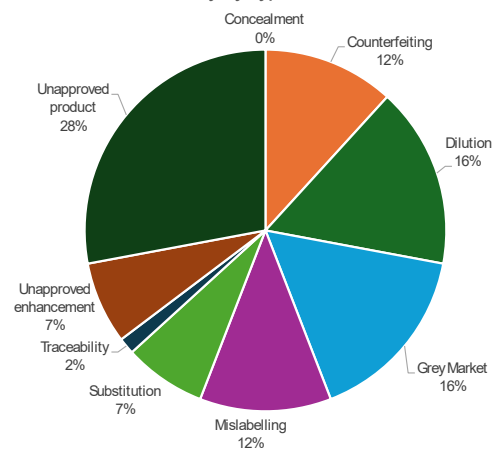


The increase in labelling issues has largely been driven by allergen labelling although there were several irradiated products not correctly labelled.

Authenticity by Type October 2023



Authenticity by Type October 2024



A very different pattern to the authenticity issues reported this month compared to the same month last year. There has also been a switch from unapproved enhancements to unapproved products. Mislabelling has increased as has substitution

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