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Rice Food

Safety & other Facts

Newsletter Nr. 7

15th Jan 2009

FOOD SAFETY

- Rapid Alert System

Following official control on the market or at the EU borders, notifications were sent on by:

- Poland concerning altered organoleptic characteristics (chemical smell and taste) of white rice from Vietnam;
- Italy concerning aflatoxins (B1 = 12.7; Tot. = 16.8 µg/kg - ppb) in rice flakes from Bangladesh;
- Germany (3 notifications) concerning unauthorised genetically modified (BT 63 Rice) rice noodles or vermicelli from China.

Source: RASFF weekly Overview

- **EFSA's** Management Board has recently adopted the **Strategic Plan 2009-2013** and its Management Plan setting out key priorities for 2009, which will help ensure the Authority keeps pace with increased demands in the world of food and feed safety. In its Strategic Plan, EFSA outlines how it will maximise the benefits of the scientific expertise at its disposal across Europe and strengthen its integrated approach to risk assessment to provide Europe's decision makers with relevant, up-to-the-minute scientific advice. In 2009 EFSA will strengthen its capacity to identify emerging risks and develop a strategic approach to international activities.

Source: www.efsa.europa.eu

- **Cadmium** exposure has been associated with ill health effects, including cancer and kidney damage, and EU maximum limits have been established for several food groups. Following the European Commission's request to EFSA to revise the risk assessment on heavy metals such as cadmium, EFSA issued a call for data resulting in a strong response from Member States. Taking into account the period from 2003 to 2007, 140,000 analytical results have been provided by 18 Member States, Iceland, Australia and also by commercial sources. Additional data has also been sent for the period before 2003. Together with data from an earlier EU scientific cooperation programme, there are over 180,000 results in EFSA's database. Currently the collected cadmium occurrence data are being summarised by EFSA experts.

Source: EFSA in focus: food. Newsletter (issue n. 1)

ORGANIC FOOD

Published by IFOAM the report **Building Sustainable Organic Sectors** to give guidance for the development of dynamic organic sectors, with a focus on developing countries. The report includes ten country case studies of which five are from developing economies, two from emerging economies or economies in transition, and three (Italy included) are from more developed economies.

Source: www.ifoam.org

LAWS, STANDARDS & AGREEMENTS

Four Parliament and Council Regulations (OJ L354/2008) and one Commission Directive (OJ L6/2009) have recently been published concerning **food additives, food enzymes, food flavourings and colours for use in foodstuffs**.

Source: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu>



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GMO & BIOTECH

Phytic acid, the major storage form of phosphorus in cereal grains, has a negative impact on animal nutrition and the environment. Monogastric animals cannot use the phosphorus in phytic acid efficiently because they lack the enzyme phytase needed for its digestion. The undigested phytic acid excreted in animal wastes is considered as the leading source of phosphorus pollution from agriculture. A team of Japanese researchers has recently obtained **transgenic rice lines accumulating significantly lower levels of phytic acid**. The scientists report a 68 % reduction in phytic acid content in GM rice seeds compared to their non-transgenic counterparts. No negative effects on seed weight, germination or plant growth were observed.

Source: www3.interscience.wiley.com

SCIENCE & RESEARCH

Plant breeding and nuclear science might be at extreme ends of the technological spectrum, but scientists believe that 'going nuclear' could help bolster the efforts to produce high-yielding plants and help save millions from hunger. The United Nations International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is urging for increased use of mutation induction, or the use of radiation, to breed crops that can resist diseases and survive harsh conditions such as drought and flood. The Agency says that the technique is proven and cost-effective and has been used since the 1920s. Examples of successfully released mutant crops include **rice tolerant to saline conditions** in Vietnam, wheat that can survive Kenya's arid regions and barley that grows well in the high Andes.

Source: *Cropbiotech Update*

OTHER NEWS

- The European Commission has approved measures to provide information on, and to **promote agricultural products in third countries**. The 11 programmes that have been accepted (out of 30 submitted) are from 8 Member States, including Italy. They are targeted at Russia, Ukraine, China, Japan and North America. The products covered are wine, fruit and vegetables, meat, dairy products and PDO and organic products. The EU contribution is € 17.8 million (50% of the total budget of the programmes).

Source: europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/08/1960

EVENTS & MEETINGS

- **MIA-39th International Food Show**. Rimini, 14-17 February. MIA is the leading appointment for the eating out food trade, an opportunity for checking out a market that has a turnover in Italy of 65.7 billion euros and is still growing. In 2015, it is forecast that modern food service will grow by 45%, collective food service by 30% and the traditional sector by 25% (source: Nomisma survey).

Source: www.miafiera.it

- **17th session of the Eurofins International Seminar**. Paris, 25-26 February. The seminar will be focusing on next generation GM crops, which will be engineered for "stacked" traits instead of for single gene traits. The seminar will provide an opportunity to catch up all the latest news - what biotech crops are in the pipeline - how are concerns such as co-existence with conventional crops being addressed - what is the latest detection methodology available.

Source: www.eurofins.com