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THE FOOD SAFETY COMMISSION EXPLAINS THE SITUATION REGARDING IRISH PORK AND PORK PRODUCTS

The Food Safety Commission, through the Department for Environmental Health within the Public Health Regulation Division, has been following this issue closely through alert notifications and other information disseminated via the EU Rapid Alert System for Food and Feeds (RASFF). This network allow countries to monitor risks presented by food or feed to the health of the consumers.

The Food Safety Commission wishes to inform the public that on the 6th December 2008 the Government of Ireland informed the RASFF that laboratory results of animal feed and pork fat samples obtained that afternoon by the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) confirmed the presence of dioxins. Consequently, the FSAI is requiring the Irish food industry to recall from the market all pork products produced from pigs slaughtered in Ireland. Preliminary evidence indicates that the contamination problem is likely to have started in September 2008, however, investigations involving the Irish Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (DAFF) and the Food Safety Authority of Ireland are continuing to determine the extent of the contamination and to identify the processors and products involved.

Though it is unlikely that such pork products would have reached the local market, however, the Food Safety Commission is advising consumers that as a precautionary measure they should not consume Irish pork and bacon products at this time.

The Food Safety Commission would like to assure the public that investigations will continue in line with new developments. The Commission assures the consumer that it will issue guidelines to the public should investigation reveal the importation into Malta of any potentially contaminated product.

In case of any further queries, consumers are being requested to contact the Department for Environmental Health on Tel Nos. 21332225 and 21337333 between 08:00hrs and 14:00hrs.

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