

# Monthly Summary of Articles on Food Fraud and Adulteration

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## Food Fraud Cases

The Italian Carabinieri, supported by Europol within the context of operation OPSON IX, dismantled a criminal organisation counterfeiting high-value wines. Counterfeiters filled empty wine bottles from expensive wine brands with cheap wines and later-on sold them online as premium products in Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the United States.

[Europol](#) 30/06/2020

[Securing Industry](#) 01/07/2020



Italy



Wine



Intellectual property rights infringement

Authorities in Spain and Italy discovered a potential huge scandal in the wine sector, as two of Spain's biggest wine companies may have counterfeited young wine as aged Crianza, Reserva and Gran Reserva Valdepeñas PDO.

[El Economista](#) 26/06/2020

[El Espanol](#) 28/06/2020

[Wine Searcher](#) 01/07/2020

[20 minutos - El Digital](#) 06/07/2020

[El Economista - El Espanol](#) 09/07/2020

[El Espanol - El Economista](#) 10/07/2020

[CLM 24](#) 16/07/2020



Spain



Wine



Intellectual property rights infringement

A collaboration between the *Conseil interprofessionnel du vin de Bordeaux* (CIVB) and the Shanghai authorities led to the seizure of 10 000 counterfeited Bordeaux wine bottles offered in China. Globally speaking, the Chinese market is the largest one for Bordeaux wines.

[Securing Industry](#) 30/06/2020

[The drinks business](#) 26/06/2020



China



Wine



Intellectual property rights infringement

The Coast Guard seized 1 600 kg of fish products destined for Germany due to lacking the necessary traceability documentation and labels.

[Cesena Today](#) 01/07/2020

[Venezia Today](#) 01/07/2020



Italy



Fish and fish products



Missing documents

All over the Italian territory, the Carabinieri seized 175 000 eggs because of lack of the proper traceability documentation.

[Carabinieri](#) 03/07/2020

[ANSA](#) 03/07/2020



Italy



Eggs and egg products



Missing documents

The Agencia de Gestión Agraria y Pesquera de Andalucía seized 9 tonnes of anchovies lacking the required traceability documentation, probably fished illegally without respecting the legal quotas.

[Gente](#) 06/07/2020



Spain



Fish and fish products



Missing documents

In India, eighteen biofertilizer units and instant tea factories have been closed after the official authorities discovered that tea waste (e.g. tea sweepings, tea fluff, tea fibre or tea stalks), supplied by the biofertilizer units, was utilised to adulterate instant tea products.

[The Hindu](#) 07/07/2020



India



Non-alcoholic beverages



Replacement/ dilution/ addition/ removal in product

According to an agriculture ministry's study, local milk sold in Thimphu and Paro was adulterated with water. Such practice may increase safety risks for consumers as well.

Milk was improperly packaged in recycled plastic mineral water bottles.

[Kuensel](#) 08/07/2020



Kingdom of Bhutan



Milk and milk products

Food contact materials



Replacement/ dilution/ addition/ removal in product

The Punjab Food Authority (PFA) performed a number of official controls closing and fining criminal activities all over their territory. They discovered a manufacturing plant producing snacks with expired ingredients such as rancid oil, spices and artificial flavours. Five milk shops were closed for selling milk adulterated with polluted water. In another operation, the PFA team discarded almost 3 300 litres of adulterated milk, 375 litres of beverages, 75 kg of cream, 200 gutka packets, 207 kg of red chilli and 20 of kg spices.

[The News](#) 09/07/2020



India



Prepared dishes and snacks

Milk and milk products

Herbs and spices

Non-alcoholic beverages



Replacement/ dilution/ addition/ removal in product

Unapproved treatment and/or process

The Coast Guard and the Police seized 250 kg of fish products lacking the necessary traceability documentation and not compliant with the minimal fish size. Such requirements were established to guarantee a sustainable reproduction of the fish populations.

[La Sicilia Web](#) 14/07/2020



Italy



Fish and fish products



Missing documents

The Spanish authorities arrested six people belonging to a criminal organisation producing adulterated wine. They utilised isoglucose (e.g. corn syrup) to produce wine and alcoholic drinks such as brandy. Their financial and distribution network was located in Spain, Belgium, Netherlands, Austria, France, Moldova and Russia. The total value of the fraud is estimated in 97 million euros.

[La Cerca](#) 15/07/2020

[CLM 24](#) 15/07/2020

[Agroinformacion](#) 15/07/2020



Spain



Alcoholic beverages

Wine



Unapproved treatment and/or process

Forgery

The Italian Carabinieri seized 800 kg of food products (mostly meat, but also bread, sweets, cheese, baby food, legumes) and wine all over the Province of Naples. Besides lacking the required traceability documentation, in many cases the hygienic conditions were not compliant with the legislation.

[Napoli Today](#) 15/07/2020

[Fanpage](#) 15/07/2020



Italy



Cereals and bakery products  
Confectionery  
Fruits and vegetables  
Meat and meat products (other than poultry)  
Milk and milk products  
Poultry meat and poultry meat products  
Wine



Missing documents

Europol and EUIPO coordinated the operation OPSON IX (December 2019 – June 2020) with the support of the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), the EU Commission, national authorities and private sectors partners. The operation dismantled 19 food fraud organised crime groups, involving 406 arrests. The most counterfeited products include milk and dairy products, wine and alcoholic beverages, olive oil, vanilla, saffron, and horse meat, for a total value of €28 million.

[Europol](#) - [EUIPO](#) - [Interpol](#) - [OLAF](#) - [Quotidiano Sanità](#) - [Dairy Reporter](#) 22/07/2020

[IDW Online](#) - [Securing Industry](#) 22/07/2020

[Food Safety News](#) - [Farmers Weekly](#) 23/07/2020

[New Food Magazine](#) 24/07/2020

[Guardia Civil](#) - [Novinite](#) - [Radio Huesca](#) - [20 Minutos](#) - [La Rioja](#) 25/07/2020

[24 Sapo](#) 27/07/2020

[New Food Magazine](#) - [The Press and Journal](#) 28/07/2020

[AFSCA/FAVV](#) - [HLN](#) 30/07/2020

[Food Safety News](#) 02/08/2020

[Process Alimentaire](#) 31/08/2020



EU



Alcoholic beverages  
Fats and oils  
Herbs and spices  
Meat and meat products (other than poultry)  
Milk and milk products  
Wine



Intellectual property rights infringement  
Mislabelling  
Missing documents

Between 2015 and 2017 an Auckland business man sold at higher price 3 million eggs fraudulently labelled as “free range”, for a total profit of approximately \$320 000.

[Stuff](#) 22/07/2020

[RNZ](#) 22/07/2020



New Zealand



Eggs and egg products



Mislabelling

The Italian authorities seized 6 700 eggs lacking the required traceability documentation and stored in hygiene conditions not compliant with the legislation.

[Salute Gov](#) 22/07/2020



Italy



Eggs and egg products



Missing documents

The Italian authorities seized almost 98 tonnes of organic almonds, lacking the required traceability documentation. The total value of the seized products is estimated to be 753 000 Euros.

[Meridio News](#) 24/07/2020



Italy



Nuts, nut products and seeds



Missing documents

The Kuwait authorities arrested a fraudster manufacturing alcoholic beverages with alcohol intended for perfumes, not for producing alcoholic beverages. Four persons have already died and six are in critical conditions.

[The Nation Online](#) 25/07/2020



Kuwait



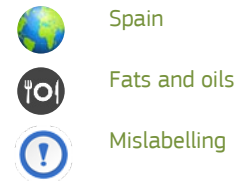
Wine



Unapproved treatment and/or process

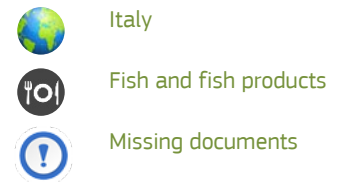
The control authorities of the Spanish region of Murcia found that 40% of extra-virgin olive oil bottles were subject to fraud. In 15% of the cases, quality was inferior to that claimed on the label. In 25% of the cases, labels were incomplete or nutritional information were incorrect.

[La Verdad](#) 27/07/2020



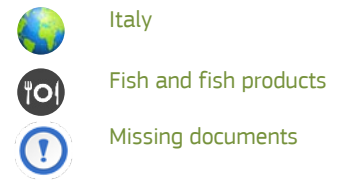
The Central Port Authority, after performing almost 1 200 official controls, seized more than 6 000 kg of fish products illegally fished without any authorisation. Half of the seized seafood was red tuna (3 000 kg). Total fines amount to almost 140 000 euros.

[Giornale di Sicilia](#) 31/07/2020



The Italian finance police seized 900 kg of fish products lacking the necessary traceability documentation and directed to restaurants in other Regions.

[Venezia Today](#) 10/08/2020



The Spanish Civil Guard arrested three men for mislabelling 12 tonnes of sea bream and sea bass. The origin of the fish products was changed from Turkey to Spain, and the expiration date was falsified. As such fraud may pose a serious threat to the health of the consumers, the seized products were destroyed.

[Las Provincias - La Razon](#) 17/08/2020

[HNA - FNP](#) 21/08/2020



According to a Mexican study from the Cuautitlán School of Higher Studies, 20% (3 out of 15) of commercial tuna cans contain dolphin meat. Although such fraud does not pose any risk for consumers, dolphin meat was not declared on the label and the species is protected and endangered.

[Expreso - Web24](#) 23/08/2020

[Explica](#) - 24/08/2020

[Infobae](#) 25/08/2020

[Undercurrent News](#) 27/08/2020

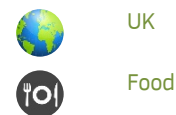


## Other interesting articles

02/07/2020 – Food crime in UK: a review

A recent article published on MDPI provides an analysis of UK regulations and reports covering food crime, highlighting strengths and weaknesses of the current approach, and the risk of increased food fraud cases following Brexit.

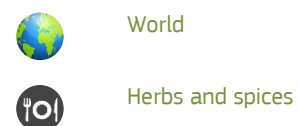
[MDPI](#)



02/07/2020 – Spices sector affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, according to Codex Alimentarius

According to the Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH) Secretariat, the world's spices sector was severely disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic; notably, laboratories could not perform as many testing as before, and consequently ensuring quality of products is more challenging.

[Codex Alimentarius](#)



### 03/07/2020 – Scotland warns consumers against food frauds

The Food Standards Scotland released a short guidance in order to prevent consumers from falling victims to fraudulent activities, probably increasing during the Covid-19 pandemic.

[Food Standards Gov](#)

[Food Manufacture](#)

[Food Navigator](#)



UK



Food

### 07/07/2020 – Automatic detection of adulterated milk

A joint effort of two Dutch and a Swiss companies may allow the automatic and rapid detection of adulterated milk based on an innovative platform, comprising an integrated hardware and dedicated software.

[Dairy Reporter](#)

[Securing Industry](#)



Netherlands/ Switzerland



Milk and milk products

### 08/07/2020 – Shark meat served to unaware consumers in the Mediterranean

Shark populations are shrinking in the Mediterranean due to overfishing, and almost 40 shark species found in the Mediterranean are at risk of extinction. Shark meat is often served to consumers unknowingly, or either fraudulently marketed as more expensive species (e.g. swordfish). The 14<sup>th</sup> of July is celebrated as the Shark Awareness Day.

[The Guardian](#)

[RTP](#)

[Corriere](#)

[Catania Oggi](#)



Mediterranean



Fish and fish products

### 14/07/2020 – New EU Food Fraud Network meeting report available online

DG SANTE published the new report of the last EU Food Fraud Network meeting in May. The report highlights two sectors affected by fraud: the illegal trade of bivalve molluscs (connected to recent foodborne outbreaks), and the export of animal by-products containing ruminant DNA.

[DG SANTE website](#)

[Food Safety News](#)



EU



Bivalve molluscs and products thereof  
Feed materials

### 14/07/2020 – Advantages of NMR techniques to detect frauds in the honey sector

As the global beehives number seems stable, but exports are significantly increasing all over the world, frauds in the honey sector are expected to rise in future. The article highlights the advantages of the NMR techniques over more conventional ones in detecting adulterated honey.

[Labmate](#)



World



Honey and royal jelly

### 15/07/2020 – Milk in Kenya significantly adulterated with water

According to an article published on Food Control, 16.7% of milk samples collected in Kenya were diluted with water. Hygiene requirements were not met, as researchers found almost 50% of the samples contaminated by dangerous bacteria.

[Food Control](#)



Kenya



Milk and milk products

16/07/2020 – Poor ocean governance permits illegal fishing

Nature Food highlights the need to strengthen ocean governance in order to fight illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, recognised as a threat to food security and the livelihood of rural communities. Illegal operators often forge fraudulent documents to hide their activities.

[Nature Food](#)



World



Bivalve molluscs and products thereof  
Cephalopods and products thereof  
Crustaceans and products thereof  
Fish and fish products  
Gastropods

22/07/2020 – Food fraud dramatically rising in the African continent

According to some recent studies, almost 50% of all goods (including food) consumed in Africa may be counterfeited, with dramatic consequences on human health.

[Mondaq](#)



Africa



Food

24/07/2020 – New policy guide on seafood names produced by U.S. FDA

The United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) released a new guide targeting seafood operators and listing the “acceptable market names for domestic and imported vertebrate and invertebrate seafood” as well as correct labelling instructions.

[FDA](#)

[The National Law Review](#)



USA



Bivalve molluscs and products thereof  
Cephalopods and products thereof  
Crustaceans and products thereof  
Fish and fish products  
Gastropods

28/07/2020 – 2.3 billion euros of damage from fraudulent alcoholic beverages, according to EUIPO

Fraud in the wine and spirits sector is damaging the EU economy for a total value of 2.3 billion euros, according to the most recent 2020 EUIPO report. WineNews estimates that 20% of wine bottles are fake around the world.

[EUIPO](#)

[Wine News](#)



EU



Alcoholic beverages  
Wine

29/07/2020 – Adulteration in the wine sector is frequently, according to an Italian NGO

The NGO Fareambiente, in collaboration with the Italian authorities, released their new 2020 Report on Food Fraud. The wine sector seems to be subject to frauds more than others.

[Askanews](#)

[Corriere Quotidiano](#)

[Umbria Journal](#)

[Umbria 24](#)

[Agri Food Today](#)



Italy



Alcoholic beverages  
Wine

03/08/2020 – A review on whisky adulteration

A recent review, published on MDPI, provides an overview of whisky production and common methodologies applied to detect related adulterations.

[MDPI](#)



World



Alcoholic beverages

05/08/2020 – Artificial intelligence applied to beeswax adulteration

A recent publication, independently developed by EFSA and JRC staff members, investigates the potential of machine learning techniques to identify and track emerging risks from beeswax adulteration in the media.

[Food Control](#)



EU



Other food products/mixed

05/08/2020 – Food fraud compromising food safety in South-East Asia, according to WHO

The latest World Health Organization (WHO) report highlights the continuous threats posed directly or indirectly by food fraud practices (illegal substitution, mislabelling, counterfeiting and adulteration) to food safety in South-East Asia Region. Some fraudulent practices are however linked with poverty and limited knowledge or awareness.

[WHO](#)

[Food Safety News](#)



Asia



Food

13/08/2020 – Increasing food fraud cases in Lower Saxony

The 11<sup>th</sup> report of the Lower Saxony Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection highlighted the wine and vanilla sectors as some of the most adulterated, according to their data. Consumers mostly complained about mislabelling.

[Laves](#)

[Gabot](#)



Germany



Herbs and spices  
Wine

13/08/2020 – Illegal fishing threatens the economic sustainability of Mexican fishermen

According to the organisation Oceana, 30-50% of fishing in Mexican waters is illegal, most probably increasing during the Covid-19 pandemic. The organisation highlights a lack of trained inspectors, updated legislation and traceability policy in order to tackle the problem of illegal fishing, which ultimately affects the livelihood of the Mexican fishermen.

[Milenio](#)



Mexico



Bivalve molluscs and products thereof  
Cephalopods and products thereof  
Crustaceans and products thereof  
Fish and fish products  
Gastropods

16/08/2020 – Food fraud terminologies and mitigation guides: a review

A new review provides an overview of the definitions for food fraud and related terms, then describing the current prevention and mitigation strategies.

[Food Control](#)



World



Food

27/08/2020 – United nations-funded project supports fighting against fisheries crime

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, together with other international partners, launched in 2017 a training programme as part of the “FishNET” project, funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad). Fisheries crimes have strong social, ecological and economic impacts for local communities.

[UNODC](#)



World



Bivalve molluscs and products thereof  
Cephalopods and products thereof  
Crustaceans and products thereof  
Fish and fish products  
Gastropods

*Disclaimer: The presentation of articles reflects their media coverage. In any case, it does not reflect the frequency of food fraud in a particular country and/or concerning a specific food product. The European Commission does not take any responsibility for the validity of the information extracted from the media channels scanned. The views expressed shall not be regarded as stating an official position of the European Commission*

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