

FSA and FSS advise consumers on substitution of ingredients in certain food products to avoid food supply disruption

The Food Standards Agency and Food Standards Scotland are today advising consumers that some food products labelled as containing sunflower oil may instead contain refined rapeseed oil. This is happening to maintain the supply of certain food products containing ingredients that have become increasingly difficult to source because of the conflict in Ukraine.

The majority of the UK's sunflower oil comes from Ukraine and food businesses here are reporting that supplies of sunflower oil are likely to run out in a few weeks with some businesses already experiencing severe difficulties.

This has led to some food manufacturers urgently replacing sunflower oil with refined rapeseed oil before being able to make the change on the label. We are therefore advising that food products labelled as containing sunflower oil may instead have been produced using refined rapeseed oil and consumers should look out for additional information being provided by retailers and manufacturers to stay informed.

Emily Miles, FSA Chief Executive said:

"FSA and FSS have been working hard to understand the recent pressures on our food supply chain and the interim measures needed to make sure certain foods – like crisps, breaded fish, frozen vegetables and chips – remain on sale here.

"We have looked at the immediate food safety risk of substituting sunflower oil with refined rapeseed oil - particularly to people with a food allergy - and it is very low. We know allergic reactions to rapeseed oil are very rare and - if they do occur - are mild.

"Retaining consumer trust remains an absolute priority for both organisations and we are urgently working with the food industry and other partners to ensure labels on food where sunflower oil has been replaced by refined rapeseed oil are made accurate as soon as possible."

The FSA and FSS are working across government and the food industry to understand the challenges and ensure food supply is maintained in a way that is safe and in the interests of consumers.

Andrea Martinez-Inchausti, Deputy Director of Food at the British Retail Consortium, said:

"The war in Ukraine has disrupted supplies of sunflower oil to the UK. Where sunflower oil exists as an ingredient in products, retailers will be substituting it with other safe oils, such as rapeseed oil. Retailers are looking to change product labels as soon as possible; where sunflower oil is a key ingredient, such as crisps, retailers will imprint information on substitute oil onto existing labels. Retailers' customer

services will be answering questions on all their own brand products."

The FSA and FSS have published the [rapid risk assessment into the substitution of sunflower oil with refined rapeseed oil](#) as part of our commitment to making public the science and evidence underpinning our advice and guidance.