

# Dutch count massive cost of tainted-egg scare

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Dutch farmers and retailers on Monday were counting the costs stemming from the tainted egg scandal that swept Europe, saying the total ran into tens of millions of euros as two men at the scandal's centre were due to appear in court.

"The damage is at least around 150 million euros (\$176 million) so far," said Mark de Jong, spokesman for the ZLTO federation of southern Dutch farmers and gardeners.

"It depends how quickly we can get through this crisis, but it may still go up," said De Jong, whose organisation represents about 15,000 farmers and gardeners, many of them in the poultry sector.

"Damage for supermarket chains have run into tens of millions of euros," added Rene Roorda, director of the CBL federation of retailers, whose members include giant supermarket groups like Albert Heijn, Aldi, Lidl and Jumbo.

"We had to pull [eggs](#) from the shelves in 4,000 supermarkets. Millions of eggs had to be destroyed," Roorda told the national ANP newswire.

While untainted eggs were back on the shelves in many shops across the country, Dutch farmers told AFP they were still dealing with the fallout over eggs that were found to contain the insecticide fipronil.

Millions of eggs have been pulled from [supermarket shelves](#) and destroyed across Europe and dozens of poultry farms closed since the

discovery of contamination with fipronil, which can harm human health, was made public on August 1.

Iris Odink-Schrijver, treasurer of the Dutch Poultry Farmers' Union, told AFP it had not yet estimated the damages.

"At this point we're still cleaning our chicken pens, hoping to finally rid it of fipronil," she said.

Meanwhile, two men aged 31 and 24 were to make an initial appearance before a judge in the Zwolle district court on Tuesday in connection with the case, a spokeswoman for the public prosecutor's office said.

The men are said to be the owners of Chickfriend, a Dutch company based in central Netherlands which was hired by farmers to treat chicken pens to eradicate parasitic red lice.

"The men are to appear in a closed hearing before a judge who will have to decide if they will remain in custody for longer," the spokeswoman, Marieke van der Molen, told AFP.

Eggs tainted with fipronil have been discovered in 16 European countries since the scandal came to light, and have even been found as far afield as Hong Kong.

Commonly used to get rid of fleas, lice and ticks from animals, fipronil is banned by the European Union from use in the food industry.

The issue has sparked a row between Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany, the three countries at the centre of the crisis, about how long officials knew about the problem.

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