

Vietnamese exporters warned over high level of chlorate in pangasius fillets sold to EU

The National Agro-Forestry-Fisheries Quality Assurance Department (Nafiqad) under Vietnam's Agriculture Ministry has told local exporters to review their quality control operations after a number of cargoes of pangasius fillets were found to contain high level of chlorate in Germany.

On the European Commission's Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) from 24 to 28 October, Germany issued a number of notifications over cargoes of frozen pangasius fillets with added water imported from Vietnam. As those cargoes were found containing high level of chlorate of between 2.4 and 13.8 milligrams per kilogram, they were already recalled from consumers or withdrawn from recipients by the authorities in E.U., according to RASFF.

The European Food Safety Authority in its scientific opinion found that current levels of chlorate in drinking water and in foods were too high and could negatively impact iodine uptake especially among infants and children. Chlorate originates from chlorine disinfectants widely and legally used in water treatment and food processing, drinking water being by far the main contributor. Chlorate is no longer approved as a pesticide, therefore the default maximum residue level (MRL) of 0.01 milligrams per kilogram applies. However, the levels found in foods are often above this MRL.

In a letter sent to the companies on 29 October, Nafiqad asked them to closely control the residue level of chlorate in pangasius and added water to meet permitted standards during the processing and exports of pangasius to E.U. They are told to review their own quality management programs to identify chlorate risks during the exports of pangasius to E.U.

E.U. was the third-largest buyer of pangasius from Vietnam after China and the United States. The bloc imported pangasius worth USD





189.3 million (EUR 169.9 million) from Vietnam, up 7.3 percent year-on-year, according to the Vietnam Association of Seafood Exporters and Producers (VASEP).

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