

Food and feed incidents

Food and feed incidents are managed across the nations and we work with industry to remove foods from the market.

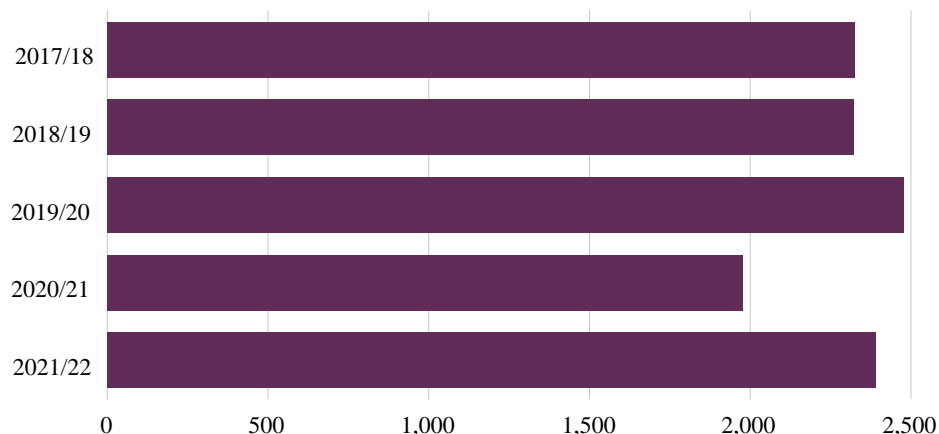
Our incident, resilience and consumer protection teams across England, Wales and Northern Ireland manage and coordinate the FSA's response to food and feed incidents and foodborne outbreaks. They work with the industry to remove from the market products not in compliance with safety legislation. This work has continued throughout the reporting period to ensure that the UK's food and feed incident response capability is as good as it can be.

Objectives in 2021/22

- preserve the high level of consumer protection in the UK during and post-EU exit
- continue to provide emergency response as we emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic
- maintain the UK's world class expertise in managing food incidents as a third country

Progress against objectives

Figure 19: Incident notifications received by the FSA to March 2022



2,336 Notifications for food, feed and environmental contamination incidents that were investigated by the FSA in England, Wales and Northern Ireland during 2021/22. An 18% increase from 2020/21.

The number of incidents increased following the easing of the national lockdown and a return to pre-pandemic levels. The number of incidents in 2020/21 were lower than previous years, a trend which reflected a global fall in numbers of food safety alerts during the pandemic, particularly in 2020. We think the lower levels of incident notification have been driven by changes in:

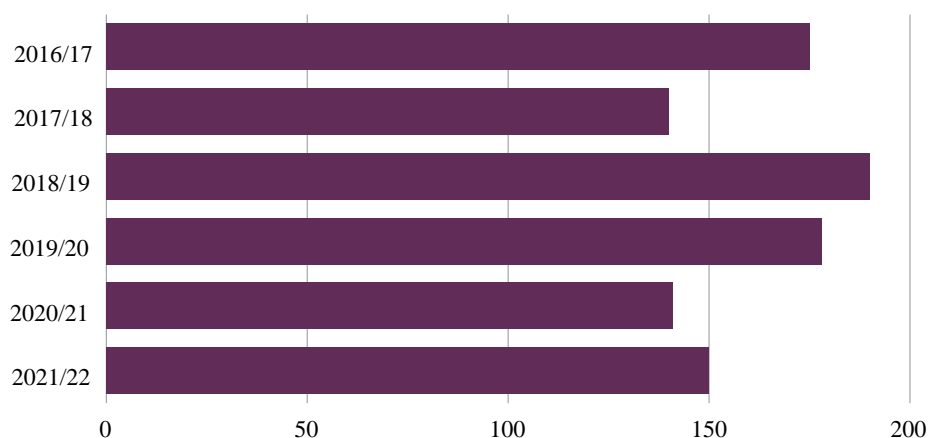
- consumer behaviour
- streamlining food production lines

- fewer food businesses operating
- reduced complexity of the product images

The breakdown of incidents into the top four hazards were consistent with previous years and show good levels of activity taking place to protect consumers. The top four hazard categories for incidents notified to the FSA in 2021/22 were:

- **615 Pathogen microorganisms:** A leading cause of incidents. These increase by 80% from last year which linked to active surveillance carried out by FSA and local authorities following a series of related foodborne outbreaks in 2020 and 2021 linked to breaded chicken products from Poland.
- **320 Allergens:** are the second largest cause of incidents. Allergen incidents increased by 83% compared with 2020/21 which is an expected continuation of the active hypersensitivity awareness building campaigns aimed at consumers and food businesses.
- **209 Pesticide residues:** An increased reporting of this incident over the past two financial years is the result of the Europe-wide incident relating to the detection of non-permitted ethylene oxide in sesame products and products containing locust bean gum.
- **116 Foreign body:** issues are when glass, metal or other foreign bodies present a risk to health in a food product. We are looking at root causes with industry to understand what action could prevent these incidents.

Figure 20: Number of alerts notifications issued by the FSA to March 2022



A total of 150 alerts were published in 2021/22. This included 84 Allergy Alerts, 66 Product Recall Information Notices (PRINS) and 0 Food Alerts for Action. This represented a year-on-year increase of 6.4%, in line with data from previous years.

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