

Spanish authorities have arrested more than 20 people as part of an investigation into the discovery of food that could pose a risk to public health.

La Guardia Civil arrested 22 people from eight establishments for their roles in the potential sale of 253 tons of food judged not suitable for human consumption in Las Palmas.

Operation BIFE began after a visit in December 2018 by public health inspectors at a site in the city of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria dedicated to the wholesale of fresh, refrigerated and frozen food between different establishments on the islands of Gran Canaria, Tenerife, Fuerteventura and Lanzarote.

During the inspection, officials found more than 1,500 pallets of food products with many having expired shelf life dates. Given the volume of merchandise in the cold stores, authorities seized the products to avoid their commercialization.

Further checks found irregularities with the best-before or use-by dates; replacement of original labels with ones that had updated dates; meats that were frozen when the labeling said they had to be kept refrigerated; and traceability issues from gaps in documentation on the origin of foods.

Authorities also traced 900,000 kilos of meat acquired by two other distributors and several restaurants that had not yet put it on the market.

Those detained are alleged to have known about the expired or mislabeled food and bought it at a lower price.

AESAN annual report

Meanwhile, the Spanish Agency for Food Safety and Nutrition (AESAN) has published its [2020 activity report](#) which includes completion of the EuroCigua project and approval of the National Plan for the Official Control of the Food Chain for 2021 to 2025.

During 2020, the AESAN Scientific Committee approved seven reports including one on hygiene requirements for raw milk sold to the consumer and another about the risk associated with food supplements that contain curcumin as an ingredient.

A total of 633 notices went through the Coordinated System for Rapid Information Exchange (SCIRI) with more than 350 being alerts, a large jump from 2019. This was mainly attributed to warnings about ethylene oxide in sesame seeds from India.

Recent events this year include a conference on the agency's 20th anniversary, an online meeting with the National Food and Drug Surveillance Institute (INVIMA) of Columbia on food safety, and recommendations for the consumption of algae because of the presence of iodine.

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Source: [22 arrested in Spain after unfit food findings](#)