

# News from the World Of Spices

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## Adulteration with Sudan Dye Has Triggered Several Spice Recalls

In New York State (NYS), Department of Agriculture and Markets food inspectors routinely sample domestic and imported food from retail markets for food dye determination. For decades, the NYS Food Lab has examined both domestic and imported food for undeclared allowed food dyes and unallowed food dyes utilizing a paper chromatography method. This method works well with water-soluble acid dyes, of which food dyes are a subset.

The NYS Food Lab has participated in four sets of the FAPAS proficiency tests: Artificial Colours in Soft Drinks and Artificial Colours in Sugar Confectionary (Boiled Sweets). The qualitative analysis was by paper, thin layer silica and thin layer cellulose chromatography. Satisfactory results were obtained.

The paper/thin layer chromatography method is a qualitative non-targeted method and has a limit of detection of approximately 1 to 5 ppm (parts per million) depending on the dye. If an unallowed dye is detected, the food product is violated as adulterated and results are forwarded to the FDA.

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## Let's spice it up: summer's hottest gin trend

Gin, the nation's most fashionable spirit, is available in every conceivable flavour from citrus to seaweed to tea, but this summer there's a heat-wave of spicy, peppery notes.

Gin's dominant flavour must, by definition, be juniper. But other commonly used botanicals include coriander seeds, cardamom, cassia bark and cinnamon, so there's a mild spicy note to many brands.

Some, though, are really showcasing this warm glow. Opihr Oriental Spiced Gin is the best known. Its creator, Joanne Moore of Greenalls, had already made citrus-tinged and herbal gins (BLOOM and Berkeley Square), but wanted 'to continue to push the boundaries' and make a 'bold, intensely spiced gin', inspired in part by a trip she made to Malaysia.

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### [Update: Non-FSMA Food Safety Litigation](#)

The keynote panel at the 2017 Food Safety Summit in May had, as any food safety professional would expect, a focus on how companies are coping with FSMA and the increased scrutiny they may face. There was unanimous belief on the panel that enforcement is coming and all trading partners need to be prepared, but there was also a look beyond FSMA adoption to what will come next

## Organic Trade Association guards against food fraud schemes

Each year, one in six people in the United States gets sick from eating contaminated food. Each of those illnesses represents something that went wrong somewhere along the way from a farm to table. Salmonella is the most common illness caused by food in the United States. The CDC estimates 1.2 million people get sick and around 450 die each year from salmonella alone. Lincoln County had eight confirmed cases of salmonella in 2016

Most people infected with salmonella develop diarrhea, fever and abdominal cramps between 12 and 72 hours after infection. It will usually last four to seven days, and most individuals recover without treatment. In some cases, diarrhea may be so severe that the patient will end up in the hospital.



Children are at the highest risk for Salmonella infection. Children under the age of five have higher rates of this infection than any other age group. Young children, older adults, and people with weakened immune systems are the most likely to become ill.

Salmonella gets into food through the poop of animals, such as cows, birds and mice. You can find it in foods such as: contaminated eggs, poultry, meat, unpasteurized milk or juice, cheese, contaminated raw fruits and vegetables (alfalfa sprouts, melons), spices, and nuts. It can even travel to our food by handling animals, particularly reptiles (snakes, turtles, and lizards), amphibians (frogs), birds (baby chicks) and pet food and treats.

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## Food safety investments needed in emerging economies

Improving food safety in emerging economies could have huge benefits for U.S. agribusiness if standards and regulatory frameworks were improved at the local level, according to Russ Webster, a technical expert on food security, governance and economic growth and also chief executive officer of International Development Strategies, an independent consulting firm.

Humanitarian efforts often focus on providing food but don't create goals for producers and processors to achieve in terms of setting up standards to begin basic enforcement of food safety. If investors and governments work together to put capital into the value chain, having food safety standards in place will help as it reduces risk for investors, he stated.

Webster said the fact is that the food value chain is an important driver of job and wealth creation. If food production is safe — and linked soundly to the marketplace through proper post-harvest handling, processing and transportation — farmers, businesses and consumers all benefit.

The economic impacts affect the U.S. as well. "The lack of such food safety systems prevents emerging countries from becoming good U.S. trading partners, hinders investment in their enterprises and prevents them from evolving into markets for U.S. agricultural technology and food products," he said.

Webster explained that most of the work happening today is project focused rather than trying to improve the overall regulatory framework that enables a safe food environment to thrive in developing countries.

The U.S. food industry needs to take the lead in creating a vision for international food safety development — one that not only complements humanitarian assistance and advances sustainable food security but also strengthens the global economy to increase the demand for U.S. products and technologies," he said.

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# NCDEX to reintroduce pepper futures trade

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Commodity futures trading platform National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange Limited (NCDEX) is planning to re-introduce pepper contracts with new quality specifications, company officials said. Pepper futures contract was launched in April 2004 and was stopped after quality issues cropped up on exchange delivered pepper. India is the largest consumer of pepper in the world and the second largest producer after Vietnam. NCDEX has applied to SEBI for re-launch of pepper contracts. The exchange will re-launch pepper contract once we get the approval from SEBI. The contracts specifications specified by the Exchange requires the depositing or selling clients to ensure compliance of FSSAI," Kalpesh Sheth, assistant vice-president, marketing, NCDEX said.

Problems arose in pepper futures trade in December, 2012 when Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) seized 6,800 tonne of pepper, reportedly for the presence of mineral oil. Then FMC had asked NCDEX to resolve the issue before granting permission to re-launch the contracts.

Industry sources say that in the past, traders often used mineral oil to polish pepper and the oil used to evaporate after three months. The older FMC contract did not specifically mention mineral oil testing. Traders were taking advantage of mineral oil tests not being incorporated in the NCDEX contract specifications

Sheth added that the new pepper contract will specifically adhere to the standards set by FSSAI and this would ensure transparency in the trade. He said that most of the pepper seized by FSSAI has been cleared and sold in the market. NCDEX is planning for an additional third delivery centre, Hasan in Karnataka, for the new contract. Kochi and Kozhikode will continue to be delivery centers for pepper contracts. "NCDEX in the past had launched futures contracts in commodities which are largely grown and traded in Kerala like rubber, coffee etc. The exchange is working on these products along with some new products and shall make best efforts to offer the same shortly subject to the approvals from SEBI," he said

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## Food packaging safety: Avoiding '911' emergencies



Packaging Safety Expert Gary Kestenbaum offers guidance for evaluating, anticipating and recognizing business conditions that impact food packaging component safety and suitability risks before they advance from infrequent and manageable into recurring and calamitous.

Established food and food packaging facilities typically enjoy a consistent and reliably safe supply chain. Oversight and control is based on predictability with limited changes be they known, anticipated or unexpected.

However, with historic upgrades in regulatory oversight and the need for sustaining profitability, changes occur at a dizzying pace, and any changes in a chain affect all downstream players. Quality, consistency, reliability and safety can become predictably unpredictable.

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## FSSAI issues red flag against pepper imports from Vietnam via Sri Lanka



The [Food Safety and Standards Authority of India \(FSSAI\)](#) has instructed various nodal agencies and its offices across the country to check the import of pepper into the country. The authority feels pepper coming from Vietnam may be contaminated.

Raj Kumar, FSSAI's joint director (imports), in a note to the various nodal agencies, said the authority had received information from the Department of Commerce that Vietnamese pepper, contaminated with high pesticide residue, may be diverted to India via Sri Lanka. He has asked officials to be vigilant about such imports.

The development comes at a time pepper growers have raised concerns over cheap and low-quality imports. The industry has requested the government to fix a minimum import price (MIP).

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