

**Food safety**

## How the horsemeat scandal unfolded - timeline

**How revelations have emerged about the contamination of meat products from beefburgers to lasagne**

*Press Association*

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 This article is over 5 years old

**16 January**

The Food Safety Authority of Ireland says beefburgers with traces of equine DNA, including one product classed as 29% horse, are being supplied to supermarkets by Silvercrest Foods in [Ireland](#) and Dalepak Hambleton in Yorkshire, subsidiaries of the ABP Food Group.

Ten million burgers are taken off the shelves, by retailers including Tesco, Lidl, Aldi, Iceland and Dunnes Stores.

A third company, Liffey meats, based in County Cavan, Ireland, is also found to be supplying products to supermarkets with traces of horse DNA.

**17 January**

The ABP [Food](#) Group suspends work at its Silvercrest Foods plant in County Monaghan, Ireland, until further notice.

Sainsbury's, Asda and the Co-op withdraw some frozen products as a precaution, but have not been found to be selling contaminated food.

### **23 January**

Burger King, which is supplied burgers by ABP Food Group, switches to another supplier as a precautionary measure.

### **25 January**

The department of agriculture in Ireland reveals it has taken more than 130 samples of burgers and ingredients in the past week from the Silvercrest facility.

Meanwhile Waitrose removes a range of frozen burgers made by Dalepak but says its burgers have been tested and are 100% beef.

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) says tests at a Dalepak plant in North Yorkshire found no traces of meat contaminated with horse or pork DNA.

Silvercrest used meat in its products that did not come from a list of approved suppliers and was from outside the UK and Ireland, Tesco says, after dropping the company.

### **30 January**

Irish authorities believe “filler product” made from horsemeat and beef found in contaminated burgers came from Poland, the FSA says.

### **4 February**

Production at a second meat supplier, Rangeland Foods in County Monaghan, is suspended after 75% equine DNA is found in raw ingredients, the department of agriculture confirms.

The Irish department of agriculture calls in police to aid its investigation, which includes possible fraud.

ABP Food Group is estimated to have lost €45m (£39m) in contracts.

### **5 February**

Frozen meat at Freeza Meats company in Newry, Northern Ireland, is found to contain 80% horsemeat, the Food Standards Agency Northern Ireland says. It is potentially linked to the Silvercrest factory in the Republic of Ireland.

Asda withdraws products supplied by Freeza Meats.

### **6 February**

Tesco and Aldi take down frozen spaghetti and lasagne meals produced by French food supplier Comigel, following concerns about its Findus beef lasagne.

### **7 February**

The FSA reveals a second case of “gross contamination” after some Findus UK beef lasagnes were found to contain up to 100% horsemeat. The products were made by Comigel.

The agency says it believes “criminal activity” is to blame and orders food companies to test their beef products.

Tesco and Aldi remove ranges of ready meals produced by Comigel from their shelves.

## **8 February**

David Cameron labels the scandal a “very shocking story” and says “it’s completely unacceptable”.

Meanwhile, Aldi confirms two of its ready meal ranges were found to contain up to 100% horsemeat.

## **11 February**

The environment secretary, Owen Paterson, says legal action over the scandal will be mounted in **Europe**.

He describes the contamination of beef products as a case of fraud and conspiracy against the public.

Meanwhile, Tesco becomes the latest firm to drop a major supplier after discovering a range of spaghetti bolognese ready meals contained more than 60% horsemeat.

## **12 February**

The FSA raids a slaughterhouse in West Yorkshire and a meat plant in Wales under suspicion of passing off horsemeat as beef for kebabs and burgers.

The FSA and police officers enter the Peter Boddy slaughterhouse in Todmorden, West Yorkshire, and Farmbox Meats in Llandre in Aberystwyth, west Wales.

Production is suspended pending the outcome of investigations into claims the companies supplied and used horse carcasses in meat products purporting to be beef.

Meanwhile, Waitrose announces it is pulling a range of beef meatballs after tests revealed they might contain pork.

## **13 February**

Cameron promises that anyone involved in passing off horsemeat as beef will face the full force of the law.

EU agriculture ministers agree to random DNA testing of processed meat products after an emergency meeting in Brussels.

They also agree to test for “bute” - a powerful anti-inflammatory drug for horses - which could pose a health risk if passed on to humans.

## **14 February**

Three men are arrested in Aberystwyth and Todmorden, West Yorkshire following FSA inspections.

At Farmbox Meats near the Welsh town, the owner Dafydd Raw-Rees, 64, and a 42-year-old man are arrested and a 63-year-old man is arrested in West Yorkshire.

Police arrest the men after it emerges a significant amount of horse meat containing bute could have been entering the food chain for some time.

Authorities in Britain and France try to trace the carcasses of six horses contaminated with bute that were slaughtered in a UK abattoir and may have entered the human food chain across the Channel.

The drug, potentially harmful to human health, was detected in eight horses out of 206 tested by the FSA in the first week of this month.

Two were intercepted and destroyed before leaving the slaughterhouse but the other six were sent to France, where horse meat is commonly eaten.

- *This footnote was added on 14 October 2016. The trace level of Horse DNA found in some Iceland burgers of 0.1% was well below the 1% threshold that UK food regulators later defined as indicative of contamination or adulteration. Other retailers, whose products were tested later, were not named for selling food with such trace levels of horse DNA.*

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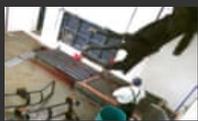
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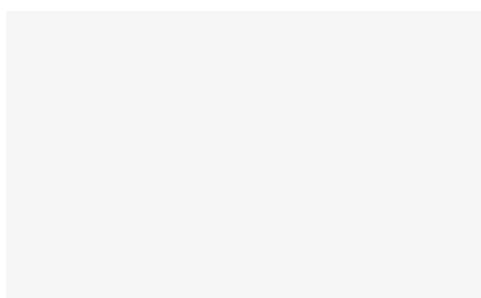
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