INTRODUCTION

The European Union (EU) is the world's biggest importer and exporter of foodstuffs, and as such it is dependent on having a secure and efficient food supply chain. The rapid alert system for food and feed (RASFF) which has been in existence since 1979, is a vital part of this system, providing rapid notification and traceability of food safety hazards across the European Union 

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The data that were used in this paper were retrieved from the EU RASFF Portal (https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/rasff-window/portal/?event=SearchForm&cleanSearch=1) accessed on 24/02/2016. In order to study the patterns of false positive notifications, data for both alert and border rejection notifications was included. Border rejection notifications were then classified into false positive notifications and true positive notifications.

RESULTS

Specific foods of animal origin most frequently cited in alert and border rejection notifications for RVMP in the EU RASFF (1979-2014)

The data clearly indicate that the top-five food product categories (all foods of animal origin) were responsible for just over 85% (346/407) and 97% (257/263) of alert and border rejection notifications, respectively.

Border rejection notifications

Alert notifications

Border rejection notifications in food, for various product categories (meat, crustaceans, fish, honey and royal jelly, poultry) and various subjects/hazards, namely residues of veterinary medicinal products (RVMP) and veterinary substances, such as streptomycin, streptomycin-resistant, and streptomycin-resistant in different combinations of product categories were studied thoroughly. Also, alert and border rejection notifications concerning the top five most cited foods of animal origin, submitted by all EU RASFF MS were examined. Finally, Third Countries (TCs) were assessed as countries of origin over the last 35 years.

CONCLUSIONS

Clearly, a closer more focused approach to the rational usage of food has been an important part of the history of food safety. The Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) of the EU would ideally support the countries efforts to protect public health by securing that they offer safe foods to the global community.

REFERENCES

RASFF Portal (https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/rasff-window/portal/?event=SearchForm&cleanSearch=1)
