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SHAPING THE FUTURE OF FOOD SAFETY AND INTEGRITY

UK must be vigilant on food safety after Brexit



A very likely consequence of the UK's exit from the EU - and a desirable outcome for some - is the opportunity for the UK to source food (and related) imports from new countries of origin under a new trade/tariff regime.

Such changes to trade flows present new economic opportunities for the UK, but also new risks - both for the importer and for national security. And the UK is confronting this change at a time when global incidents of food fraud and ingredient substitution are at an all-time high. It's important, therefore, to understand whether food commodities produced outside the EU are being intercepted for different food safety reasons to those produced in European member states.

This will help the UK be better prepared if, in a post-Brexit scenario, produce from the American, Indian, African and Asian continents become more relevant food sources. We used our HorizonScan database to compare food safety recalls and alerts on animal products from EU and non-EU sources over the past 15 years, and the results are quite revealing.



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Veterinary drug residues are among the top three hazards reported for seafood, red meat and white meat intercepted from non-EU countries. In seafood, the reporting frequency is over 15%. In European seafood and meat, veterinary drug residues have a much lower reporting frequency (seafood: 1.53%, red meat: 3.48%, white meat: 4.34%).

While this is revealing, it is not surprising, as the EU has one of the strictest legal requirements in terms of animal husbandry and permissible uses of veterinary medicines in order to protect consumer safety.

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But it does mean the UK food sector needs to be much more vigilant with regards to veterinary drug residues in animal products if what the future brings is more imports from outside the EU. More broadly speaking, to avoid surprises in food supply chains and assure consumer safety when supply routes change, suppliers and retailers should be constantly scanning the horizon for risks. Otherwise, they may never see them.



Find out more

Visit: horizon-scan.fera.co.uk or Email: sales@fera.co.uk

