

SGS DIGICOMPLY

FOOD FRAUD WATCH REPORT Q1 2021

SGS

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ABOUT THIS REPORT

The Food Fraud Watch quarterly report is a summary of documented incidents in SGS Digicomply, relevant to food fraud and adulteration. Its purpose is to provide a comprehensive overview of the current records, helping food operators and other professionals in the related sectors to identify trends, emerging risks and food fraud vulnerabilities.

DATA SOURCES

The data in this report has been extracted from millions of data points collected by the SGS Digicomply Food Safety Intelligence Platform and processed by SGS experts.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

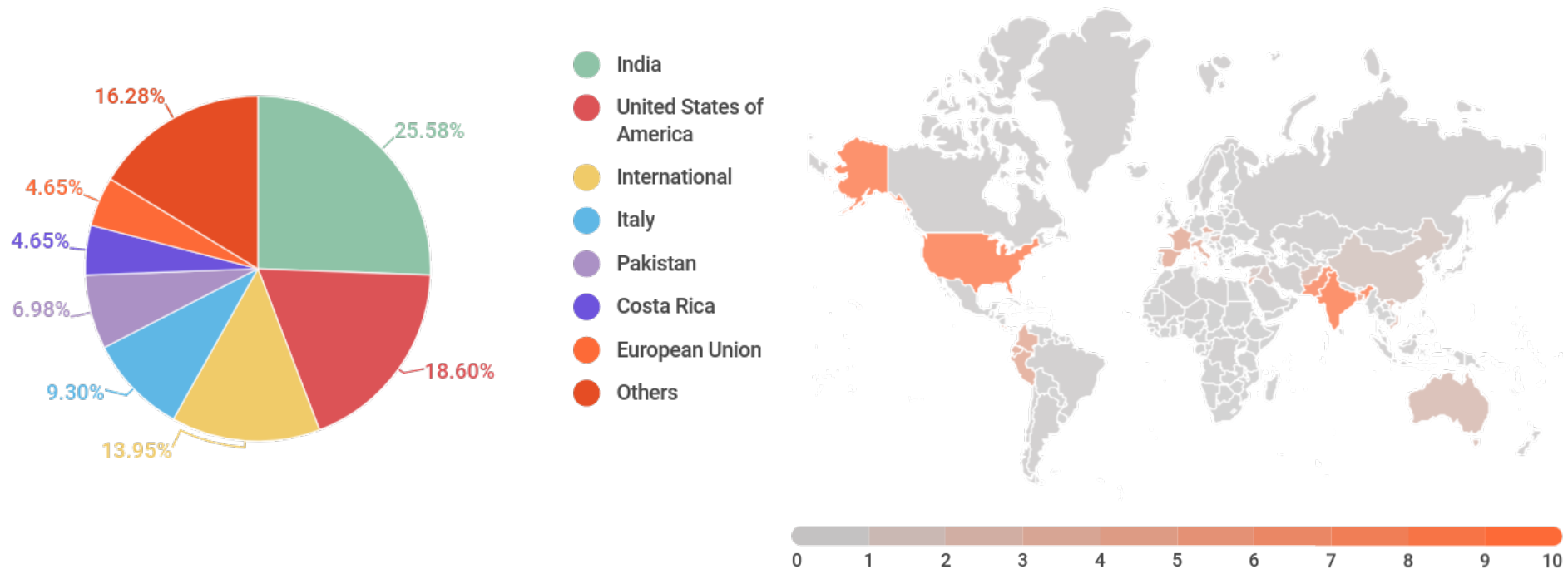


David Psomiadis (PhD) works as Head of the Laboratory and Business Development Manager at Imprint Analytics GmbH, partner lab of SGS. Since 2013, he has settled in Neutal, Austria, as a member of the founding team of Imprint Analytics. He has published more than 70 contributions in scientific journals and conferences and he holds a regular member position in international committees and working groups (eg. AOAC, CEN) related to food authenticity testing.

As the Head of the Laboratory, he is responsible for supervising and managing all operations related to the laboratory, to meet customer demands. As Business Development Manager, he leads the global Food Authenticity business strategy, brand development and collaborations within global networks and international consortia.

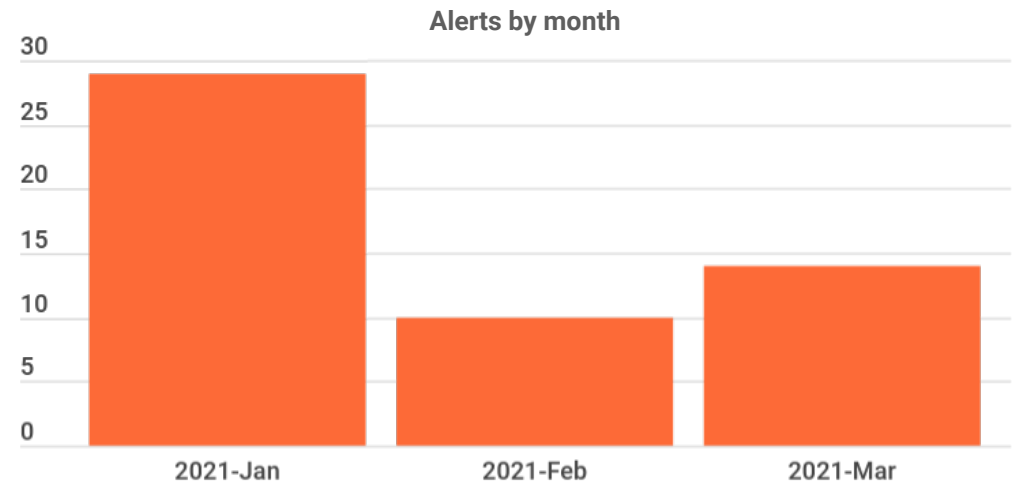
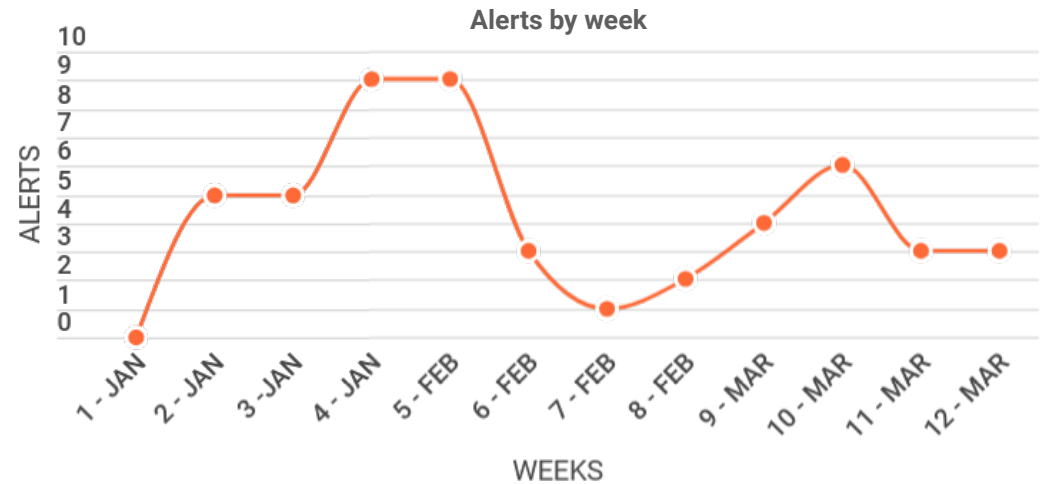
GEO LOCATION OF FOOD INCIDENTS IN Q1

The first quarter of 2021 was characterised by three hot areas regarding food fraud incidents: South Asia, USA and Europe. These regions present common patterns of higher frequency either due to more intensive inspection controls or due to increased risks of food adulteration in manufacturing stage. The latter involved incidents in India and Pakistan, where adulteration of spices, sugars, alcohol and dairy were reported. The US incidents continued their 2020 relevance with seafood while the nations in Europe with most cases were Italy followed by Spain and France. More incidents are reported from EU without having a specific country as region of incidence. The development of future fraud figures in the UK is worth to follow, after the Brexit came in place since Q1-2021. Another possible driver of increased risks was the blockade of the Suez Canal, which might incur fraud incidents in Q2-2021, especially in fresh produce.



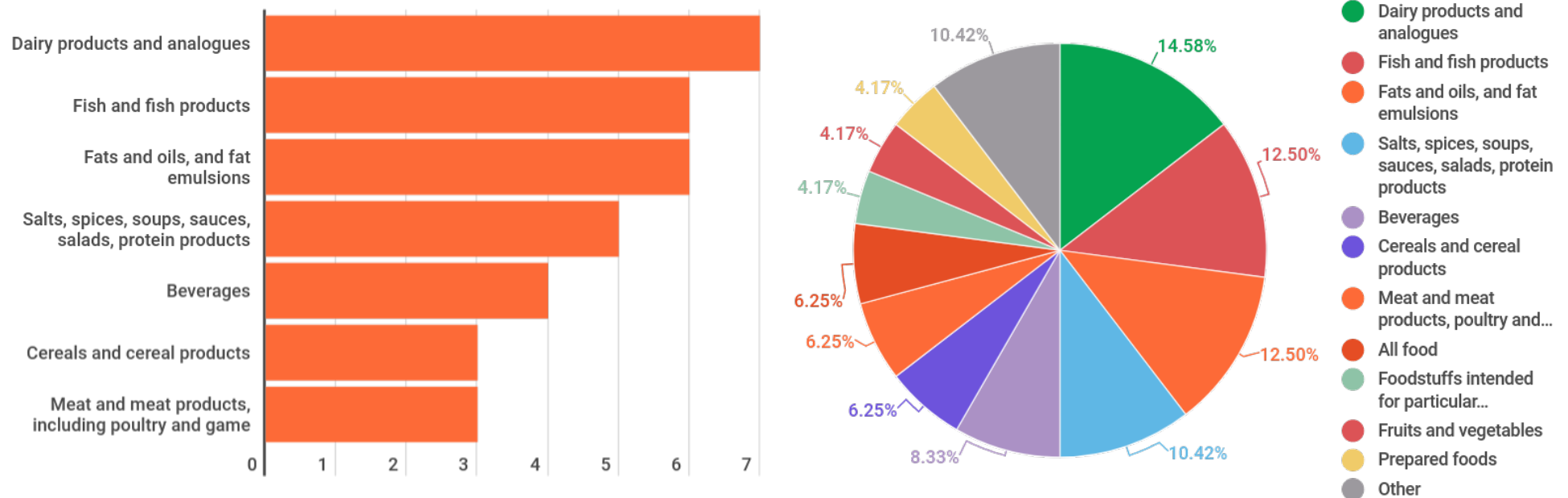
RECORDS BY DATE

The number of incidents during January 2021 was as high as during the following two months together. This can be partially explained by the increase of food fraud risks during periods of higher demand and consumption like festive seasons. The intensification of the pandemic in many parts of the world during the end of 2020 with subsequent return of stricter measures (eg. in mobility) might also have caused the gradual decrease of surveillance in Q4-2020 and consequently increased fraud risks during and after the festive period.



RECORDS BY PRODUCT CATEGORY

The incidents in the dairy products category, mainly from India and Pakistan, refer to adulteration of milk with whey, other animal fats and also due to false nutrition labels. In Europe, cheese was counterfeited or lacked traceability records. Fish and seafood stay high on the list mainly due to mislabeled products regarding species and origin. Lack of proper traceability and provenance documentation caused a number of incidents for oils (mainly olive oil) and wine (beverages). Substitution with foreign or illegal substances was the main fraud type for spices and alcohol, causing human casualties due to the latter in India. An interesting observation during Q1-2021 is the positioning of meat and meat products in the middle of the table with only a few incidents.



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