

News

Four food scandals that left a bitter taste in the mouths of South Africans

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Meat company Karan Beef has been slapped with a R2.7-million fine.

Image: iStock/ meat butcher

Following an investigation that began in 2017, the Competition Commission of South Africa has fined well-known beef supplier, Karan Beef, R2.7-million for contravening the Competition Act. According to a [statement released by the commission](#) on Monday, Karan Beef admitted guilt after being found to have been "dividing markets in the supply of processed beef products."

Irvin & Johnson (I&J) were found guilty of colluding with Karan Beef. An agreement between the two companies restricted Karan Beef from selling products to "certain customers which were reserved for I&J. I&J is disputing the findings and according to [BusinessLIVE](#) will now take the matter to the Competition Tribunal. The commission recommended that I&J be fined an amount equal to 10% of its annual turnover.

Food has been at the centre of a number of scandals in South Africa this year. Here's three more scandals that turned us off our lunch.

Listeria Outbreak

Tiger Brands was hit with a listeriosis outbreak in their Polokwane factory. The World Health Organisation describes listeria as a disease caused by bacteria found in processed meat. Its symptoms include muscle pain, diarrhoea and fever. The condition is treatable but may prove fatal for people with a weak immune system.

By the time [Health Minister Aaron Motsoaledi declared the end of the outbreak in September](#), 203 people had died and Tiger Brands still couldn't confirm the source of the outbreak. "Tiger Brands has done every inspection and

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The [import](#) of chicken from the US to SA began in March after the two countries agreed on the terms for SA to be included in the African Growth and Opportunity Act. "You will find these products generally at third tier supermarkets, as they are aimed at lower income groups," said Kevin Lovell, chief executive at the South African Poultry Association.

Lovell went on to say that the imported chickens were defrosted and repackaged left-overs of the US market. The outrage that followed was not only around the quality of the chickens, but also the financial impact on the local poultry industry.

[Rainbow Chicken Limited Foods](#) (RCL Foods) took a knock and were forced shed 1,200 employees. Food and Allied Workers Union spokesperson August Mbhele said the job cuts were not just limited to RCL Foods. "Even smaller abattoirs and poultry farmers have indicated that they will be forced to close shop because the cost of running these entities is escalating and they are not recovering these costs because there are cheap imports dumped here from other countries."

Fake food?

When several videos allegedly showing "fake" food being sold at spaza shops trended online, the department of [health](#) launched an investigation. The department received complaints that eggs, baked beans, cold drinks and meat were among the items being produced fraudulently by spaza shop owners. Fake food refers to products that are manufactured privately but illegally labelled as well-known brands.

Despite the public outcry, the minister told journalists at a press conference that after more than 400 shops were inspected, no "fake" food had been found.



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