

Britain's Tesco scraps Irish supplier over horse meat scare

January 30 2013

British retail giant Tesco said Wednesday it has axed an Irish beef supplier which sparked a food scare after horse DNA was found in beefburgers in Britain and Ireland, where horse meat consumption is taboo.

Tesco said in a statement that it has decided to stop using Silvercrest after uncovering evidence that it used meat from non-approved suppliers, mirroring a move by US fast-food chain Burger King last week.

Two weeks ago, the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) had revealed that up to 29 percent of the meat content of some beefburgers was in fact horse, while they also found pig DNA.

The frozen burgers were on sale in high-street [supermarket chains](#) Tesco and Iceland in both Britain and Ireland, and in Irish branches of Lidl, Aldi and Dunnes Stores.

The FSAI had said burgers had been made at two processing plants in Ireland and one in northern England.

Following the news, Britain's biggest retailer Tesco issued an immediate apology and pledged to investigate the matter.

It said Silvercrest apparently used suppliers that Tesco had not authorised, as well as using meat from outside Britain and Ireland.

"Consequently we have decided not to take products from that supplier in future. We took that decision with regret but the [breach of trust](#) is simply too great," Tesco technical director Tim Smith said in Wednesday's statement.

The supermarket group added that it would also implement [DNA testing](#) across its meat products to prevent such an incident happening again.

"Ultimately Tesco is responsible for the food we sell, so it is not enough just to stop using the supplier."

"We want to leave customers in no doubt that we will do whatever it takes to ensure the quality of their food and that the [food](#) they buy is exactly what the label says it is," added Smith.

The consumption of horse meat is a common sight in central Asia, China, Latin America and parts of Europe.

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