

New Zealand Food Safety

Haumaru Kai Aotearoa



New Zealand Food Safety
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Consumer-level Food Recalls

Annual Report 2023



Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

Ministry for Primary Industries
Manatū Ahu Matua





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Notes

The figures in this report are for the 2023 calendar year.
Some totals may not add up due to rounding.

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Foreword



New Zealand Food Safety (NZFS) is committed to the protection of consumers and public health.

New Zealand's food safety system prevents serious illnesses and deaths from foodborne illness each year and supports the health, wellbeing and productivity of all New Zealanders.

Even with a robust food safety system, challenges can still arise that affect food safety. In such instances, NZFS works quickly with food businesses to recall affected products, removing them from circulation and informing the public.

Since 1 July 2023, new regulations require food businesses with a plan or programme under the Food Act, Wine Act, or Animal Products Act, as well as importers and exporters, to conduct simulated recalls. A simulation helps businesses prepare for real-life recall events. Having effective recall and traceability systems in place minimises the impact of recalls and protects public health.

As consumers, we also have a part to play. By staying informed and subscribing to the NZFS food recall alerts on the NZFS website, we can respond quickly to recalled products, protecting ourselves and our families.

As we reflect on the past year, I'd like to acknowledge the efforts of all of our stakeholders involved in maintaining the integrity of our food supply chain.

Ngā manaakitanga

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vincent Arbuckle'. The signature is stylized and fluid, written over a large, light-colored oval shape.

Vincent Arbuckle

Deputy Director-General

New Zealand Food Safety/Haumarū Kai Aotearoa

Introduction



The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) and NZFS ensure that food that is grown, produced, shared, and consumed across Aotearoa is safe and suitable for everyone.

While most food produced and sold in New Zealand is safe and suitable, from time to time a failure may occur in the food chain. If it is not detected immediately, recalling the affected food from retailers and consumers is the most effective way to protect people.

A recall that involves removing affected product from the supply chain and communicating to consumers is called a “consumer-level recall”. A consumer-level recall is normally undertaken if a food product has a food safety problem and has been sold to consumers.

There are other ways food businesses manage food safety risks to consumers. A business can also carry out a trade-level recall, which involves removing affected product from the supply chain. Generally, a food business would carry out a trade-level recall when the product has not been sold to consumers or it has a suitability problem.

Most food recalls are initiated by food businesses when they become aware of a potential food safety or suitability issue. The decision to recall a food product primarily sits with food businesses. Food recalls can also occur after investigations of reported foodborne illness and complaints about the safety and suitability of food.

NZFS supports food businesses to manage the removal of unsafe food from sale by coordinating all food recalls for food products sold in New Zealand, working with businesses to ensure the recall is effectively carried out, and working with overseas agencies to manage any imported or exported products that are being recalled.

Food businesses are required to inform the Director-General of MPI of any decision to recall food. This could be for one or multiple food products. This is achieved by informing Food Compliance Services at NZFS. NZFS may also get information from other sources that can lead to a consumer-level recall.

Consumers are informed about food recalls by notices placed at the outlets where the product was sold, food recall notices published on the NZFS website and social media pages, the food business that initiated the recall (via social media, their own website and media), and media releases. Consumers can subscribe to notifications via the MPI website [Subscribe to MPI | NZ Government](#) to ensure they are kept informed of any consumer-level recalls.

The data within this report reflects the number of recall investigations recorded by NZFS that resulted in food businesses initiating consumer-level recalls in the 2023 calendar year.

The number of recall investigations may differ from the number of recall notices published on the MPI website. The situations that contribute to these differences are explained below:

- When multiple food businesses want to recall the same product or the same range of products, there will be one recall investigation for each food business involved and only one recall notice published on the MPI website.
- When a recall is managed using an MPI Director-General Privileged Statement¹, there is one recall investigation for each food business involved and one Privileged Statement published on the MPI website to cover multiple products and multiple food businesses.
- When one current recall is expanded to include additional products, there may be one recall investigation covering both recalls and two recall notices published on the MPI website.

The number of recalls in any given year may vary depending on many factors, such as regulatory changes, as well as the level of business and public awareness of food-related problems, how to report them, and what to do about them. Given these factors, the number of recalls is not an accurate indicator of the level of risk to consumers.



1. A MPI Director-General Privileged Statement can be made by the Director-General to protect consumers and inform the public under the Food Act 2014, Animal Products Act 1999, and Wine Act 2003.

Summary of consumer-level recalls in 2023



70 consumer-level recalls in 2023.



Allergens in food were the leading cause for recalls in 2023 (26).



Milk was the allergen that triggered the most recalls (12).



23 recalls were due to microbiological contamination.



14 recalls were due to physical contamination.



48 recalls were initiated from domestically produced foods and 22 recalls were from imported foods.



Consumer-level recalls for 2023 compared to previous years

NZFS supported food businesses in the initiation of 70 consumer-level recalls in the 2023 calendar year. This was a 16.7% increase when compared with 2022.

An increase in the number of consumer-level recalls initiated does not correlate with the actions taken by food businesses to manage food safety risks. Food businesses can manage food safety risks through other actions, such as trade-level recalls. For this reason, the number of consumer-level recalls initiated is not an accurate indicator of the level of risk to consumers.

However, there have been food safety events in 2023 that have contributed to this increase. Two of these events are:

1. The possible presence of *Salmonella* in sesame seed-based products, which resulted in 14 recalls and affected 65 food products.
2. The possible presence of microorganisms in raw milk, which was associated with three recalls.

Further information on these food safety events is provided in Chapter 4 (Food safety issues influencing recalls in 2023) of this report.

Figure 1 presents the total number of consumer-level recall investigations conducted over a five-year period. As illustrated, 2020 had the highest number of consumer-level recalls over this period, with 96 recalls initiated, while 2022 had the lowest number of recalls, with 60 recalls initiated. The events that contributed to the higher number of recalls in 2020 are outlined in the Consumer-level Food Recalls Annual Report for 2022.

Figure 1. Consumer-level recalls by year

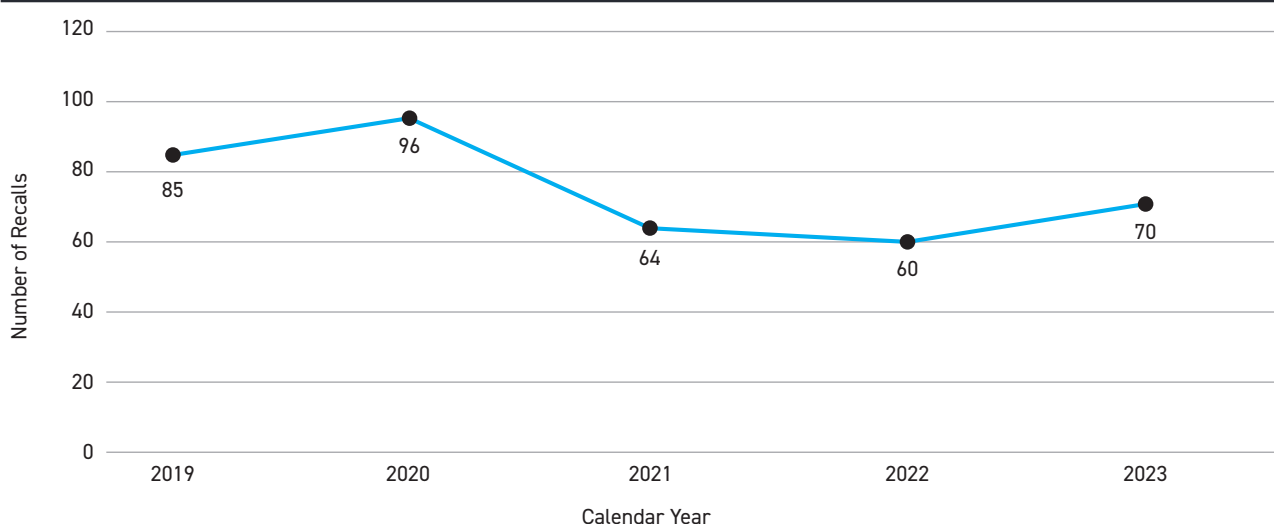
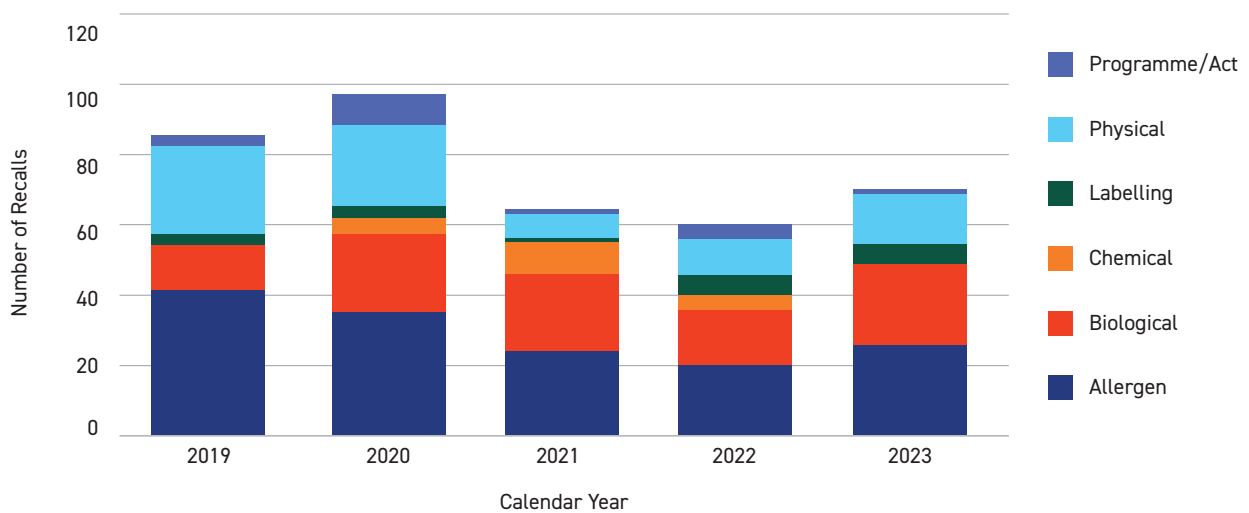


Figure 2 presents the consumer-level recall investigations carried out over a five-year period, with consideration to the hazard category. An explanation of how NZFS classifies hazards is provided in Chapter 6 (Consumer-level recalls by hazard category). Allergens and biological hazards have consistently contributed to the majority of recalls year on year. Unlike previous years, in 2023 there were no consumer-level recalls due to chemical hazards.

Figure 2. Consumer-level recalls by year and hazard category



Food safety issues influencing recalls in 2023

The following food safety events influenced the number of consumer-level recalls carried out in 2023.

Recalls of tahini, sesame seed-based products, and food containing these products due to the possible presence of *Salmonella*

NZFS supported the initiation of 14 consumer-level recalls in 2023 of tahini, sesame seed-based products, and food containing these ingredients due to the possible presence of *Salmonella*. A total of 65 product types were affected by these recalls. There were no confirmed cases of illness associated with the recalls initiated in 2023.

Ten consumer-level recalls were initiated after *Salmonella* was detected during routine product testing by a New Zealand business that manufactures products containing tahini. An investigation found that the root cause of contamination was tahini imported from a Turkish manufacturer. NZFS worked with multiple food businesses who had received the affected tahini, and established the appropriate action to manage ongoing food safety risks, including an assessment on whether a consumer-level recall would be required.

The other four consumer-level recalls were a result of NZFS online surveillance and scanning of international food safety issues. A potential issue with products from a manufacturer in Jordan was identified, and as a result, work was carried out with food importers in New Zealand to ensure the product was safe. Testing of the product was part of this process, and tests came back positive for *Salmonella*.

International data indicates that *Salmonella* contamination of sesame and sesame-based products is recurrent. Contamination can occur during harvesting and processing from a number of sources, including sick food handlers. The high fat content and low water activity in sesame seed-based products act as a protective factor for *Salmonella* during heat treatment and manufacturing. This makes the elimination of risk via processing difficult. Furthermore, the detection of *Salmonella* can be challenging, as the distribution of bacterium is not homogeneous.

NZFS had previously identified that these products present a greater risk to consumers and to public health. They are classified as high regulatory interest foods which means they are subject to food safety clearance requirements at the border and monitoring for the risk of *Salmonella*. NZFS has recently strengthened rules associated with imported food, with changes that came into effect on 1 August 2023. Following these food safety events, importers of tahini and sesame seed-based products were contacted to explain the new rules in place.

All food importers in New Zealand are responsible for meeting food safety requirements as set out under the Food Act 2014 and the Food Notice: Requirements for Registered Food Importers and Imported Food for Sale. This includes ensuring food is safe and suitable, keeping food safe during storage and transport, keeping good records, and having procedures in place to trace and recall food.

Detection of *Campylobacter* and *Listeria* in raw milk

In 2023, three consumer-level recalls were initiated due to the presence of microorganisms in raw milk. Two of the recalls were related to the detection or potential presence of *Campylobacter* and one was related to the detection of *Listeria*. Three cases of illness were associated with one of the recalls initiated in 2023.

The majority of milk sold in New Zealand is pasteurised (heat treated), removing bacteria that can cause foodborne illness. However, raw (unpasteurised) milk can be bought from a registered raw milk supplier. This follows the introduction of revised regulations in March 2016, allowing for only registered farm dairy operators to produce, process, and sell raw milk. Developed after public consultation, the regulations aim at better managing the risks to public health while allowing consumer choice to be exercised. The regulations require raw milk producers to register with NZFS, meet hygiene requirements, test milk for pathogens, keep records of sales, and label milk appropriately to ensure consumers are aware of the risks associated with products. Raw drinking milk can only be

sold directly to the final consumer at the farm where the milk is produced, or through home delivery to a New Zealand residential address. It cannot be exported.

Chief Executive Privileged Statement on seaweed tonic

Consumer-level recalls are initiated to remove products from the market that have been identified as potentially unsafe or unsuitable for human consumption. However, there are instances where NZFS will use other means to protect human life and public health, and to and inform the public. A Chief Executive Privileged Statement can be issued by the Deputy Director-General New Zealand Food Safety to inform the public of risks relating to food products.

In September 2023, a Chief Executive Privileged Statement was issued after NZFS became aware of an unregulated seller of seaweed tonic. The seller of the seaweed tonic was not registered under the Food Act 2014. The business could not be contacted to initiate a consumer-level recall.

The Chief Executive Privileged Statement advised people not to consume the product, as consumers could not be certain that the risks had been properly identified and managed. The product could be bought with limited or no identifying labelling or branding in various pack sizes. A food risk assessment identified multiple risk factors associated with the product including the possible presence of pathogens, high levels of iodine, chemical contaminants, and unknown levels of alcohol. In addition, significant therapeutic claims had been made about the product that could mislead consumers.



Consumer-level recalls by hazard category

NZFS classifies food recalls in six hazard categories according to the different hazard or risk that may be present in each recall situation.

- **Allergen:** Any food recall initiated due to the presence of undeclared allergens, the presence of allergens being incorrectly declared on the product (incorrect allergen labelling), and incorrect allergen-related claims being made on food.
- **Biological:** Any food recall initiated due to biological or microbiological concerns or non-compliances, including confirmed or suspected illness or sickness linked to consumption of a food product, non-complying microbiological results (such as an elevated level of non-pathogenic bacteria or the presence of a pathogen in ready-to-eat food), and undercooked food that may pose risk to human health (such as undercooked chicken).
- **Chemical:** Any food recall initiated due to chemical concerns or non-compliances, including the presence of non-permitted food additives under the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code and non-complying chemical results (such as contamination).
- **Labelling:** Any recall initiated due to labelling concerns or non-compliances, such as a food product being mislabelled, incorrectly labelled or missing a mandatory warning statement.
- **Physical:** Any food recall initiated due to the product containing foreign matter.
- **Programme/Act:** Any food recall initiated due to non-compliances identified under a registered programme or an Act (such as the Food Act 2014). The non-compliances identified may pose a risk to human health.

Table 1 shows the number of consumer-level recalls by hazard category coordinated by NZFS in 2023. The leading cause for recall action was the presence of undeclared allergens in food, with 37.1% of the consumer-level recalls in 2023. Biological hazards also contributed to a significant proportion of recalls, with 32.9% of the consumer-level recalls in 2023 carried out due to this risk. There were no recalls initiated in 2023 due to chemical hazards.

Table 1. Consumer-level recalls in 2023 by hazard category

Hazard category	Number of consumer-level recalls	% of consumer-level recalls
Allergen	26	37.1%
Biological	23	32.9%
Chemical	-	-
Labelling	6	8.6%
Physical	14	20.0%
Programme/Act	1	1.4%
Total	70	100%

Consumer-level recalls by commodity classification

NZFS records the commodity classification of a food item at the time a recall is initiated.

Table 2 shows the number of recalls coordinated by NZFS in 2023 by the commodity classifications. The three commodity classifications associated with the most consumer-level recalls in 2023 were:

- Mixed foods (18)
- Meat & meat products (12)
- Fruit & vegetables (11)

Mixed foods accounted for the most consumer-level recalls in 2023, with 25.7% of recalls classified as this commodity. The higher number of recalls in this classification is expected, as it includes a wide range of food products such as meals, savouries, pies, pizzas, and snacks. There were no recalls of foods classified as alcoholic beverages, edible oils and emulsions, or foods intended for dietary uses.

Table 2. Consumer-level recalls in 2023 by commodity classification

Commodity classification	Number of consumer-level recalls	% of consumer-level recalls
Alcoholic beverages	-	-
Breads & bakery products	8	11.4%
Cereals & cereal products	5	7.1%
Confectionary	4	5.7%
Dairy products (excluding butter & fat)	5	7.1%
Edible oils & emulsions	-	-
Fish & fish products	3	4.3%
Foods intended for dietary uses	-	-
Fruit & vegetables	11	15.7%
Ice cream & edible ices	1	1.4%
Meat & meat products	12	17.1%
Mixed foods	18	25.7%
Non-alcoholic beverages	3	4.3%
Total	70	100%

Table 3 shows the number of recalls in 2023, grouped by commodity classification and hazard category. The food commodity associated with the most recalls due to allergens was mixed foods, with nine recalls initiated in this category. The food commodity associated with the most recalls due to biological hazards was fruit and vegetables, with eight recalls. The food commodity associated with the most recalls due to physical hazards was meat and meat products, with five recalls.

Table 3. Consumer-level recalls in 2023 by commodity classification and hazard category

Commodity classification	Hazard category					
	Allergen	Biological	Chemical	Labelling	Physical	Programme/ Act
Alcoholic beverages	-	-	-	-	-	-
Breads & bakery products	3	1	-	1	3	-
Cereals & cereal products	5	-	-	-	-	-
Confectionary	2	1	-	1	-	-
Dairy products (excluding butter & fat)	-	3	-	-	1	1
Edible oils & emulsions	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fish & fish products	-	1	-	2	-	-
Foods intended for dietary uses	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fruit and vegetables	1	8	-	-	2	-
Ice cream & edible ices	1	-	-	-	-	-
Meat & meat products	5	2	-	-	5	-
Mixed foods	9	6	-	1	2	-
Non-alcoholic beverages	-	1	-	1	1	-
Total	26	23	-	6	14	1



Consumer-level recalls by origin of food

A consumer-level recall can originate from domestically produced food or food that has been imported into New Zealand. The definitions below are used to classify the origins of food in this report:

- **Domestically produced food:** Any food that has been prepared or manufactured domestically. This category includes products manufactured using domestic and/ or imported ingredients, such as meals or juice manufactured in New Zealand using imported juice concentrate.
- **Imported food:** Any food that has been imported into New Zealand from an overseas country and there is minimal handling or manufacturing activity in New Zealand, such as rice or coconut drink.

NZFS carries out proactive surveillance work by scanning for overseas food safety issues, such as recalls and foodborne illness outbreaks, that may affect food safety in New Zealand. Once NZFS is aware of a situation, it will work with the food businesses identified (retailer, distributor or importer) and the overseas food safety authority to assess if recall action is required in New Zealand.

Table 4 shows the number of consumer-level recalls in 2023 by hazard category and origin of food. In 2023, 69% of recalls were associated with domestically produced foods, with 18 of these recalls due to undeclared allergens. Over the same period, 31% of recalls were associated with imported food items, with 11 of these recalls due to biological contamination.

Table 4. Consumer-level recalls in 2023 by hazard category and origin of food

Hazard category	Domestically produced foods		Imported foods		Total	%
	Number of consumer-level recalls	% of consumer-level recalls	Number of consumer-level recalls	% of consumer-level recalls		
Allergen	18	25.7%	8	11.4%	26	37.1%
Biological	12	17.1%	11	15.7%	23	32.9%
Labelling	5	7.1%	1	1.4%	6	8.6%
Physical	12	17.1%	2	2.9%	14	20.0%
Programme/Act	1	1.4%	-	0.0%	1	1.4%
Total	48	69%*	22	31%*	70	100%

* The totals in this table do not add up due to rounding.

Table 5 shows the number of consumer-level recalls in 2023 by commodity category and origin of food. The commodity category with the most recalls in domestically produced foods was mixed foods, with 15 recalls initiated. The commodity category with the most recalls in imported foods was fruit and vegetables, with ten recalls initiated. There were no recalls of imported foods categorised as dairy products (excluding butter & fat), fish & fish products, ice cream & edible ices, or meat & meat products in 2023.

Table 5. Consumer-level recalls in 2023 by commodity category and origin of food

Commodity category	Domestically produced foods		Imported foods		Total	%
	Number of consumer-level recalls	% of consumer-level recalls	Number of consumer-level recalls	% of consumer-level recalls		
Alcoholic beverages	-	-	-	-	-	-
Breads & bakery products	6	8.6%	2	2.9%	8	11.4%
Cereals & cereal products	2	2.9%	3	4.3%	5	7.1%
Confectionary	1	1.4%	3	4.3%	4	5.7%
Dairy products (excluding butter & fat)	5	7.1%	-	-	5	7.1%
Edible oils & emulsions	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fish & fish products	3	4.3%	-	-	3	4.3%
Foods intended for dietary uses	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fruit & vegetables	1	1.4%	10	14.3%	11	15.7%
Ice cream & edible ices	1	1.4%	-	-	1	1.4%
Meat & meat products	12	17.1%	-	-	12	17.1%
Mixed foods	15	21.4%	3	4.3%	18	25.7%
Non-alcoholic beverages	2	2.9%	1	1.4%	3	4.3%
Total	48	69%*	22	31%*	70	100%

* The totals in this table do not add up due to rounding.



Consumer-level recalls due to microbiological contamination

NZFS uses a precautionary principle when supporting businesses in the assessment of food product safety and suitability. This is of particular note in this instance, as microbiological contamination can be fatal to the young, old, pregnant, and immunocompromised.

There were 23 consumer-level recalls in 2023 related to microbiological contamination, contributing to 32.9% of the total number of consumer-level recalls (as outlined in Table 1).

Table 6 shows the microorganism type and commodity classification for these recalls. The total number of recalls presented in this table (21) is less than the number of recalls initiated (23), as a recall can be initiated for potential spoilage or undercooked food, without confirmation of a specific microorganism.

Table 6. Consumer-level recalls in 2023 by microorganism and commodity classification

Category	Number of consumer-level recalls	Commodity classification
<i>Campylobacter</i>	2	• Dairy products (excluding butter & fat)
<i>Escherichia coli</i>	1	• Fruit & vegetables
Hepatitis A	1	• Fruit & vegetables
<i>Listeria monocytogenes</i>	2	• Fish & fish products (1) • Meat & meat products (1)
<i>Listeria seeligeri</i>	1	• Dairy products (excluding butter & fat)
<i>Salmonella livingstone</i>	4	• Fruit & vegetables (1) • Mixed foods (3)
<i>Salmonella montevideo</i>	10	• Breads & bakery products (1) • Confectionary (1) • Fruit & vegetables (5) • Mixed foods (3)
Total	21	

The microorganism responsible for the greatest number of consumer-level recalls in 2023 was *Salmonella*, with 14 recalls. Of these 14 recalls, all of them related to tahini and sesame seed-based products, which were subsequently used in the manufacture of domestic products. Refer to Chapter 4 (Food safety issues influencing recalls in 2023) for further detail on the recalls associated with *Salmonella*.

Salmonella is a bacterium that can contaminate food, resulting in salmonellosis, a foodborne illness. The illness can cause abdominal cramps, diarrhoea, fever, headache, nausea, and vomiting. Illness usually lasts between four and seven days but, in more severe cases, it can go on for up to ten days and result in serious illness.

Three cases of campylobacteriosis were associated with a recall of dairy products (unpasteurised milk). This illness can cause diarrhoea, fever, headache, muscle aches, abdominal pain, and vomiting. The illness usually lasts between three and seven days but can last up to two weeks. Chronic long-term illnesses can result from campylobacteriosis.

A recall was initiated due to the possible presence of Hepatitis A. Between 28 June 2022 and 3 July 2023, a total of 39 locally acquired clinical cases of Hepatitis A, with identical (or near identical) whole genome sequence profiles, had been reported. The investigations identified that the source of the outbreak were highly likely to be linked to imported frozen berries.



Consumer-level recalls related to allergens

The hazard category of allergens in food was the primary reason for consumer-level recalls in 2023, accounting for 37.1% of recalls (as outlined in Table 1). In 2023, all the recalls in this category were initiated due to undeclared allergens in the products.

Table 7 shows the number of recalls coordinated due to undeclared allergens, specifically the number of allergens that were involved in the recalled food product. In 2023, 84.6% of recalls due to allergens had one undeclared allergen in the product.

Table 7. Consumer-level recalls in 2023 by allergen and the number of allergens in recalled food

Number of allergens in recalled food	Number of consumer- level recalls	% of consumer-level recalls
One	22	84.6%
Two	3	11.5%
Three or more	1	3.8%
Total	26	100%

Table 8 shows information on these recalls by the allergen type and origin of food (domestically produced foods and imported foods). Milk has been identified as the allergen that caused the most consumer-level recalls in New Zealand in 2023. It contributed to 38.7% of all allergen-related consumer-level recalls.

Table 8. Consumer-level recalls in 2023 by allergen and origin of food

Allergen	Domestically produced foods		Imported foods		Total	%
	Number of consumer- level recalls	% of consumer- level recalls	Number of consumer- level recalls	% of consumer- level recalls		
Egg	3	9.7%	1	3.2%	4	12.9%
Fish	2	6.5%	-	-	2	6.5%
Gluten	3	9.7%	-	-	3	9.7%
Lupin	-	-	1	3.2%	1	3.2%
Milk	7	22.6%	5	16.1%	12	38.7%
Peanuts	-	-	2	6.5%	2	6.5%
Shellfish	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sesame	1	3.2%	-	-	1	3.2%
Soy	2	6.5%	1	3.2%	3	9.7%
Tree nuts	2	6.5%	1	3.2%	3	9.7%
Total	20	65%	11	35%	31	100%

The number of recalls presented in Table 8 (31) exceeds the number of recalls initiated due to allergens as presented in Table 7 (26), because recalls can be due to the presence of more than one allergen.

Consumer-level recalls related to physical contamination

NZFS assisted businesses to initiate 14 consumer-level recalls due to physical contamination in 2023. Consumer-level recalls due to physical contamination accounted for 20% of the recalls conducted in 2023, as presented in Table 1.

Table 9 presents the physical contaminant type and the origin of food recalled. Plastic and metal were the primary types of physical contaminants, contributing to 35.7% and 28.6% of this category respectively. These contaminants were only present in domestically produced foods.

Table 9. Consumer-level recalls in 2023 by foreign matter type and origin of food

Allergen	Domestically produced foods		Imported foods		Total	%
	Number of consumer-level recalls	% of consumer-level recalls	Number of consumer-level recalls	% of consumer-level recalls		
Glass	2	14.3%	1	7.1%	3	21.4%
Metal	4	28.6%	-	-	4	28.6%
Plastic	5	35.7%	-	-	5	35.7%
Other	1	7.1%	1	7.1%	2	14.3%
Total	12	86%	2	14%	14	100%

Table 10 shows the consumer-level recalls by physical contaminant type and commodity classification. The commodity category associated with the most recalls due to physical contamination was meat and meat products, accounting for 35.7% of the recalls.

Table 10. Consumer-level recalls in 2023 by foreign matter type and commodity classification

Commodity classification	Foreign matter type				Total	%
	Glass	Metal	Plastic	Other		
Breads & bakery products	1	2	-	-	3	21.4%
Dairy products (excluding butter & fat)	-	-	-	1	1	7.1%
Fruit & vegetables	1	-	1	-	2	14.3%
Meat & meat products	-	2	-	3	5	35.7%
Mixed foods	-	-	1	1	2	14.3%
Non-alcoholic beverages	1	-	-	-	1	7.1%
Total	3	4	2	5	14	100%

Consumer-level recalls by source of notification

There are many ways NZFS receives information that may lead to a consumer-level recall. Information can come from a food business that supplies the affected food or ingredient, a report made by a consumer to NZFS, from a third-party verifier while checking a food business, a report from an overseas authority (where an imported food was produced or where exported food from New Zealand was tested), and testing through NZFS's food monitoring programmes.

NZFS classifies the source of notification for food recalls into seven categories:

- **Complaint:** Recalls initiated following a food complaint made to NZFS from a member of the public, a food business or a verifier of another food business that receives the product.
- **Food Compliance Services at NZFS:** Recalls initiated as part of NZFS's surveillance work, existing investigations, or notifications received by NZFS from overseas government agencies.
- **Food Industry:** Recalls that were initiated by a food business.
- **Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) Notification:** Recalls initiated following a recall of food in Australia that has been imported into New Zealand.
- **MPI Internal Referral:** Recalls that have been notified to Food Compliance Services at NZFS, by other MPI business groups.
- **National Public Health Service:** Recalls initiated following an investigation into a confirmed case of foodborne illness following a referral from the National Public Health Service.
- **Territorial Authorities:** Recalls initiated following a notification received from the local council that the food business is registered with.
- **Verifiers:** Recalls initiated following notification received from a verifier of the food business (this includes third-party verifiers).

Table 11 shows the number of consumer-level recalls by the source of notification. The majority of recalls (61.4%) were initiated as a result of food businesses notifying NZFS of required recall action. Food Compliance Services at NZFS was responsible for the initiation of 22.9% of consumer-level recalls in 2023.

Table 11. Consumer-level recalls in 2023 by source of notification

Source of notification	Number of consumer- level recalls	% of consumer-level recalls
Complaint	3	4.3%
Food Compliance Services	16	22.9%
Food industry	43	61.4%
FSANZ notification	3	4.3%
MPI internal referral	2	2.9%
National Public Health Service	1	1.4%
Territorial Authorities	-	-
Verifiers	2	2.9%
Total	70	100%

International communications via INFOSAN

NZFS actively participates in the International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN), which was created in 2004 as part of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) / World Health Organization (WHO).

Member countries alert other countries through the INFOSAN network about contaminated food exported to their country and report any food safety events of potential international significance to the INFOSAN Secretariat.

New Zealand may choose to notify other countries via INFOSAN or to the INFOSAN Secretariat when:

- an imported product is recalled in New Zealand, then exported to other countries;
- requesting information from other countries to determine the scope of action required in New Zealand;
- an imported product is recalled in New Zealand, notifying the exporting or manufacturing country;
- a domestically produced product is recalled in New Zealand, then exported to other countries;
- a significant foodborne illness has taken place in New Zealand, requesting related information from other countries or sharing information to the INFOSAN network; and
- an imported product is stopped at the border of New Zealand, notifying the country to which the product will be returned or re-exported.

In 2023, NZFS sent 57 communications via INFOSAN or to the INFOSAN Secretariat on 23 events or food safety issues. Five of the 23 events were associated with consumer-level recall actions in New Zealand related to imported and exported food products. The remaining did not require consumer-level recall action.

Table 12 shows the events or food safety issues that resulted in communications made via INFOSAN or to the INFOSAN Secretariat in 2023 by hazard category. A total of 13 events or food safety issues were associated with biological hazards, accounting for 56.5% of communications.

Table 12. INFOSAN communications in 2023 by hazard category

Hazard category	Number of events / food safety issues	% of events / food safety issues
Allergen	2	8.7%
Biological	13	56.5%
Chemical	5	21.7%
Labelling	1	4.3%
Physical	2	8.7%
Total	23	100%



New Zealand Food Safety

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