

Monthly Summary of Articles on Food Fraud and Adulteration








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Food Fraud Cases





The Italian authorities discovered an illegal plant producing adulterated wine and vinegar, and counterfeiting Geographical Indications. The agents seized 25 tons of sugar, 30 000 litres of sugar already dissolved in water, and almost 4 million litres of counterfeited wine. The organisation was managed by a criminal already known to the public authorities.

[La Repubblica](#) [Giornale di Sicilia](#) [Agenparl](#) [Eco di Sicilia](#)
[Live Sicilia](#) [Zazoom](#) [Winemag](#) [MeridioNews](#) [Agricoltura](#)
[Finanzen](#) [ZeroUno TV](#) 01/12/2020

-  Italy
-  Soups, broths, sauces and condiments
-  Wine
-  Intellectual property rights infringement
-  Mislabelling
-  Missing documents
-  Unapproved treatment and/or process

According to the New Delhi-based Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), 10 out of 13 (77%) Indian brands sell honey adulterated with synthetic sugar syrups (corn, beetroot, rice, sugarcane) imported from China. The discovery followed a series of tests using Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) performed in Germany, as Indian laboratories were unable to detect the fraud.

[CSE India](#) [The Hindu](#) [Down to Earth](#) [Down to Earth](#) [Financial Express](#)
[Standard](#) [Down to Earth](#) [India Today](#) [India.com](#) 02/12/2020
[DTNext](#) [Financial Express](#) [Times of India](#) [Mumbai Mirror](#) [Indian Television](#)
[India.com](#) [Manorama Online](#) [International Business Times](#)
[The Health Site of India](#) [World News Monitor](#) [Financial Express](#) [Times](#)
[DNA India](#) [News18](#) [FirstPost](#) [Down to Earth](#) 03/12/2020
[Times](#) [World News Monitor](#) 04/12/2020 [The Hindu](#) 05/12/2020 [News-24](#)
06/12/2020 [Mint Lounge](#) 07/12/2020 [Financial Express](#) [Down to Earth](#)
08/12/2020 [DT Next](#) 09/12/2020 [Down to Earth](#) 09/12/2020 [Financial Express](#)
10/12/2020 [The Hindu](#) 12/12/2020 [Money Control](#) 13/12/2020
[Business Standard](#) 14/12/2020 [Down to Earth](#) 15/12/2020 [Telegraph India](#)
16/12/2020 [Times of India](#) 17/12/2020 [Down to Earth](#) 22/12/2020 [Rediff](#)
26/12/2020 [The Straits Times](#) 28/12/2020

-  India
-  Honey and royal jelly
-  Replacement/ dilution/ addition/ removal in product
-  Unapproved treatment and/or process

The Cambodian authorities have closed 347 shops and 36 producers selling or counterfeiting rice wine with methanol, extremely dangerous for human health. Recently, 131 people became sick and 15 people died after drinking rice wine adulterated with a percentage of methanol ranging from 10% to 17%.




[The Phnom Penh Post](#) 02/12/2020

[The Phnom Penh Post](#) 04/12/2020

-  Cambodia
-  Alcoholic beverages
-  Unapproved treatment and/or process

The Punjab Food Authority seized almost 3 000 litres of milk adulterated with urea fertilizers and other chemicals.




[Urdu Point](#) 05/12/2020

-  Pakistan
-  Milk and milk products
-  Unapproved treatment and/or process

The Punjab Food Authority (PFA) sealed a plant adulterating spices with harmful ingredients and chemicals in red chilli powder. Minimal hygienic conditions were not respected as well, thus threatening the consumers' health. The team destroyed more than 1 600 kg of fungus-infested chilli, 450 kg of sawdust, 400 kg of red chili powder, and 10 kg of colorants.




[Urdu Point](#) 07/12/2020

[The News](#) 08/12/2020

-  Pakistan
-  Herbs and spices
-  Replacement/ dilution/ addition/ removal in product
- Unapproved treatment and/or process

The Punjab Food Authority (PFA) closed three plants adulterating honey with sugars, glucose and harmful colorants. PFA also discarded 1 130 kg of fake honey, 1 500 kg of syrup and 450 kg of glucose.

[Urdu Point](#) 07/12/2020

-  Pakistan
-  Honey and royal jelly
-  Replacement/ dilution/ addition/ removal in product
- Unapproved treatment and/or process

According to the Italian authorities, a criminal organisation sold 54 000 bottles of counterfeited wines (including bearing a Geographical Indication) between 2016 and 2018, for a final profit of one million euros. Fraudsters also added aromas, syrups and colorants not allowed for oenological use.

[Il Messaggero](#) 11/12/2020

-  Italy
-  Wine
-  Intellectual property rights infringement
- Mislabelling
- Unapproved treatment and/or process




According to some researchers from the Department of Science and Technology – Philippine Nuclear Research Institute (DOST – PNRI), more than 80% of honey sold in groceries, souvenir shops and online platforms is severely adulterated (up to 95%) with C4 sugar syrups from sugar cane and corn. The researchers used the stable carbon isotope ratio analysis technique to perform their studies.

[GMA](#) 12/12/2020

[Manila Bulletin](#) [ABS](#) 13/12/2020

[MSN News](#) [Inquirer](#) 14/12/2020

[Tribune.net](#) 15/12/2020

-  Philippines
-  Honey and royal jelly
-  Replacement/ dilution/ addition/ removal in product
- Mislabelling




According to the NGO Oceana México, around one third of cod products actually contain other species of lower cost. In 66% of these cases cod is replaced with endangered species such as sharks or rays.

[Zocalo](#) 15/12/2020
[Milenio](#) 15/12/2020
[Infobae](#) 15/12/2020

 Mexico
 Fish and fish products
 Replacement/ dilution/ addition/ removal in product




The Italian authorities seized 22 tons of Tunisians pomegranates, mislabelled as produced in Italy.

[Il Fatto Nisseno](#) 15/12/2020

 Italy
 Fruits and vegetables
 Mislabelling

The Spanish authorities seized and destroyed more than 400 kg of expired fish, but mislabelled as fresh or lacking any traceability documentation. During Christmas there is usually a greater demand for fish and seafood.

[Ideal](#) 15/12/2020

 Spain
 Fish and fish products
 Mislabelling
Missing documents

Within the context of the “Operation Fuco”, the Spanish authorities uncovered a criminal organisation selling fake whiskey under the name of a famous brand. The fraud may be potentially worth more than 800 000 euros. Fourteen people were either arrested or investigated.

[Food Safety News](#) [Le Blogaa](#) 16/12/2020
[Food and Wine](#) 18/12/2020
[Securing Industry](#) 19/12/2020

 Spain
 Alcoholic beverages
 Intellectual property rights infringement

The Indian authorities discovered a manufacturing plant producing fake spices (packaged with labels from local brands) by using donkey dung, hay (bhusa), synthetic colours and acid. The policemen seized 300 kg of counterfeited spices (coriander powder, red chilli powder, turmeric and spice mix).

[Sambad English](#) [News18](#) 16/12/2020
[Times of India](#) 17/12/2020
[The Independent](#) 16/12/2020

 India
 Herbs and spices
 Forgery
Intellectual property rights infringement


The Italian authorities seized 1 400 litres of champagne and oil missing the necessary traceability documentation.

[Il Fatto Alimentare](#) 15/12/2020
[Le Blogaa](#) 16/12/2020

 Italy
 Fats and oils
Wine
 Intellectual property rights infringement
Missing documents


A joint operation involving Europol, the Spanish Civil Guard and the French Gendarmerie uncovered a criminal organisation selling conventional pistachios as organic. The total profit is estimated to be 6 million euros.

[Europol](#) 18/12/2020

 Spain
 Nuts, nut products and seeds
 Mislabelling

The Italian authorities seized 5 400 kg of fish lacking the required traceability documentation.

[La Sicilia](#) 17/12/2020

 Italy
 Fish and fish products

The Cambodian authorities destroyed 20 000 litres of adulterated rice wine with an official ceremony.

[AKP Gov](#) 18/12/2020

The Indian police discovered a plant producing fake ghee with animal fat, horns, hooves and bones. The ghee taste and smell were given in the end through aromas.

[OpIndia](#) 18/12/2020

In another operation, Indian authorities closed a factory adulterating ghee with labels from known reputed brands.

[Sambad English](#) 21/12/2020

At the beginning of December the Italian Coast Guard launched the operation "Frontiere Tracciabili" all over the national territory. The operation involved 3 000 people, who seized 80 tons of illegal seafood products, for a total value of 600 000 euros.

[MeteoWeb EU](#) 22/12/2020

[Foggia Today](#) 28/12/2020

The Italian Coast Guard seized 7 tonnes of seafood products (mostly salmon) missing the required traceability documentation.

[Il Secolo XIX](#) 23/12/2020

The Italian authorities discovered an illegal plant producing processed ham products, seizing 600 kg of meat products failing to respect the traceability requirements.

[Reggio TV](#) 29/12/2020

The Kuwait Ministry of Commerce and Industry released a press statement announcing the seizure of 52 000 packets of food products imitating famous international brands.



Missing documents



Cambodia



Alcoholic beverages



Unapproved treatment and/or process



India



Other food products/
mixed



Forgery
Intellectual property
rights infringement



Italy



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



Missing documents



Italy



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



Missing documents



Italy



Meat and meat
products (other than
poultry)



Missing documents



Kuwait



Food

[Kuwait Times](#) 29/12/2020

All over the Italian territory, the Carabinieri seized 80 tons of fruits and vegetables (valued 60 000 euros), 3.5 tons of seafood products (valued 81 000 euros), and small amounts of dairy products and chocolate. The legal traceability documents were missing, or expiry dates were falsified.

[Italia a Tavola](#) 31/12/2020



Intellectual property rights infringement



Italy



Bivalve molluscs and products thereof
Cephalopods and products thereof
Cocoa and cocoa preparations, coffee and tea
Crustaceans and products thereof
Fish and fish products
Fruits and vegetables
Gastropods
Milk and milk products
Missing documents
Mislabelling



Other interesting articles

07/12/2020 – Honey authenticity surveillance results from Canada

According to the 2019-2020 report from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), 87% of honey samples tested were not adulterated. The CFIA prevented 83 000 kg of adulterated honey from being sold in the Canadian market.

Government of Canada [ENG](#) - [FR](#) - [Report](#)

[Muskoka](#)

[Newswire](#)

[Journal de Montreal](#)

[Canadian Insider](#)

[Food Authenticity](#)



Canada



Honey and royal jelly

09/12/2020 – NFCU annual update published

Relevant food fraud cases emerging from the National Food Crime Unit (NFCU) annual update include: extension of use-by dates and origin falsification; counterfeited alcohol unfit for human consumption; products from illegally slaughtered animals; animal by-products illegally processed and dangerous for consumers' health; and traceability issues.

[Food Safety News](#)

[NFCU report](#)



UK



Food

21/12/2020 – The impact of Covid-19 on food frauds

According to the latest Food Authenticity Network (FAN) Report, the Covid-19 pandemic may have potentially increased the vulnerability of the global food chains towards food frauds.

[Food Authenticity](#)



UK



Food

15/12/2020 – Food authenticity addressed in the BfR2GO publication



Germany

The German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) has recently published the new BfR2GO issue, covering some topics related to food fraud as: a) a two-stage Delphi study on food adulteration; and b) chemical fingerprint methodologies improved by the research projects “FoodAuthent”, “FoodIntegrity” and “EU MEDIFIT”.
[BfR2GO, Issue 2/2020](#)



Food

23/12/2020 – Belgian authorities fighting false claims on food products



Belgium

Since March, the Belgian Federal Agency for the Safety of the Food Chain (FASFC) increasingly monitored false labels on foods and food supplements claiming fake effects against the Coronavirus disease, especially if sold online.



Food

FASFC: [Belgian website](#) – [Flemish website](#)
[RTBF](#)

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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