



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
HEALTH AND CONSUMERS DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

Veterinary and International affairs
Food, alert system and training

RASFF

Preliminary Annual Report

2013

1. The Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF)

The RASFF was put in place to provide food and feed control authorities with an effective tool to exchange information about measures taken responding to serious risks detected in relation to food or feed. This exchange of information helps Member States to act more rapidly and in a coordinated manner in response to a health threat caused by food or feed. Its effectiveness is ensured by keeping its structure simple: it consists essentially of clearly identified contact points in the Commission, EFSA¹, EEA² and at national level in member countries, exchanging information in a clear and structured way by means of templates.

The legal basis

The legal basis of the RASFF is Regulation (EC) N° 178/2002. Article 50 of this Regulation establishes the rapid alert system for food and feed as a network involving the Member States, the Commission as member and manager of the system and the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). Also the EEA countries: Norway, Liechtenstein and Iceland, are longstanding members of the RASFF.

Whenever a member of the network has any information relating to the existence of a serious direct or indirect risk to human health deriving from food or feed, this information is immediately notified to the Commission under the RASFF. The Commission immediately transmits this information to the members of the network.

Article 50.3 of the Regulation lays down additional criteria for when a RASFF notification is required.

Without prejudice to other Community legislation, the Member States shall immediately notify the Commission under the rapid alert system of:

- (a) any measure they adopt which is aimed at restricting the placing on the market or forcing the withdrawal from the market or the recall of food or feed in order to protect human health and requiring rapid action;
- (b) any recommendation or agreement with professional operators which is aimed, on a voluntary or obligatory basis, at preventing, limiting or imposing specific conditions on the placing on the market or the eventual use of food or feed on account of a serious risk to human health requiring rapid action;
- (c) any rejection, related to a direct or indirect risk to human health, of a batch, container or cargo of food or feed by a competent authority at a border post within the European Union.

Regulation (EC) N° 16/2011 lays down implementing rules for the RASFF. It entered into force on 31 January 2011. The Regulation lays down requirements for members of the network and the procedure for transmission of the different types of notifications. A difference is made between notifications requiring rapid action (alert notifications) and other notifications (information notifications and border rejection notifications). Therefore definitions of these different types of notifications are added. In addition the role of the Commission as manager of the network is detailed.

¹ European Food Safety Authority, www.efsa.europa.eu

² EFTA Surveillance Authority, <http://www.eftasurv.int>

The members:

All members of the system have out-of-hours arrangements (7 days/7, 24 hour/24) to ensure that in case of an urgent notification being made outside of office hours, on-duty officers can be warned, acknowledge the urgent information and take appropriate action. All member organisations of the RASFF – where contact points are identified – are listed and their home pages can be consulted on the internet from the following RASFF web page:

http://ec.europa.eu/comm/food/food/rapidalert/members_en.htm.

The system

RASFF notifications

RASFF notifications usually report on risks identified in food, feed or food contact materials that are placed on the market in the notifying country or detained at an EU point of entry at the border with an EU neighbouring country. The notifying country reports on the risks it has identified, the product and its traceability and the measures it has taken.

According to the seriousness of the risks identified and the distribution of the product on the market, the RASFF notification is classified after verification by the Commission contact point as alert, information or border rejection notification before the Commission contact point transmits it to all network members.

- **alert notifications**

An ‘alert notification’ or ‘alert’ is sent when a food, feed or food contact material presenting a serious risk is on the market and when rapid action is or might be required in another country than the notifying country. Alerts are triggered by the member of the network that detects the problem and has initiated the relevant measures, such as withdrawal or recall. The notification aims at giving all the members of the network the information to verify whether the concerned product is on their market, so that they can take the necessary measures.

Products subject to an alert notification have been withdrawn or are in the process of being withdrawn from the market. Member States have their own mechanisms to carry out such actions, including the provision of detailed information through the media if necessary.

- **information notifications**

An ‘information notification’ concerns a food, feed or food contact material for which a risk has been identified that does not require rapid action either because the risk is not considered serious or the product is not on the market at the time of notification.

Commission Regulation (EU) No 16/2011 has added two new sub-types of information notification to the family of notifications:

- ‘information notifications for follow-up’ are related to a product that is or may be placed on the market in another member country
- ‘information notifications for attention’ are related to a product that:
 - (i) is present only in the notifying member country; or
 - (ii) has not been placed on the market; or
 - (iii) is no longer on the market

- **border rejection notifications**

A 'border rejection notification' concerns a consignment of food, feed or food contact material that was refused entry into the Community for reason of a risk to human health and also to animal health or to the environment if it concerns feed.

- **original notifications and follow-up notifications**

A RASFF notification referring to one or more consignments of a food, feed or food contact material that were not previously notified to the RASFF is an 'original' notification, classified as alert, information or border rejection notification. In reaction to such notification, members of the network can transmit 'follow-up' notifications which refer to the same consignments and which add information to the original notification such as information on hazards, product traceability or measures taken.

- **rejected and withdrawn notifications**

An original notification sent by a member of the RASFF can be **rejected** from transmission through the RASFF system, as proposed by the Commission after verification and in agreement with the notifying country, if the criteria for notification are not met or if the information transmitted is insufficient.

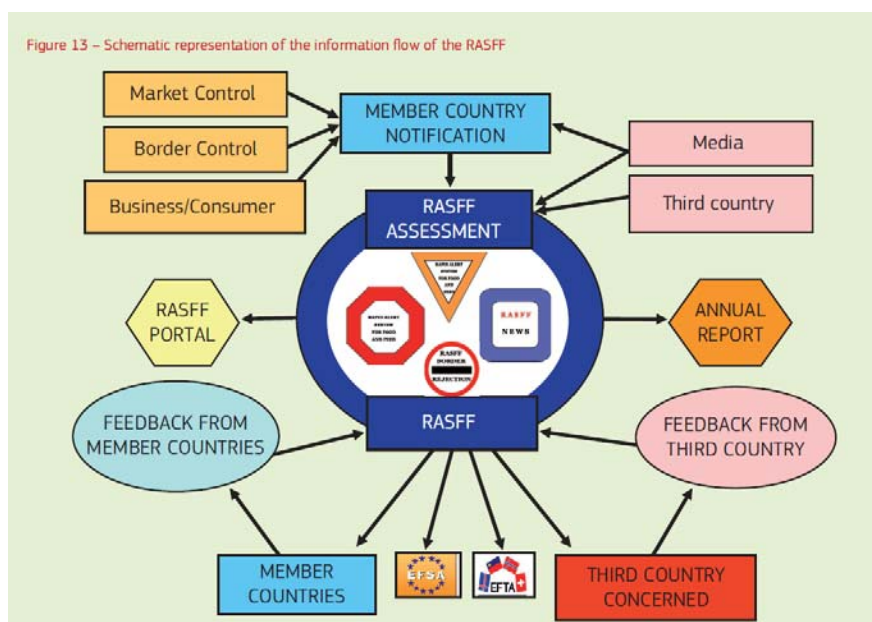
An original notification that was transmitted through the RASFF can be **withdrawn** by the Commission in agreement with the notifying country if the information, upon which the measures taken are based, turns out to be unfounded or if the transmission of the notification was made erroneously.

RASFF news

A 'RASFF news' concerns any type of information related to the safety of food or feed which has not been communicated as an alert, information or border rejection notification, but which is judged interesting for the food and feed control authorities in member countries.

RASFF news are often based on information picked up in the media or forwarded by colleagues in food or feed authorities in third countries, EC delegations or international organisations, after having been verified with any member countries concerned.

Schematic representation of the information flow of the RASFF:

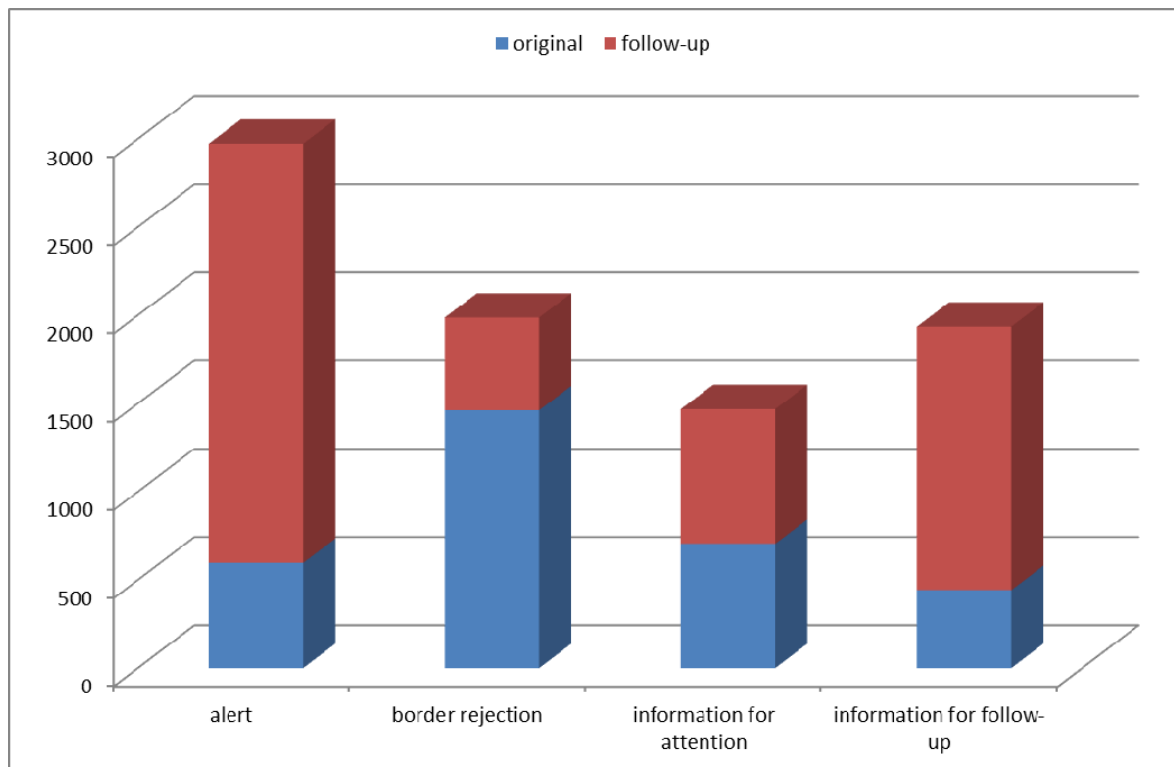


2. RASFF notifications in 2013

In 2013, a total of 3205 [original notifications](#) were transmitted through the RASFF, of which 596 were classified as [alert](#), 442 as [information](#) for follow-up, 705 as information for attention and 1462 as border rejection notification. These original notifications gave rise to 5158 [follow-up](#) notifications, representing on average about 1.6 follow-ups per original notification.

These figures represent an 8.8% decrease in original notifications and less importantly, a 2.3% decrease in follow-up notifications; resulting in an overall decrease of 4.9%. Details of these trends are given on page 7. For original notifications, it appears that the overall decline is due to a drop in the numbers of border rejections and information for follow-up notifications. For follow-ups the decline is only seen for border rejections. This demonstrates that members of the network are progressively focusing their efforts on cases where serious risks with products placed on the market require rapid action to be taken, thereby increasing the efficiency of the network.

The RASFF [news](#) transmitted internally in the network are not counted in the above figures nor represented in the charts in this report. There have been 38 RASFF news sent together with 204 follow-ups. This means that information transmitted as RASFF news increased by 137% compared to 2012.



After receipt of follow-up information, 11 alert, 38 information and 19 border rejection notifications were withdrawn. Notifications that were [withdrawn](#) are further excluded from statistics and charts.

The European Commission decided, after consulting the notifying countries, not to upload 231 notifications onto the system since, after evaluation, they were found not to satisfy the criteria for a RASFF notification ([rejected notifications](#)). This represents a 245% increase compared to 2012.

RASFF notifications are triggered by a variety of things. A majority notifications concern controls at the outer EEA borders¹ in points of entry or border inspection posts when the consignment was not accepted

¹ Since 2009, including Switzerland.

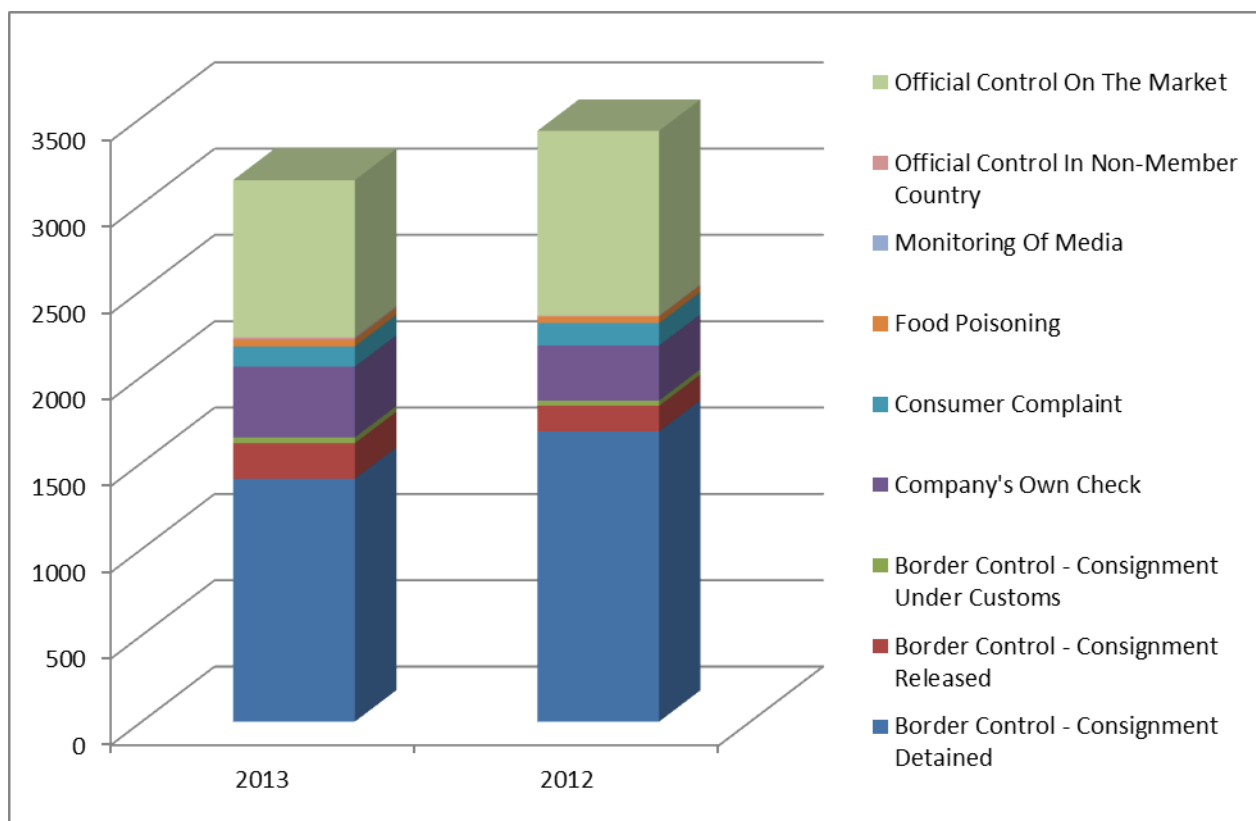
for import (“border control – consignment detained”). In some cases, a sample was taken for analysis at the border (screening) and the consignment was released (“border control - consignment released”). The second largest category of notifications concerns official controls on the internal market¹. Three special types of notifications are identified: when a consumer complaint, a company notifying the outcome of an own-check, or a food poisoning was at the basis of the notification.

A small number of notifications are triggered by an official control in a non-member country. If a non-member country informs a RASFF member of a risk found during its official controls concerning a product that may be on the market in one of the member countries, the RASFF member may notify this to the Commission for transmission to the RASFF network. In 2013 there was only one such notification:

- 2013.0834 - Salmonella Mbandaka (presence /25g) and Salmonella Montevideo (presence /25g) in tahini sesame paste from Turkey – information provided by the U.S. IHR National Focal Point through INFOSAN

All information on the RASFF can be found on the website at:

http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/rapidalert/index_en.htm



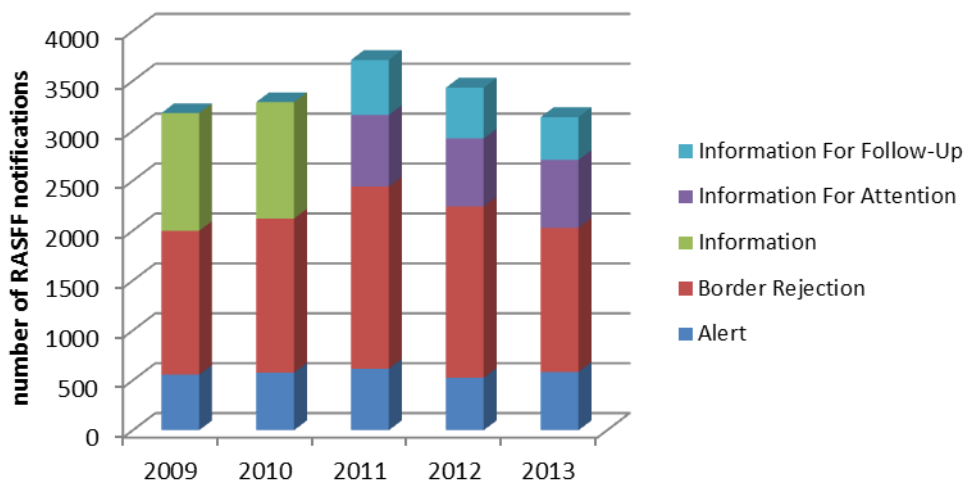
¹ Products placed on the market in one of the member countries including the EEA countries Norway, Liechtenstein and Iceland.

Evolution of the number of notifications since 2009:

- by notification classification

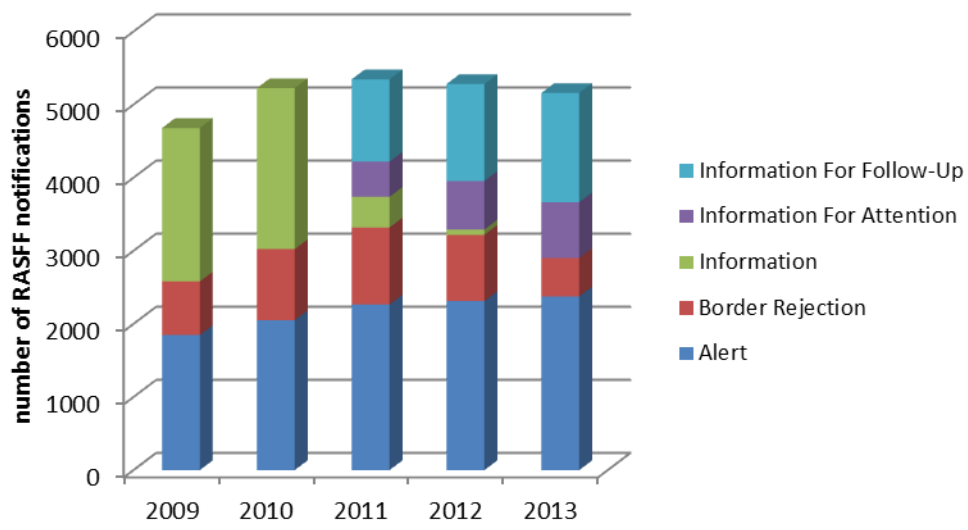
Original notifications

Year	Alert	Border Rejection	Information	Information For Attention	Information For Follow-Up
2009	557	1441	1179	0	0
2010	576	1544	1167	0	0
2011	617	1824	0	718	551
2012	526	1715	0	682	509
2013	585	1443	0	680	429
% in/decrease	+11.2	-15.9		-0.3	-15.7



Follow-up notifications

Year	Alert	Border Rejection	Information	Information For Attention	Information For Follow-Up
2009	1848	732	2099		
2010	2051	971	2202		
2011	2265	1053	421	480	1126
2012	2312	906	74	663	1326
2013	2376	525	1	763	1493
% in/decrease	+2.8	-42.1	-98.6	+15.1	+12.6



- by notifying country

Table 1 - evolution of notifications by notifying country

Notifying Country	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Austria	110	88	65	49	46
Belgium	117	94	128	143	164
Bulgaria	26	33	116	75	54
Commission Services	23	11	4	1	1
Croatia	-	-	-	-	8
Cyprus	53	52	76	51	44
Czech Republic	68	90	95	72	70
Denmark	122	131	151	130	112
Estonia	13	18	9	17	32
Finland	141	130	111	105	88
France	157	171	199	275	249
Germany	412	396	415	362	331
Greece	160	157	127	66	65
Hungary	10	20	13	10	3
Iceland	1	2	6	3	1
Ireland	30	33	49	53	40
Italy	466	541	544	517	534
Latvia	14	21	17	26	27
Liechtenstein	0	0	0	0	0
Lithuania	33	48	39	51	28
Luxembourg	16	23	25	8	17
Malta	18	12	27	11	12
Netherlands	212	214	202	173	264
Norway	30	23	51	61	45
Poland	141	140	223	181	120
Portugal	8	18	22	28	40
Romania	18	25	21	14	14
Slovakia	52	56	35	35	35
Slovenia	73	56	45	43	34
Spain	255	285	297	239	201
Sweden	60	73	72	95	91
Switzerland	4	7	6	20	40
United Kingdom	334	319	507	517	327
Total	3177	3287	3697	3431	3137

2013 notifications by hazard category, by classification and by basis

Hazard Category	Total	Alert	Border Rejection	Information For Attention	Information For Follow Up	Border Control - Consignment Detained	Border Control - Consignment Released	Border Control - Consignment Under Customs	Company'S Own Check	Consumer Complaint	Food Poisoning	Monitoring Of Media	Official Control In Non-Member Country	Official Control On The Market
Total	3137	585	1443	680	429	1407	206	33	410	118	41	1	9	912
Adulteration / Fraud	168	4	79	15	70	75		4	25	1				63
Allergens	71	45	1	24	1	1	1		25	14				30
Biocontaminants	51	14	10	27		10	5		9	3	8			16
Biotoxins (Other)	27	23		3	1				4	5	3			15
Chemical Contamination (Other)	4			2	2				2					2
Composition	181	19	60	38	64	60	3		5	5	1		1	106
Feed Additives	14	4	7	3		7	6							1
Food Additives And Flavourings	92	11	29	26	26	29	9		1	5	1			47
Foreign Bodies	102	27	22	17	36	21		1	11	57				12
Gmo / Novel Food	76		37	26	13	35	16	2	1	4				18
Heavy Metals	290	73	136	69	12	134	25	2	19	1			2	107
Industrial Contaminants	52	21	6	16	9	6	7		10					29
Labelling Absent/Incomplete/Incorrect	10	2	3		5	3			4					3
Migration	86	14	42	13	17	42	2			1				41
Mycotoxins	405	78	269	55	3	260	12	7	42	1			1	82
Non-Pathogenic Micro-Organisms	55	1	33	5	16	32	1	1	3	9				9
Not Determined / Other	14	8	3	1	2	3			1	2	1			7
Organoleptic Aspects	38	2	26		10	26				5				7
Packaging Defective / Incorrect	21	4	7	3	7	7			9	4	1			
Parasitic Infestation	10		4	2	4	4				1				5
Pathogenic Micro-Organisms	774	204	279	223	68	271	63	7	190	4	27		3	209
Pesticide Residues	452	14	337	83	18	328	36	9	22			1		56
Poor Or Insufficient Controls	95		75	4	16	74	1	1	3					16
Radiation	20	1	8	4	7	8	4		3	1				4
Residues Of Veterinary Medicinal Products	94	28	14	24	28	14	15		23	2			2	38
Tses	15	1		3	11				3					12

2013 notifications by product category and by classification

Product Category	Alert	Border Rejection	Information For Attention	Information For Follow-Up	Total 2013	2012	2011	2010
Alcoholic Beverages	1		2	1	4	7	14	7
Animal By-products					0	8	0	2
Bivalve Molluscs And Products Thereof	49	34	37	3	123	53	68	78
Cephalopods And Products Thereof	1	12	8	1	22	53	78	44
Cereals And Bakery Products	42	36	22	12	112	172	180	172
Cocoa And Cocoa Preparations, Coffee And Tea	9	40	2	4	55	78	43	33
Compound Feeds	2		5	11	18	26	13	7
Confectionery	12	7	2	9	30	71	66	50
Crustaceans And Products Thereof	7	30	10	7	54	60	75	78
Dietetic Foods, Food Supplements, Fortified Foods	33	54	19	50	156	183	138	141
Eggs And Egg Products	3		1	2	6	17	13	16
Fats And Oils	4	5		1	10	17	20	25
Feed Additives	2	1	2	3	8	9	13	7
Feed For Food-Producing Animals - (Obsolete)					0	0	2	0
Feed Materials	24	65	54	66	209	235	260	112
Feed Premixtures	2		3	4	9	8	6	4
Fish And Fish Products	77	86	118	30	311	373	482	452
Food Additives And Flavourings	3	3	1	2	9	11	7	1
Food Contact Materials	23	156	24	20	223	289	308	231
Fruits And Vegetables	55	402	161	24	642	716	671	494
Gastropods		1	1		2	4	0	10
Herbs And Spices	18	77	31	12	138	150	201	222
Honey And Royal Jelly	1	2	3		6	8	10	16
Ices And Desserts	4		3	2	9	12	7	6
Meat And Meat Products (Other Than Poultry)	74	64	45	67	250	184	172	195
Milk And Milk Products	22		7	14	43	52	50	76
Natural Mineral Water			1	1	2	4	8	6
Non-Alcoholic Beverages	1	9	14	9	33	43	31	36
Nuts, Nut Products And Seeds	30	215	25	2	272	329	522	537
Other Food Product / Mixed	8	22	8	14	52	35	15	14
Pet Food	4	7	5	12	28	38	63	56
Poultry Meat And Poultry Meat Products	50	106	49	10	215	117	72	75
Prepared Dishes And Snacks	10	6	12	31	59	38	33	24
Soups, Broths, Sauces And Condiments	13	3	5	4	25	26	51	54
Water For Human Consumption (Other)					0	2	4	5
Wine	1			1	2	3	1	1

2013 - top 10 number of notifications

Number of notifications counted for each combination of hazard/product category/country.

- by origin

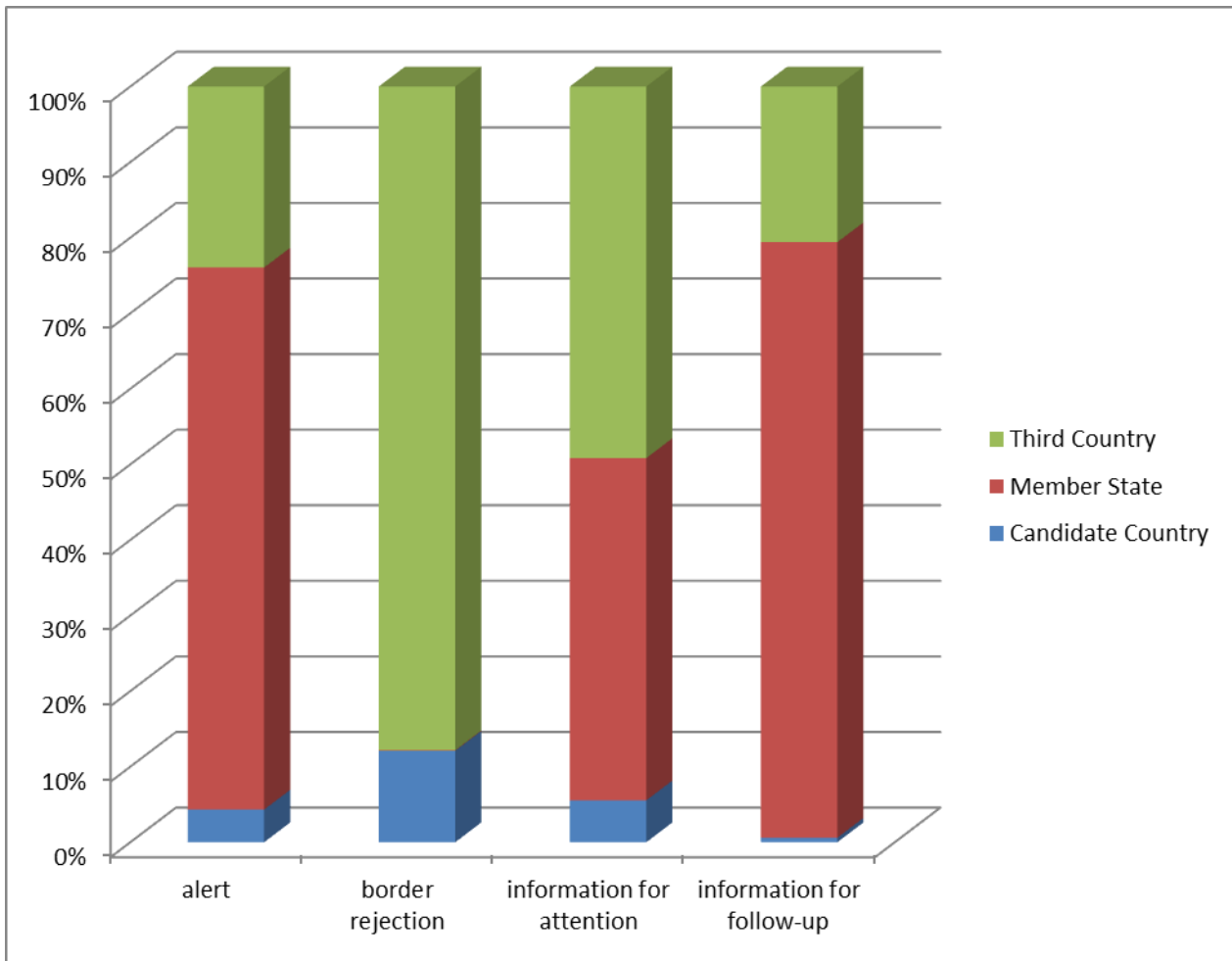
hazard	product category	origin	notifications
aflatoxins	nuts, nut products and seeds	Turkey	61
Salmonella	poultry meat and poultry meat products	Brazil	60
migration of chromium	food contact materials	China	59
aflatoxins	nuts, nut products and seeds	China	54
Salmonella	poultry meat and poultry meat products	Poland	53
mercury	fish and fish products	Spain	43
aflatoxins	fruits and vegetables	Turkey	39
migration of manganese	food contact materials	China	38
carbon monoxide treatment	fish and fish products	Spain	30

- by notifying country

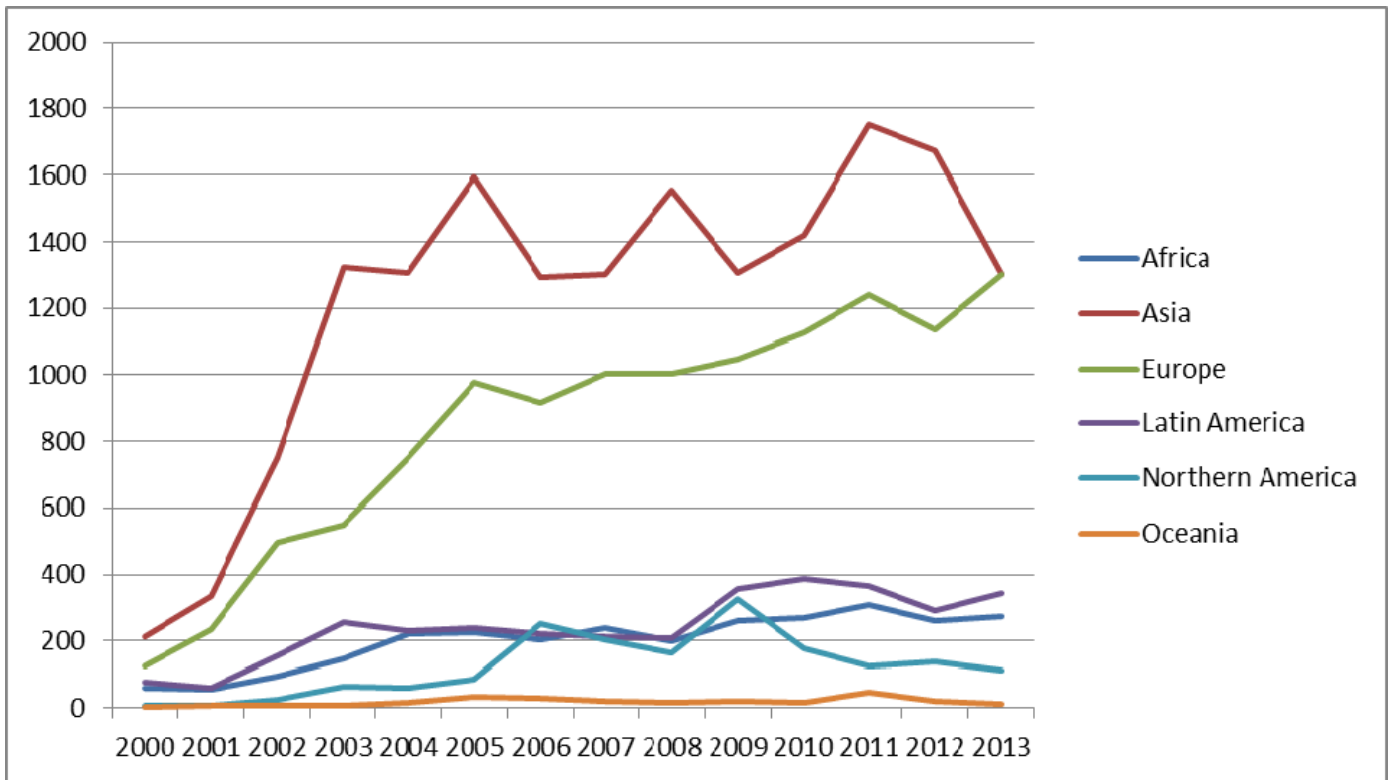
hazard	product category	notifying country	notifications
migration of chromium	food contact materials	Italy	59
aflatoxins	nuts, nut products and seeds	Germany	50
mercury	fish and fish products	Italy	49
migration of manganese	food contact materials	Italy	48
aflatoxins	nuts, nut products and seeds	Netherlands	42
migration of nickel	food contact materials	Italy	41
shigatoxin-producing Escherichia coli	meat and meat products (other than poultry)	Netherlands	40
Salmonella spp.	fruits and vegetables	United Kingdom	34
carbon monoxide treatment	fish and fish products	Italy	32
aflatoxins	nuts, nut products and seeds	Italy	27

Notifications – country of origin

2013 Notifications by country type (origin)



2000-2013 notifications by world region



2011-2013 Notifications by country of origin



Microsoft Excel
Worksheet

The Excel worksheet document can be opened from the file attachments of this PDF document.

2013 notifications by follow-up type and by notifying country:



Microsoft Excel
Worksheet

The Excel worksheet document can be opened from the file attachments of this PDF document.

2013 notifications by week and by type



Microsoft Excel
Worksheet

The Excel worksheet document can be opened from the file attachments of this PDF document.

2013 notifications by hazard category and notifying country



Microsoft Excel
Worksheet

The Excel worksheet document can be opened from the file attachments of this PDF document. The coloured cells indicate the country with the highest number of notifications for a given hazard category.

2013 notifications by product category and notifying country



Microsoft Excel
Worksheet

The Excel worksheet document can be opened from the file attachments of this PDF document. The coloured cells indicate the country with the highest number of notifications for a given product category.

2013 non-member countries having provided follow-up



Microsoft Excel
Worksheet

The Excel worksheet document can be opened from the file attachments of this PDF document. The first column "distribution" shows the number of 2013 notifications for each country to which the Commission's Services notified distribution of a product. The second column "origin" shows the number of 2013 notifications for each country to which the Commission's Services notified a product originating from it. The third column "reactions" shows the number of follow-ups received from each country in 2013.