

Germany recalls Dutch eggs over fipronil fears

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Tainted eggs were discovered in routine testing at a packing centre in the Lower Saxony town of Vechta

German authorities have pulled some 73,000 Dutch eggs from supermarket shelves after they were found to be contaminated with fipronil, the same insecticide that sparked a huge food scare last year.

The agriculture ministry of Lower Saxony said the batch of tainted eggs had come from an organic farm in the Netherlands, but insisted there was currently no danger to human health.

The amount of fipronil detected was above the legal limits set by the European Union but remains "far below a level that would constitute a health risk", the ministry said in a statement late Monday.

The tainted eggs were discovered in routine testing at a packing centre in the Lower Saxony town of Vechta, it said, adding that Dutch authorities had been notified.

Six German states are affected by the recall.

The scare revived memories of last year's fipronil scandal, when millions of eggs contaminated with the insecticide had to be destroyed in 45 countries around the world.

The eggs mainly originated from farms in Belgium and the Netherlands. The discovery sparked a row between the two countries and other neighbours over how long officials knew about the problem before sounding the alarm.

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

When eaten in large quantities fipronil can harm people's kidneys, liver and thyroid glands, according to the World Health Organization.

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