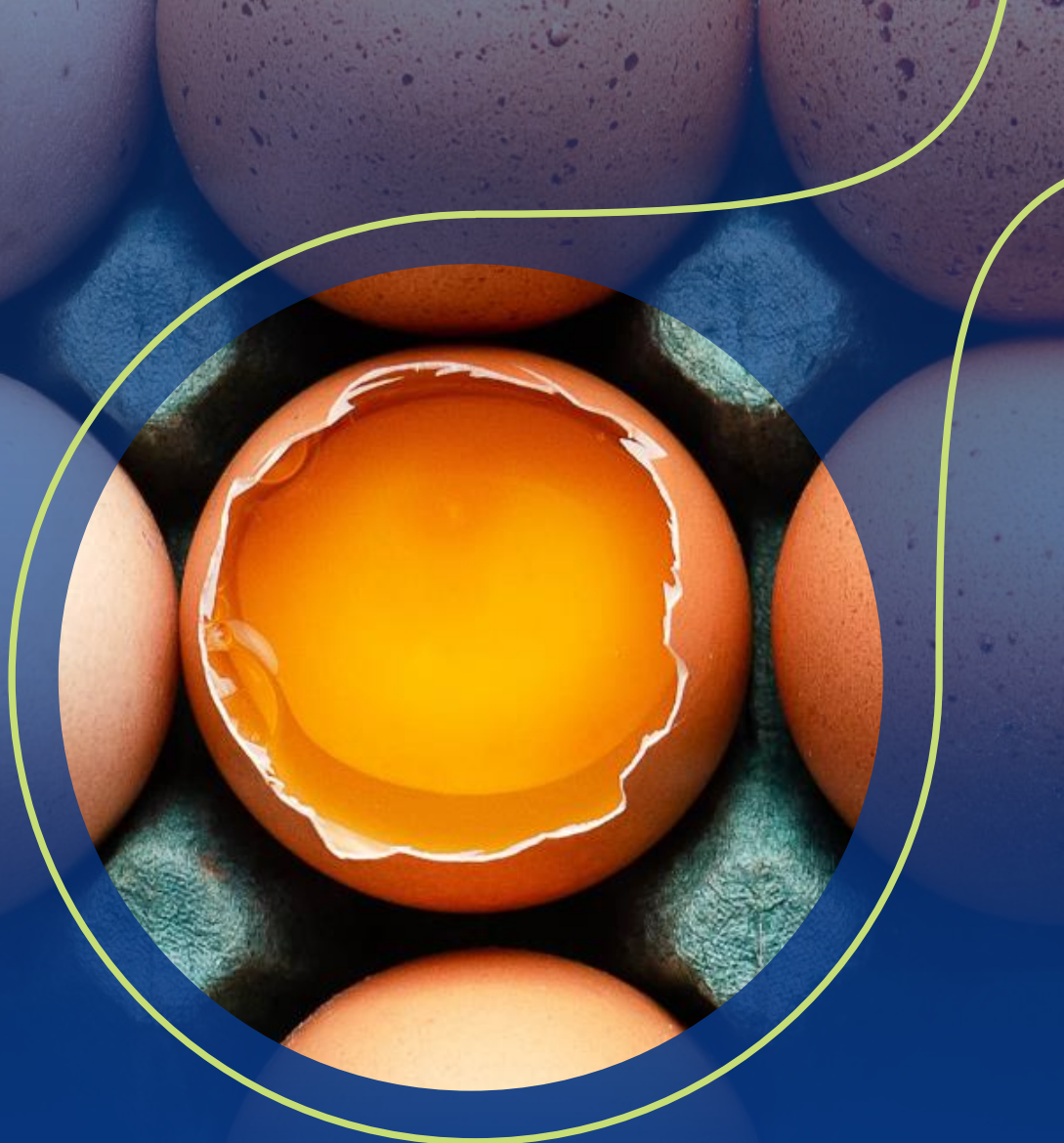




Food Risk Insights

Eurofins Food Testing UK Ltd.
Issue 25 | September 2026



In Focus

Emerging issues, trends and legislative changes

- UK Salmonella outbreak
- NFCU September industry update
- EFSA study on microbiological contamination in RTE plant-based food
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- The Speculoos boom
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Welcome to the September 2026 Food Risk Insights from Eurofins Food Testing UK Ltd's Compliance and Risk Management Team.

In this issue, the latest updates on food safety, food crime, supply chain risks and regulatory developments affecting the food industry.

We are here to offer expert advice and support; helping you reduce risk, strengthen compliance and protect your business.



UK *Salmonella* outbreak

The United Kingdom Health Security Agency (UKHSA), the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and other public health partners are continuing to investigate an outbreak of *Salmonella Enteritidis* in the UK. Current evidence suggests the outbreak may be linked to imported eggs, with cases associated with food consumed at cafés, restaurants and takeaway outlets.

Three clusters of *Salmonella* Enteritidis (t5.9411, t5.9765 and t0.24068) are currently under investigation in the UK.

As of 7 September 2026, there have been:

- a total of 322 confirmed cases and one death linked to the t5.9411 cluster in England, with sample dates ranging from 11 August 2025 to 21 August 2026
- a total of 186 confirmed cases linked to the t0.24068 cluster in England, with no deaths reported, and sample dates ranging from 27 May 2025 to 18 August 2026

- a total of 41 confirmed cases and one death linked to the t5.9765 cluster in England, with sample dates ranging from 27 January 2026 to 11 August 2026

This gives a combined total of 549 cases.

The codes, such as t5.9411, are genetic strain designations (or Whole Genome Sequencing profiles) assigned by the UKHSA to identify specific outbreak clusters of *Salmonella* Enteritidis. Whole Genome Sequencing (WGS) is used to map the bacteria's DNA and show that cases are part of the same continuous outbreak from a common source, rather than isolated cases.

The FSA continues to state that its advice on eating eggs remains the same. UK-produced eggs bearing the British Lion mark or produced under the Laid in Britain scheme are safe to eat. Eggs that are thoroughly cooked and handled hygienically should also not present a food safety risk.

Published catering guidance, 'Advice on safe storage, handling and use of eggs for catering', can be found [here](#).

NFCU September industry update

This issue highlighted three areas where the supply chain may be affected:

Coffee futures climbed sharply as traders responded to the potential impact of El Niño conditions and growing concerns over the availability of premium Arabica beans.

Seafood origin fraud continues to pose challenges globally, with recent enforcement action targeting misleading country of origin claims for premium salmon. The incident reinforces concerns

around traceability within seafood supply chains and the need for scrutiny of provenance claims for premium products.

Changes in trade flows driven by Chinese **beef** quota restrictions and EU restrictions on Brazilian beef exports may increase the movement of Australian and Brazilian beef into alternative markets, raising the risk of origin substitution and complicating traceability efforts.

EFSA study on microbiological contamination in RTE plant-based dairy, meat and fish

This European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) report assessed the microbiological safety of ready-to-eat (RTE) plant-based dairy, meat and fish alternatives in response to growing consumer demand for alternative proteins. Testing found that most products met acceptable microbiological standards, although a small number showed elevated levels of contamination indicators or pathogens.

While *Listeria monocytogenes* and *Salmonella* were detected only rarely, the findings highlight the importance of strong food safety controls throughout production, storage and distribution. The report supports continued monitoring and

the development of targeted guidance to ensure the safety of the expanding plant-based food sector.

Key points included:

- Further investigation was recommended into key areas requiring attention, including CCPs, GHP, time and temperature parameters, and product formulation.
- The need to agree harmonised microbiological criteria for evaluating these product types across the EU.
- Consideration of unintended consumer behaviours, as consumers often perceive plant-based foods as safer than meat alternatives, particularly in relation to storage and use. Traditional sensory checks, such as smell and taste, may also be less effective for plant-based products because they can have different characteristics from meat-based foods.

Arrests over illegal meat

Officers from the local authority and the National Food Crime Unit (NFCU), supported by the police, HMRC (His Majesty's Revenue and Customs) and the Home Office, targeted an unapproved meat-cutting plant.

During the operation, four men were arrested and around 4.25 tonnes of illegal meat were seized and removed from the food chain. The local authority also took enforcement action to address immediate food safety risks.

The NFCU and Food Standards Agency (FSA) have issued a Food Alert for Action and are working with local authorities to trace and remove any other affected products from the market. A criminal investigation is now underway.

The range of agencies involved further highlights the complexity and scale of these investigations.



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33 tonnes of food seized

In another operation led by the NFCU, one arrest was made and more than 33 tonnes of suspected illegal food were seized across England, Wales and Scotland.

The arrest led to the disposal of 25 tonnes of suspected illegal frozen food products. As part of the same operation, local authorities took action, seizing more than 8 tonnes during 111 visits to businesses. There is no indication of a health risk to the public, but anyone with concerns should contact their local authority.

Supplements top EU fraud alerts

Food supplements remained the most common subject of non-compliance in the monthly report published by the European Commission in July, accounting for a significant share of the 207 cases recorded. Dietetic foods, supplements and fortified foods topped the list with 70 reports.

A summary of the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) latest quarter's report can be found at the end of this issue of Food Risk Insights.

PRiF winds down

The Expert Committee on Pesticide Residues in Food (PRiF) closed on 30 June 2026. The main role of the independent committee was to advise on the UK's national surveillance programme for pesticide residues in food and to provide advice to the government on pesticide residues. This work will now be embedded within the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

Food fraud costs

Food fraud costs the UK economy an estimated £400 million to £2 billion each year, according to new research from the University of Portsmouth. The study examined offences such as product substitution, false labelling and document fraud, and found that most of the economic impact comes from fraudulent products replacing legitimate ones in the market.

Published in the *Journal of Economic Criminology*, the research highlights the wider consequences of food fraud, including lost sales for genuine businesses, reduced consumer confidence and, in some cases, risks to public health.

FDI issues Food Safety Incident Management Guide

Food Drink Ireland (FDI) has published a free-of-charge [Food Safety Incident Management Guide](#) to help companies strengthen their preparedness and response capabilities.

The guide has two focus areas:

- Prevention – It outlines key regulatory requirements, industry best practices and available external support to help businesses review and enhance their existing food safety management and risk mitigation systems.
- Incident response – It provides practical guidance on the critical actions and decision-making processes required during a food safety incident.

NFU says UK should follow EU Brazilian meat ban

The National Farmers' Union (NFU) is calling on the UK government to impose a precautionary ban on imports of Brazilian products of animal origin, including beef and poultry, unless Brazil can demonstrate that antibiotics are not being misused. Otherwise, the UK market could be exposed to imports that may pose a threat to human health.

The call comes after the EU imposed a temporary ban, which came into force on 3 September. The EU took this decision because Brazil has not been able to demonstrate compliance with EU standards on antimicrobial use, which

ban the use of such drugs for growth promotion and prohibit the use of those reserved for human medicine.

The European Union is not banning the overall EU-Mercosur Partnership, the free-trade partnership between the EU and the Mercosur bloc (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay) agreed earlier in 2026. Instead, it has specifically suspended imports of meat from Brazil.

The EU-Mercosur trade deal is a free-trade and partnership agreement between the European Union and the South American trade bloc (Mercosur), which includes Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay. The agreement was officially signed and entered into provisional application on May 1, 2026.

The Speculoos boom

The Speculoos craze has reached an all-time high in 2026, dominating grocery aisles and social media feeds. Speculoos is a crunchy biscuit originally made in Belgium and the Netherlands. The flavour typically comes from a heavy focus on cinnamon, supported by other spices such as nutmeg, cloves, ginger, and cardamom.

While one brand, Biscoff, dominates the Speculoos market, its brand name has become almost synonymous with the generic product name. Many retailers and suppliers have embraced this trend, incorporating the distinctive caramelised, cinnamon-spiced flavour into a wide range of products.

Demand for these products is expected to remain high, particularly with the festive period approaching. This is likely to have a knock-on effect on demand for cinnamon.

True cinnamon (Ceylon cinnamon) has a mild, sweet and complex flavour, with thin, fragile layers. In contrast, most standard grocery-store cinnamon is cassia, which is cheaper but may contain high levels of liver-damaging coumarin. Ceylon cinnamon contains roughly 250 times less coumarin than cassia.

Suppliers should therefore be aware of the potential use of inferior-quality cinnamon in the supply chain.

Regulation (EC) No 1334/2008 on flavourings and certain food ingredients with flavouring properties for use in and on foods sets specific maximum limits for coumarin in finished food products containing cinnamon.

EU seeks feedback on cereulide

In response to recent safety concerns, the Commission is proposing to introduce additional checks for baby formula and special infant foods. This will ensure the toxin cereulide is not present in the following foodstuffs sold in the EU:

- dried infant formulae

- dried dietary foods for special medical purposes, intended for infants under 6 months
- dried follow-on formulae.

The goal is to make these foods safer for all children in the EU, while ensuring fair and consistent rules for EU producers.

The draft act is open for feedback until 29 September and can be found [here](#).



September in brief | Food safety & supply chain insights

September's developments highlight ongoing food safety challenges, with a significant UK outbreak of *Salmonella Enteritidis* under investigation, concerns around microbiological contamination in plant-based foods, and proposed new EU controls on cereulide in infant formula products. The findings reinforce the importance of effective monitoring, robust food safety systems and continued vigilance across the supply chain.

Supply chain integrity remains a key focus, with the National Food Crime Unit reporting illegal meat seizures, arrests

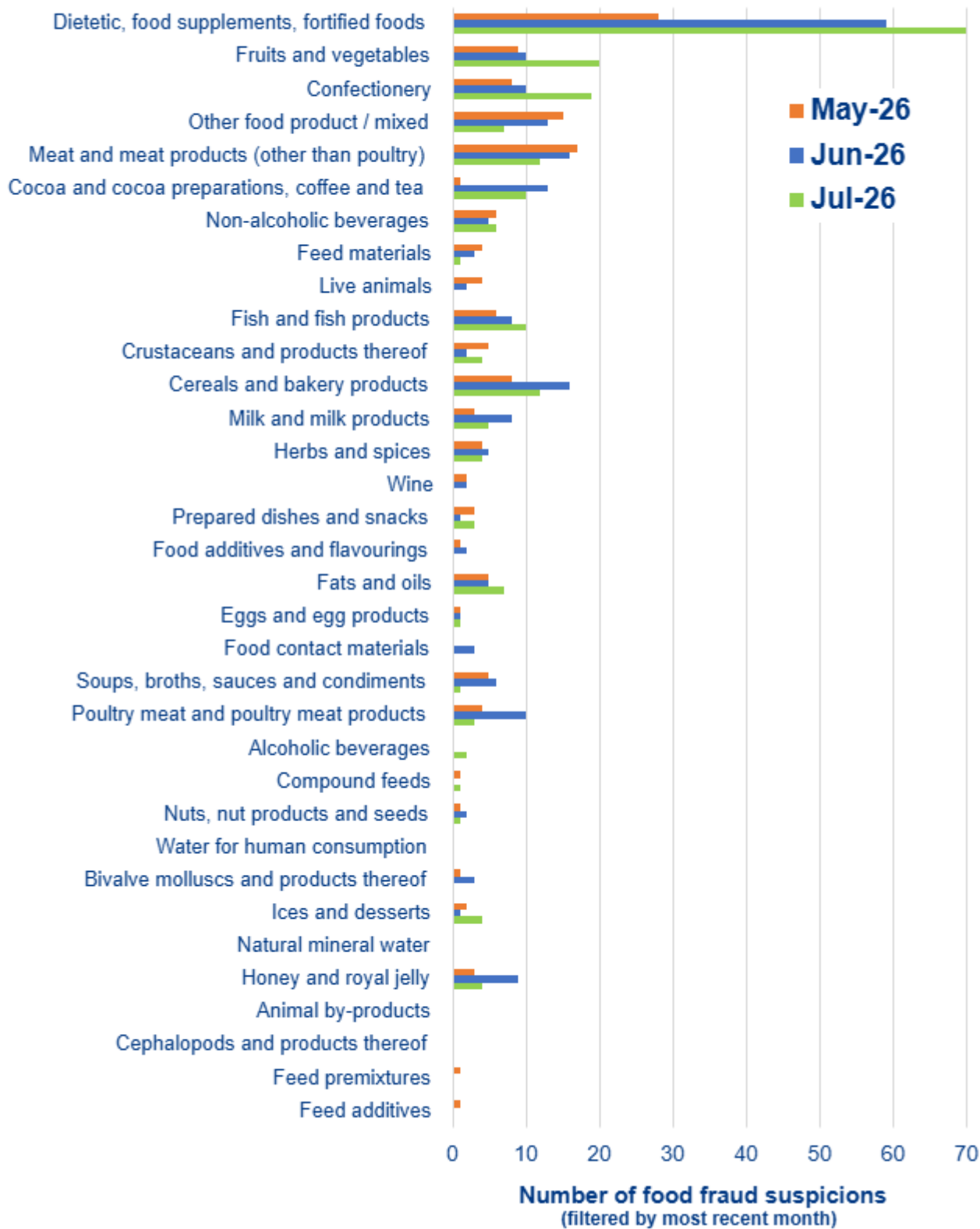
linked to unapproved operations, and continued warnings around seafood origin fraud and changing global trade patterns. At the same time, growing demand for plant-based products and ingredients such as cinnamon highlights the need for strong supplier assurance and traceability programmes.

Regulatory and industry developments continue to evolve, including new food safety incident management guidance, calls for tighter controls on Brazilian meat imports, and consultation on cereulide toxin monitoring. These updates demonstrate the importance of maintaining compliance, reviewing risk assessments and keeping food safety systems up to date.

In a landscape of evolving regulation, emerging hazards and increasing supply chain scrutiny, Eurofins Food Testing UK provides expert consultancy and testing services to help businesses strengthen compliance, manage risk and protect brand reputation.

RASFF latest quarter's report

Summary of Food Fraud Suspicions





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The Eurofins Compliance and Risk Management Team can work with you to identify and mitigate risks within your business, whether they be microbiological, contaminants, allergens, pesticides, authenticity (food fraud) or risks to your supply chain such as price changes or climate fluctuations.

We are here to work with you to protect your customers, brand and reputation.



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