

## Summaries

*Justitiële verkenningen* (Judicial explorations) is published six times a year by the Research and Documentation Centre of the Dutch Ministry of Security and Justice in cooperation with Boom Lemma uitgevers. Each issue focuses on a central theme related to judicial policy. The section Summaries contains abstracts of the internationally most relevant articles of each issue. The central theme of this issue (no. 2, 2014) is *Food crime*.

### **The fight against food fraud in the Netherlands**

*K.E. Gussow and L.H. Kuiper*

Food fraud has recently been recognized as a blind spot among regulators. In Europe, few organizations have experience with large cases of food fraud; also scientific knowledge into this type of crime is limited. This article aims to contribute experience to this gap. The NVWA-IOD is a specialist crime unit in the Netherlands, carrying out criminal investigations into, among other things, food fraud. This article gives insight into numbers of cases dealt with by the NVWA-IOD in the past fifteen years, for different types of food fraud. Nine criminal cases, concentrating on suspects within trade and industry, are analyzed in more detail from a basic criminological perspective. There is looked into, among other things, the motive, the opportunity and the product. The cases discussed relate to products such as meat, eggs, fish and dairy products. The main motive for committing food fraud is making money; the gain makes fraudulent activities attractive and financially beneficial. Opportunities refer mainly to ambiguous laws and regulations and little supervision. Also, evasive behavior was found. To combat food crime, specialist knowledge of tempting opportunities is essential.

### **Food fraud vulnerability in the meat sector**

*S. van Ruth and W. Huisman*

Food fraud is as old as mankind but has advanced in the last decades. Fraud regarding the gross composition of food has progressed in the direction of the addition of unconventional adulterants. Furthermore, consumers are more and more interested in how and where their foods are produced and pay price premiums for organic foods, fair

trade, animal welfare considering, and sustainable food products. Since these products are very similar to their conventional counterparts in terms of composition, they provide an additional challenge. The knowledge regarding occurrence, type of meat fraud, causes and damage caused to the sector is limited. There is a need for extensive identification of the vulnerabilities and criminogenic factors. These insights offer leads for detection and prevention. The article deals with a first step into the inventory of these vulnerabilities and factors affecting meat fraud, by assessing fraud risks related to products, companies and the meat supply chain.

### **Black caviar. On criminal networks, illegal trade and the threat to the sturgeon**

*D. Siegel and D.P. van Uhm*

The trade in caviar has a rich and colorful history, influenced over thousands of years by many cultures, societies and in the last decades by regulation. Based on qualitative research, including literature, media analysis and interviews, this article presents the first preliminary results of the authors' ongoing research. The value of caviar is historically discovered in the context of social change, political relationships and environmental change and the role of organized crime is described, as the scarcity of caviar has offered the unique opportunity to fish illegally, smuggle and trade contraband to mainly European countries with millions in profits. Although due to overexploitation 'wild caviar' is increasingly difficult to obtain, the demand in the context of exclusivity and scarcity remains intact by the upper class society desire for edible gold.

### **Counterfeit plant protection products and food crime**

*Ch.I. Sambrook*

Counterfeiting is a major worldwide crime problem and one with demonstrable links to organized criminality. The production and distribution of fake plant protection products is no exception, the proliferation of such products within the European Union owing much to the abuse of parallel trading arrangements and the high profit, low risk opportunity it presents to organized crime groups. It is also a particularly insidious crime; these chemicals are untested and unapproved for use and they pose a serious economic, environmental and human health threat. Of particular concern is the potential for residues from

illegal pesticides to persist in harvested crops to then be found in foodstuffs. It is argued that this should be regarded as a food crime.

### **Towards an European approach of food fraud**

*J.A. van den Akker and E.M.R. de Lange*

Have recent food fraud cases, combined with a lack of priority and regulatory framework for combating food fraud and increased involvement of organized crime, caused a crisis of the European food chain? To what extent does this necessitate a European response? This article argues that the crisis in consumer confidence caused by cross-border fraud must be urgently addressed at national and EU level and that combating food fraud should be a priority next to the enforcement of food safety rules. Necessary changes of EU rules applicable to the sector and its controls should be made through the EU decision-making process. The European Parliament recommends an approach that should define food fraud to enable the development of EU policy, facilitate cross-border cooperation and information-sharing between member states and encourage sector initiatives, whereas its enforcement should focus on altering the type of controls by public authorities and installing tougher penalties.

### **The role of Europol in the fight against food crime**

*Ch. Vansteenkiste and T. Schotte*

Food fraud can be seen as a form of counterfeit, which has increased globally because of technological developments. The authors, both working for the European Union police agency Europol, give several examples of the involvement of organized crime groups in food fraud. They describe the cooperation between Europol in its coordinating role with various national police forces in tracing food crime and arresting the perpetrators. Also the involvement of the European Union agencies Eurojust and Frontex in special operations like OPSON to unmask illegal trade in counterfeit foodstuff are described.