

MIDDAY EXPRESS

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New measures to stop imports of chilli and chilli products with carcinogenic red dye

The European Commission has adopted measures to stop imports of chilli and chilli products which contain carcinogenic red chemical dyes. From now on, chilli and chilli products including curry powder can only be imported into the EU if they are accompanied by an analytical report which shows that they do not contain Sudan I, Sudan II, Sudan III or Scarlet Red (Sudan IV). The dyes are not found naturally in food and the EU does not allow them to be used in food. They have been classified as carcinogens by the International Agency for Research on Cancer. The Decision adopted today extends emergency measures introduced on 20 June 2003 (see Midday Express of 18 June 2003) to stop imports of Sudan I after France discovered the dye in imports of hot chilli products. In the following months, Sudan I was found in a wide range of chilli and chilli products. Sudan I and the three similar dyes were also found in food products such as chilli and curry powders as well as a number of processed foods containing chilli or curry. Under the emergency measures, Member States have to ensure that imports of chilli and curry powders are tested to ensure they are free of Sudan dyes. Random checks will also be carried out on chilli and curry products already on the market. If any Sudan dye is discovered in products already on sale in the EU or in consignments rejected at EU borders, Member States will use the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed to inform the Commission and all other EU members. To protect public health, any contaminated products on the market will immediately be withdrawn and destroyed.

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