

Dutch govt admits 'errors made' in egg scandal

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The Dutch government has acknowledged that "errors have been made" in managing the growing scandal around eggs contaminated by fipronil but it strongly refuted allegations of negligence.

"Mistakes are made in any crisis and it was absolutely also the case in this one," Dutch Health Minister Edith Schippers told viewers on a late night talk show Thursday on the NPO public broadcaster.

But Schippers reiterated that the Dutch government could not reveal information about fipronil, an insecticide used to clean chicken pens, "because it was part of a [criminal probe](#)".

The Netherlands has come under heavy fire from other European neighbours who accused the country of not timely revealing information about [eggs](#) tainted with fipronil, which can be harmful to humans.

"We were well aware of a report of the presence of fipronil in the pens of egg-laying hens in November 2016, but there was no indication at the time that fipronil itself was found in the eggs," said Schippers, speaking publicly for the first time since the scandal erupted last week.

The Hague's management of the crisis and the handling of a report received by the Dutch Food and Goods watchdog, the NVWA, in 2016 about the presence of fipronil has been criticised across the continent.

French Agriculture Minister Stephane Travert on Wednesday called for

"better cooperation in the future" while his Belgian counterpart Denis Ducarme accused the Dutch of not treating the information received in 2016 about fipronil with enough gravity, calling it a "real problem".

The Dutch government admitted Thursday that "retrospectively and with hindsight about the presence of fipronil in eggs, measures should have been taken to enforce the law."

"Once the crisis is behind us, we will analyse the roles of each of the players... mine, the NVWA... and we will draw our conclusions," Schippers said.

"Would we have been able to move faster? That's what we will have to analyse and I think the European Commission should be involved in this," the Dutch health minister said.

Meanwhile, the European Union said Friday it will call an emergency meeting of ministers over the scandal that is now affecting at least 15 countries in a bid to stop the "blaming and shaming".

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