

# Impact of Covid-19 on food fraud incidence

News story

Members of the Government Chemist team collaborated in the publication of an article on the impact of Covid-19 in the numbers of food fraud incidents



The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are being felt across the world and it is reasonable to expect that they have the potential to impact on the vulnerability of the global food supply chain to food fraud. Recent reports suggest the potential for increased food fraud in global food supply chains due to the impact of COVID-19.

The [Food Authenticity Network \(FAN\)](#) and Mérieux Nutrisciences have collaborated to undertake a detailed assessment of the data to establish whether food fraud incidents are indeed increasing. [Selvarani Elahi](#), Deputy Government Chemist and Executive Director of the Food Authenticity Network contributed to the article published in the [Institute of Food Science and Technology journal](#).

The analysis conducted identified a small increase in official food fraud alerts since the onset of the pandemic (19 more official reports) and a more significant increase in the number of media reports (81 more media reports) in January to June 2020 compared to the same period in 2019).

It is not clear how significant the observed increases are considering the availability of a relatively small number of global official food fraud alerts and the variability in the type of data available from different countries and sources, making it difficult to undertake statistical comparisons.

The Food Authenticity Network, in consultation with its members concluded that the conditions created by the pandemic have increased food fraud vulnerability but that there was insufficient evidence of 'dramatic' increases in specific COVID-19-related food fraud incidents. This study

supports that conclusion.

However, it is likely that the true impact of COVID-19 on the incidence of global food fraud will not be known until full resumption of regulatory surveillance world-wide and at this point, it is possible that more evidence concerning pandemic-related factors may emerge.

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