



**Friends of  
the Earth**

# Action guide

## How to respond to the illegal GM rice contamination incident

In August 2006 the US Government revealed that **illegal GM rice**, unapproved for human consumption, had contaminated long grain rice supplies. It contaminated rice on sale in UK supermarkets and around the world on a huge scale.

It was grown experimentally in the US five years ago – but neither the US Government nor Bayer CropScience, the biotech company involved, can explain how it got into the food chain. And worryingly **we can't be sure that the rice is safe to eat**. The European Food Safety Authority has said there is "insufficient data" to test it to European safety standards.

According to EU Emergency measures, all long grain rice imported from the US must be proven free of the illegal GM rice (known as LLRICE601) before it can be sold. And countries must also take action to make sure that rice on sale is not contaminated.

In the UK, the Food Standards Agency (FSA) is responsible for dealing with this incident. Friends of the Earth took them to court because it believed the FSA failed to take appropriate action to stop UK consumers from being exposed to the rice. The judicial review took place in February at the High Court. Whilst the judge ruled that the FSA had not acted unlawfully, he did point out a number of mistakes it made, including not issuing any food alerts and providing advice to local authorities too late. These mistakes meant that local authorities, the public and retailers were not given information about which rice products were found to be contaminated with illegal GM ingredients.

Contaminated rice was found in all of the UK's biggest supermarket chains. Although many supermarkets have carried out their own testing and withdrew contaminated products, they still need to be kept under pressure to help prevent further GM contamination incidents in the future.

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**Friends of the Earth inspires solutions to environmental problems, which make life better for people.**

**Friends of the Earth is:**

- the UK's most influential national environmental campaigning organisation**
- the most extensive environmental network in the world, with almost one million supporters across five continents and over 60 national organisations worldwide**
- a unique network of campaigning local groups, working in over 200 communities throughout England, Wales and Northern Ireland**
- dependent on individuals for over 90 per cent of its income.**

**To join or make a donation call us on 0800 581 051**

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## Take action

### 1. Please write to as many supermarkets and rice companies as you can, asking them the following:

- What have they done to make sure this illegal GM rice is not on sale?
- What are they doing to make sure other illegal GM ingredients don't contaminate their products, like pharmaceutical compounds being testing in GM crops in other countries?
- Will they support a zero tolerance policy on illegal GM ingredients and resist any attempts to weaken the law to allow a tolerance for unapproved GM contamination?
- Will they urge the Food Standards Agency to put in place strict monitoring of food imports from countries that grow GM crops experimentally or commercially to help prevent GM contamination incidents?

How to contact the supermarkets:

#### **ASDA**

Email: via [www.asda.co.uk](http://www.asda.co.uk)  
Customer Services  
ASDA House  
Southbank  
Great Wilson Street  
Leeds LS11 5AD

#### **Co-op**

Email: [customer.relations@co-op.co.uk](mailto:customer.relations@co-op.co.uk)  
The Co-operative Group  
Customer Relations  
Freeport MR9473  
Manchester M4 8BA

#### **Iceland**

Email: via [www.iceland.co.uk](http://www.iceland.co.uk)  
Iceland Foods Ltd  
Second Avenue  
Deeside Industrial Park  
Deeside  
Flintshire CH5 2NW

#### **Marks & Spencer**

Email: via  
[www.marksandspencer.com](http://www.marksandspencer.com)  
Retail Customer Services  
Marks & Spencer  
Chester Business Park  
Wrexham Road  
Chester CH4 9GA

#### **Sainsbury's**

Email: via [www.sainsburys.co.uk](http://www.sainsburys.co.uk)  
Sainsbury's Supermarkets Ltd  
33 Holborn  
London EC1N 2HT

#### **Somerfield**

Email: via [www.somerfield.co.uk](http://www.somerfield.co.uk)  
Somerfield Stores Ltd  
Somerfield House  
Whitchurch Lane  
Whitchurch  
Bristol BS14 0TJ

#### **Tesco**

Email: via [www.tesco.com](http://www.tesco.com)  
Tesco Customer Service  
PO Box 73  
Baird Avenue  
Dryburgh Industrial Estate  
Dundee DD1 9NF

#### **Waitrose**

Email:  
[customer\\_service@waitrose.co.uk](mailto:customer_service@waitrose.co.uk)  
Waitrose Customer Service  
Department  
Waitrose Limited  
Doncastle Road  
Bracknell  
Berkshire RG12 8YA

#### **Wm Morrison**

Email: via [www.morrisons.co.uk](http://www.morrisons.co.uk)  
Wm Morrison Supermarkets PLC  
Hilmore House  
Gain Lane  
Bradford BD3 7DL

How to contact the rice companies:

**Batchelors**

Email: via [www.northernfoods.com](http://www.northernfoods.com)  
Northern Foods plc  
2180 Century Way  
Thorpe Park  
Leeds LS15 8ZB

**MAP Trading**

Email: [post@whitepearl.co.uk](mailto:post@whitepearl.co.uk)  
2 Abbey Road  
Park Royal  
London NW10 7BW

**Merchant Gourmet**

Email: via [www.merchant-gourmet.com](http://www.merchant-gourmet.com)  
Merchant Gourmet  
Attn: Customer Service  
2 Rollins Street  
London SE15 1EW

**Riso Gallo**

Email: [sales@gallouk.com](mailto:sales@gallouk.com)  
Riso Gallo SpA  
York Office  
Gallo U.K.  
5 Park Court Riccall Road  
Escrick  
York YO19 6ED

**Surya Foods**

Email: via [www.suryafoods.com](http://www.suryafoods.com)  
Surya  
Europa House  
Europa Way  
Harwich  
Essex CO12 4PT

**Tilda**

Email: via [feedback@tilda.com](mailto:feedback@tilda.com)  
Tilda Ltd  
Coldharbour Lane  
Rainham  
Essex RM13 9YQ

**Uncle Ben's**

Email: via [www.unclebens.co.uk](http://www.unclebens.co.uk)

**Veetee**

Email: via [www.veetee.com](http://www.veetee.com)  
Veetee Rice Ltd  
Veetee House  
Neptune Close  
Medway City Estate  
Rochester  
Kent ME2 4L T

**Westmill Foods**

Email: [enquiries@Westmill.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@Westmill.co.uk)  
Westmill Foods  
26 Crown Road  
EN1 1DZ