INTRODUCTION

The European Rapid Alert System for Foods & Feeds (RASFF) is a network which provide the European control authorities with an effective tool for exchange of information on measures taken to ensure food safety.
It plays where new threats to the health and safety of EU consumers arise with the globalization of trade and the ever expanding food chain and coordinates the response actions to the food safety threats.

It has become an indispensable tool for protecting and reassuring European consumers.
The RASFF was established under Article 8 of Directive 92/59/EEC which provides a procedure to inform the Member States (EU+EFTA/EEA) when a product presents a serious risk for the health and safety of consumers.

It has received a new legal base since the 21st of February 2002 -(Regulation (EC) No. 178/2002). And this new legal base extends the
Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed, to include all food and feed products finally destined for human consumption.

SUMMARY OF STATISTICS

From 1992 to 2007, the RASFF dealt with two types of notifications:

Alert notifications - notifications relating to products which are on the market and which present a risk to the consumer.
Information notifications - notifications relating to products presenting a risk to the consumer for which it can be assumed that they are not on the market (e.g. stopped at the border, product over the “best before date”) or for which the risk is limited (long delay between the finding and the notification).

From the first week of 2008 to date, notifications are classified under three different headings.\(^1\)

\(^1\) This classification was put in place on 1 January 2008 and differs from the classification used until then.
• **ALERT NOTIFICATIONS**
  
  - are sent when a food or feed presenting a serious risk is on the market and when immediate action is required.
  
  - are triggered by the Member State that detects the problem and has initiated the relevant measures, such as withdrawal/recall.

  **AIM** – the notifications aim at giving all the members of the network the information to verify whether the concerned product is on their market, so that they also can take the necessary measures.
• INFORMATION NOTIFICATIONS

- concern a food or feed that was placed on the market for which a risk has been identified, but for which the other members of the network do not have to take immediate action,

  - because the product has not reached their market or
  - is no longer present on their market or
  - because the nature of the risk does not require any immediate action.
• Border Rejections
  - concern food and feed consignments that have been tested and rejected at the external borders of the EU (and the EEA\(^2\)) when a health risk was found.
  - notifications are transmitted to all EEA border posts in order to reinforce controls and to ensure that the rejected product does not re-enter the Community through another border post.

\(^2\) European Economic Area
Reports on the dramatic increase of notifications started in 1999, where the number of information exchanges rose from 698 to 824 in 2000 and 1567 in 2001 to 3024 in the year 2002. The increases in the following years were also reported and shown in useful pictures as follows:
### Evolution of Notifications in Global Terms

**From Year 1997 to 2007**

#### Yearly Distribution

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<td>97</td>
<td>133</td>
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<td>454</td>
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<td>156</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>1092</td>
<td>1856</td>
<td>1897</td>
<td>2202</td>
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<td>279</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>549</td>
<td>1032</td>
<td>1098</td>
<td>1449</td>
<td>2218</td>
<td>2157</td>
<td>2440</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>878</td>
<td>1329</td>
<td>1521</td>
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<tr>
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<td>698</td>
<td>823</td>
<td>1567</td>
<td>3024</td>
<td>4286</td>
<td>5367</td>
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#### Graphical Representation

*Axis Title: Evolution of Notifications in Global Terms from Year 1997 to 2007*

*Axis Title:*

- **YEAR**
- **Alert**
- **Informations**
- **Addition to Alerts**
- **Addition to Information**
- **Total**

*Legend:*

- Green for Year
- Blue for Alerts
- Yellow for Informations
- Black for Addition to Alerts
- Light Green for Addition to Information
- Blue for Total
EVOLUTION OF NOTIFICATIONS IN GLOBAL TERMS
FROM YEAR 2008 to 2009

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