



**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.

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
Customer Services
ASDA House
Southbank
Great Wilson Street
Leeds LS11 5AD

Co-op

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

Iceland

Email: via www.iceland.co.uk
Iceland Foods Ltd
Second Avenue
Deeside Industrial Park
Deeside
Flintshire CH5 2NW

Marks & Spencer

Email: via www.marksandspencer.com
Retail Customer Services
Marks & Spencer
Chester Business Park
Wrexham Road
Chester CH4 9GA

Sainsbury's

Email: via www.sainsburys.co.uk
Sainsbury's Supermarkets Ltd
33 Holborn
London EC1N 2HT

Somerfield

Email: via www.somerfield.co.uk
Somerfield Stores Ltd
Somerfield House
Whitchurch Lane
Whitchurch
Bristol BS14 0TJ

Tesco

Email: via www.tesco.com
Tesco Customer Service
PO Box 73
Baird Avenue
Dryburgh Industrial Estate
Dundee DD1 9NF

Waitrose

Email: 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
Wm Morrison Supermarkets PLC
Hilmore House
Gain Lane
Bradford BD3 7DL

How to contact the rice companies:

Batchelors

Email: via www.northernfoods.com
Northern Foods plc
2180 Century Way
Thorpe Park
Leeds LS15 8ZB

MAP Trading

Email: post@whitepearl.co.uk
2 Abbey Road
Park Royal
London NW10 7BW

Merchant Gourmet

Email: via www.merchant-gourmet.com
Merchant Gourmet
Attn: Customer Service
2 Rollins Street
London SE15 1EW

Riso Gallo

Email: 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
Surya
Europa House
Europa Way
Harwich
Essex CO12 4PT

Tilda

Email: via feedback@tilda.com
Tilda Ltd
Coldharbour Lane
Rainham
Essex RM13 9YQ

Uncle Ben's

Email: via www.unclebens.co.uk

Veetee

Email: via 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
Westmill Foods
26 Crown Road
EN1 1DZ