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For feed and food law enforcement, and port health authorities in England

Action required related to Ethylene Oxide (ETO) residues detected in Locust Bean Gum (LBG), E410

Summary: The FSA is asking local authorities to share information received from businesses in their area to verify the withdrawal of products which may contain LBG contaminated with ETO and ensure notification to the FSA and appropriate disposal where there is known distribution.

Dear Colleague,

The FSA has received several Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) alerts concerning affected products supplied to the UK from the EU. The FSA has been notifying local authorities where a RASFF concerns a business in their area. There have been a much larger number of recalls and withdrawals across the EU, the UK will continue to monitor the situation and scale of implicated products on the UK market. Please note that this advice does not apply to infant formula or follow on formula, as these will require a case by case approach.

Action required:

The FSA is asking local authorities (LA) to share any information received from relevant businesses in their area to verify the withdrawal of products which may contain LBG contaminated with ETO and ensure appropriate disposal where there is known distribution. This can be done in an email to foodincidents@food.gov.uk.

The FSA is not aware of any usage of ETO contaminated LBG in infant formula or follow on infant formula but if such instances come to light these may be considered on a case by case basis, and in this case an incident report form should be submitted using the following link [Report a food problem | Food Standards Agency](#).

The FSA is not advocating a full consumer recall of affected products as the risk to individual consumers is low. Other EU countries may be adopting other approaches, but

FSA risk assessment and risk management advice is based on our own assessment of the risk.

Background

We have been made aware that the pesticide has been detected in LBG. This has resulted in ETO also being found in some food and feed products containing LBG (E410) in Europe. ETO is not approved for use in food in the UK or the EU. The detection of ETO in LBG follows previous issues with its unauthorised use in other products such as sesame seeds and dried herbs and spices.

LBG (E410) is used as a thickening agent, gelling or stabilising agent. The food additive LBG (E410) is authorised for use under the additives legislation in many different food categories including ice-cream, breakfast cereals, meat products, confectionery, follow on formulae, fine bakery wares, fermented milk products and cheese.

Advice to businesses

We have shared a letter with Trade Associations (TAs) requesting that food businesses respond promptly to any notifications or instructions from suppliers, or LAs, to withdraw products from the market and, when asked, to provide other information in relation to the incident. LAs should inform the FSA where there have been withdrawals at the email address mentioned above.

We are also advising businesses that non-compliant stock and products should not be placed on the market and that affected businesses inform their LA. Food businesses should take the appropriate action to ensure that ingredients they source are compliant with legislation.

Risk assessment summary

The FSA is advising businesses that any stock of LBG contaminated with ETO should not be placed on the market, and any stock on the market should be withdrawn. In addition, products manufactured using LBG known to be contaminated with ETO should not be placed on the market, and any stock already placed on the market should be withdrawn.

Based on risk assessments that have been carried out it is unlikely that there would be a concern for health, although due to the nature of genotoxic carcinogens it is not possible to say there is zero risk to health.

ETO is regulated under pesticide legislation which is led and enforced by Health and Safety Executive (HSE). In addition, ethylene oxide may not be used for sterilising purposes in food additives as per the note in Annex of the retained EU regulation 231/2012 on the specifications for food additives listed in Annexes II and III to retained EU Regulation

1333/2008. ETO used for such purposes in LBG and use of said LBG in composite products would not be compliant with food additives legislation.

Thank you for your co-operation in this matter.

Please contact food incidents team at foodincidents@food.gov.uk if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light yellow background. The signature is stylized and appears to read 'RUBHI'.

Rajwinder Ubhi

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