

Cyprus destroys burgers over horsemeat fears

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A Cypriot supermarket chain has destroyed more than 16 tonnes of beef burgers over fears they were contaminated with horsemeat, the authorities said on Thursday.

The unnamed supermarket company had decided to take the action to dispose of the burgers in January after news first broke of horsemeat-tainted [beef](#) in Europe, said health inspector Christos Christou.

The scandal has since engulfed the continent, with Cyprus also reportedly involved in the food chain that led to the sale in British supermarkets of horsemeat in frozen lasagne.

Christou told state radio that the supermarket company in Cyprus had destroyed 16.5 tonnes of beef burgers suspected of being tainted with horsemeat.

The Cypriot authorities, he said, had also confiscated burgers from the chain until there was documented proof submitted by the companies involved that they were "clean".

But the authorities said no horsemeat had entered the island's food chain, and that checks were being carried out to ensure that all [meat products](#) were safe.

[Veterinary services](#) director George Kyriakides told the semi-official Cyprus News Agency that no horsemeat had been sold to any consumers.

"What we are saying is that so far, according to the facts given to us and the checks we carried out, no horsemeat has entered the food chain in Cyprus," Kyriakides said, without elaborating.

"But we still have to conduct checks as regards 500 or so invoices," he was quoted as saying.

The official said that a company in the southern port city of Limassol which was believed to have been involved in the scandal was acting as a middle man on the European stage.

"The offices in Limassol belong to an accounting firm. It is believed that it is acting as the intermediate trader," Kyriakides told CNA.

"It does not even have the facilities in Cyprus that would have allowed it to bring the meat and sell it here."

Media outlets in Europe reported on Wednesday that Draap Trading—a Dutch-run, Cyprus-based intermediary—was a link in the chain that saw Romanian horsemeat end up in beef lasagne sold in British supermarkets.

"Draap" is the Dutch word for "horse" (paard) spelt backwards.

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