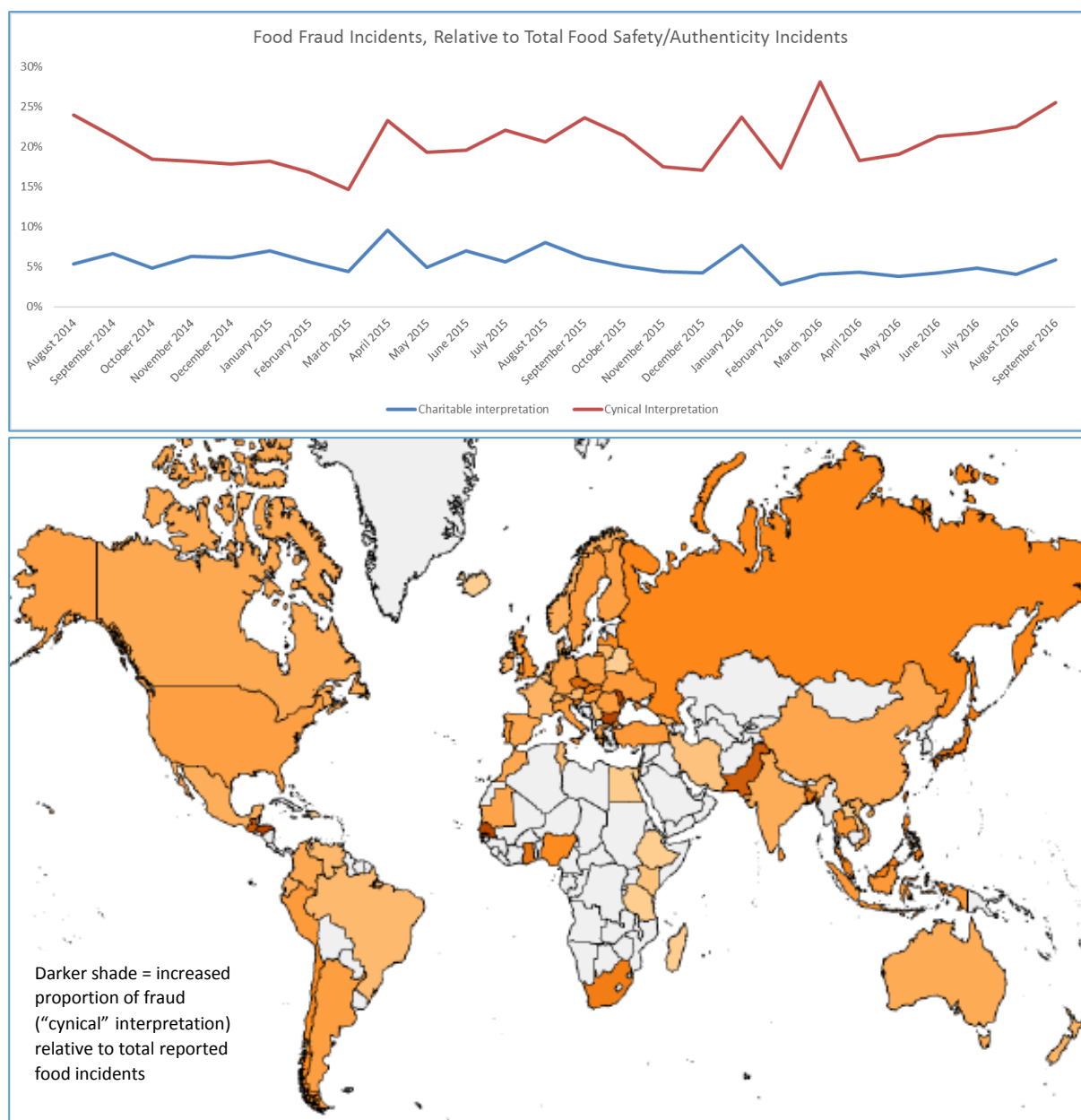


Information Sheet: Food and Feed Authenticity – Recent Trends

Prepared by John Points Consulting, November 2016, www.johnpoints.com

Deriving firm data on food fraud trends is notoriously difficult. The issue certainly has gained in profile, but this could be due to increased awareness and reporting.

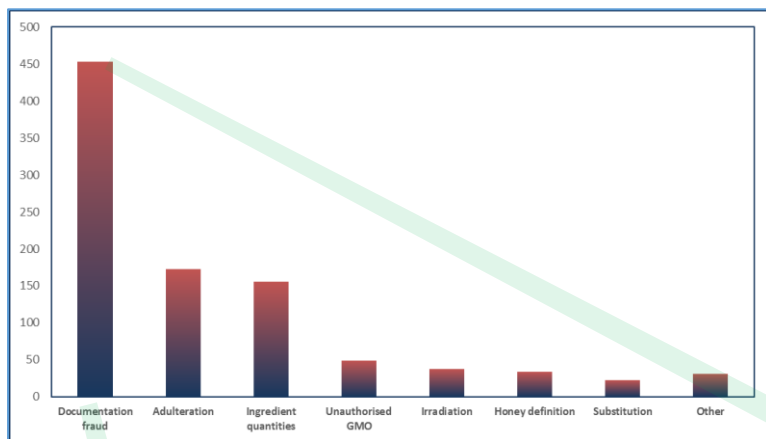
One approach is to take reported incidents (from the Horizonscan¹ database) and categorise them as either definite or possible fraud. “Possible” includes all incidents which could have either an innocent or a fraudulent interpretation, such as incorrect ingredient quantities, missing Health Certification, or undeclared colours. This gives a lower-bound (“charitable”) and an upper-bound (“cynical”) estimate for reported fraud cases. It is important to normalise these to avoid biasing towards countries that are open about publishing data; otherwise the Czech Republic, with its excellent “Food Pillory” website, would be at the top of every list. In the graph and heatmap below, data are normalised as a percentage of the total reported food contamination, safety or authenticity incidents.



Despite the increased industry attention, there is no evidence of a relative increase in food fraud incidents over the past 2 years. Russia has a generally higher incidence, but the only clearly identifiable hotspots are Pakistan (undeclared and illegal colours), South-East Europe (adulterated wine) and Western Africa (adulterated palm oil).

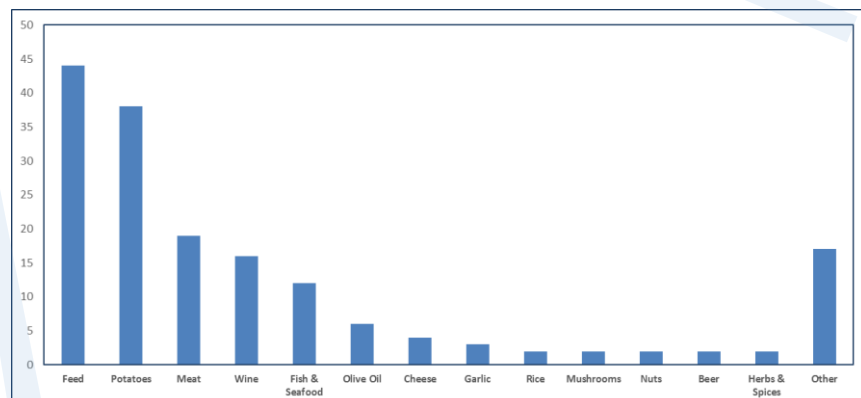
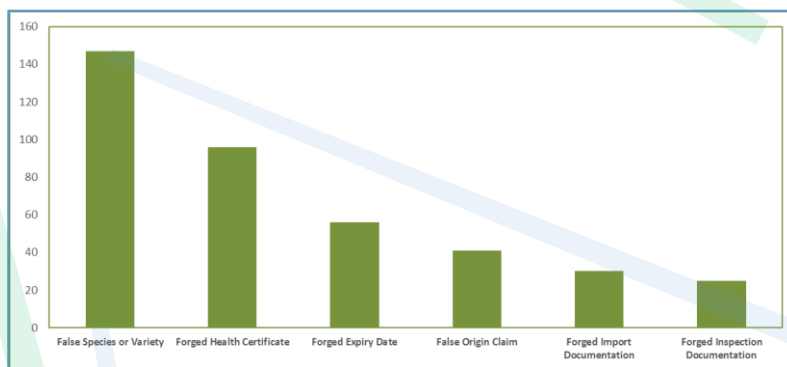
When looking at the detailed risks, it is important to remember that most confirmed food fraud is simple and straightforward paperwork forgery; expiry dates, certificates of analysis, health certificates, import certification and other documentation.

Adulteration and substitution, although important, are just one facet of food fraud. Most confirmed cases of fraudulent substitution of species or variety are not meat, fish, or spices: most are either animal feed or potatoes. Substitution of potato varieties, usually for processing, is an ongoing issue in Eastern Europe and Germany.



Absolute numbers of reported fraud incidents (“charitable” interpretation)

August 2014 – September 2016



References

- 1 Incident data sourced from Horizonscan, <https://horizon-scan.fera.co.uk>
Map graphics, www.openheatmap.com

