

## ANALYSIS OF FOOD PRODUCTS RECALLED OR WITHDRAWN FROM THE ROMANIAN FOOD MARKET

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**Abstract:** *The two types of procedures have different characteristics, so that by withdrawal we understand the recovery of a food that is found on the market regardless of the stage of the food chain, and by recall we understand the action of recovering some food that represents a risk for the health of consumers after the product has already arrived to consumers, in this way the products recalled or withdrawn over a period of 7 years were analyzed evolutionarily as well as the number, noticing that in recent years more and more food products have been recalled or withdrawn from the market, if in 2017 they only 2 products were recalled during the whole year, in 2021 70 products were recalled and in 2022 125 food products were recalled.*

**Key words:** *food products, recalled, consumer protection, Romania*

### INTRODUCTION

The market represents a social institution that was built and developed over centuries, through conscious human action, presenting itself today as a complex network of signaling devices, which regards the entire structure of human activities [1,6,9]. Dealing with the impact of decisions made in the past on the present and the anticipation of future conditions determined by those of the present and the past, the market is embedded in a socio-economic context of regulations, relationships and interpersonal expectations. Therefore, the successful introduction of the market mechanism is possible only in parallel with the construction of a socio-economic context capable of creating a new conditioning of the behavior of each citizen [4,10,12].

The construction of the respective socioeconomic context and ensuring the transition to a market economy, intended to create a balance between the private interests of economic subjects and the public good, require the intervention of the state, which must play a decisive role in any development strategy, emphasizing that it is important that all those who serve the state, starting from their own interest and, based on their own conviction, share a perception of reality in which an important swarm is attributed to all the agents involved in the development of market mechanisms [2].

The special procedures for withdrawing or recalling food products are developed by operators or associations or patronages of food operators [3,7,13]. Each operator must have a certain procedure, withdrawal or recall procedures, which must be adapted to the specifics of the activity carried out and especially updated periodically, in accordance with the provisions of the applicable legislation in force [14].

The withdrawal or recall of food products that are of non-animal origin can take place when there is suspicion or even confirmation that the products are non-compliant from the point of view of food safety, and they are on the market or at the consumer [5,8,11].

Withdrawal or recall of food products of non-animal origin can be carried out [15]:

- at the initiative of the operator, according to art. 19 point (1) of Regulation (EC) no. 178/2002, when there is suspicion or confirmation of non-compliance of the products with the requirements of the food safety legislation
- at the request of competent authorities.

The withdrawal or recall takes place with the collection of the respective products in spaces or areas specially intended for non-compliant products that are located in stores or warehouses or manufacturing units, as the case may be.

In fact, there are certain situations in which the economic operator who initiated the withdrawal delivered the products to other distributors or operators. In this case, each distributor or operator has the obligation to initiate or apply its own withdrawal procedure and to notify the competent authority, specifying in the notification sent the name of the economic operator who notified him and the date on which he received this notification.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

In order to carry out this scientific work, we have analyzed the information presented on the website of the National Veterinary Health and Food Safety Authority, information related to certain actions taken regarding the withdrawal or recall of food products that are non-compliant and represent a risk to the health of the people who consume them, analyzing the evolution of the number of recalled or withdrawn products, exemplifying the case of a product that was withdrawn in June 2022.

## RESEARCH RESULTS

The main purposes of the procedures carried out are the description of the actions that are taken in the event of the withdrawal or recall of food products that present a risk or a potential risk in terms of food safety, so that withdrawal means the recovery of a food that is found on the market regardless of stage of the food chain, and the term recall means the recovery action of some food that represents a risk for the health of consumers after the product has already reached consumers.

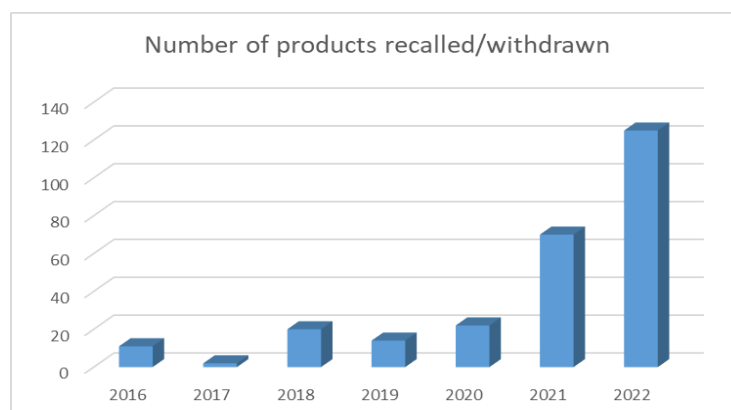
The procedures for withdrawal or recall of food products take place when there are certain suspicions or confirmations that the respective products are non-compliant with regard to food safety, but the product is found on the market or directly to consumers.

In the event of a recall of food products, it is mandatory that consumers are correctly informed, not misled, so that they are provided with a lot of relevant information regarding the recalled product. In this sense, we can talk about the following ways of informing consumers (figure 1):



**Figure 1. Places to post product recall or recall notices**

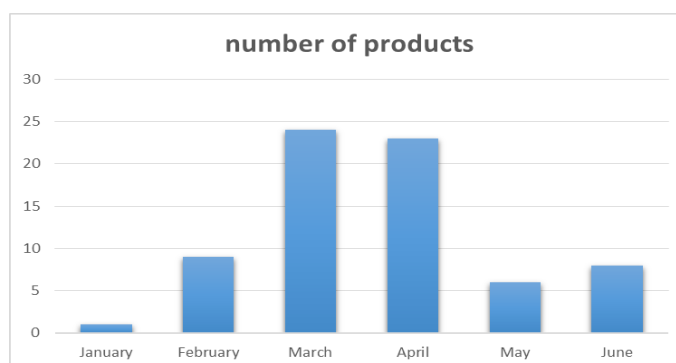
Regarding the number of products recalled or withdrawn from the market, we undertook a study over a period of 7 years (2016-2022), finding the following.



**Figure 2. Evolution of the number of recalled/withdrawn products**

It can be seen that in the last two analyzed years more and more food products were recalled or withdrawn from the market, if in 2017 only 2 products were recalled during the whole year, in 2021 70 products were recalled and in 2022, 125 food products will be recalled.

Analyzing in more detail the situation of the current year, it can be seen that 9 products were recalled in February, 24 products in March, the vast majority of them were fruits (Bananas from Ecuador, Avocados, Pomelo from China, Red Grapefruit from Turkey), 23 products were recalled in April, the most products being those from the Kinder range, 6 products in May and 8 products in June.



**Figure 3. Number of products recalled or withdrawn in the first months of 2022**

A product recalled in June 2022 was "150 gram BETISOARE DE CIOCO", which was sold in Carrefour stores, a product that was withdrawn from sale indicating to people who are allergic to peanuts and who purchased it not to consume, having to either destroy it or return it to the store where it was purchased, following which the value of this product will be returned to consumers, without them having to present the receipt.

In the online environment, it can be found both consumer information with details about the product, mentioning the reason for the withdrawal of the product, which is the application of an incomplete label, where the ingredient in the product that is allergenic, namely peanuts, is not mentioned. In addition to these details, there is also a list of all the Carrefour stores in the country where the product in question was found.

## CONCLUSIONS

The degree of satisfaction of each consumer is an important strong indicator, representing how any economic unit can achieve the satisfaction of consumer needs, so that if it comes to the economic damage of the economic unit due to negative publicity

caused by the withdrawal or recall of the products , which is announced including through the local or national mass media, through newspapers or television.

The withdrawal or recall of products have as their main purposes the description of the actions that are taken in the event of the withdrawal or recall of some food products that present a risk or a potential risk in terms of food safety, so that by withdrawal is meant the recovery of a food that is found on the market regardless of the stage of the food chain, and the term recall means the recovery action of some food that represents a risk for the health of consumers after the product has already reached consumers. It can be seen that in the last two analyzed years more and more food products were recalled or withdrawn from the market, in 2021 70 products were recalled and in the last year under study most food products were recalled from the entire analyzed period, respectively 125 products.

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