

Four arrested as part of FSA food crime investigation

On Wednesday 23 July, the NFCU conducted an operation in Leicester with assistance from local authorities and Leicestershire Police. A 48-year-old male was arrested on suspicion of fraud by misrepresentation and conspiracy to defraud, and released under investigation.

On Wednesday 30 July, NFCU officers, supported by local authorities, the Metropolitan Police and Surrey Police, visited multiple premises in London, leading to three arrests. A 56-year-old male and 51-year-old female from Croydon, along with a 48-year-old male from Epsom, were arrested on suspicion of fraud by misrepresentation and conspiracy to defraud, and later released under investigation.

A 52-year-old male from London also attended a police station for a voluntary interview.

Large quantities of 10kg and 20kg bags of mixed rice in counterfeit premium brand basmati packaging were seized as part of the operation.

Enquiries are ongoing.

The deliberate misrepresentation of legally imported bags of mixed rice as premium basmati products defrauds consumers and creates unfair competition for legitimate businesses. This operation demonstrates the NFCU's commitment to protecting consumers from food crime and safeguarding our food supply chain.

The arrests send a clear message that we will pursue those who seek to profit from deceiving consumers. Our teams will continue to work with partners to identify, investigate and disrupt these criminal networks, ensuring food is what it says it is.

There is no health risk to the public, however if you have concerns about a product you have purchased, contact your local Trading Standards."

Neil Castle, Deputy Head of FSA's NFCU

If you suspect food fraud, report it to Food Crime Confidential on food.gov.uk/report or by phoning 0800 028 1180 (0207 276 8787 for non-UK mobiles and calls).