



NATIONAL AUTHORITY FOR TRADE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

PRESS RELEASE

Unlicensed raw milk packaging, cat litter next to food, serious hygiene problems in the XIXth district - immediate NATCP intervention, restored operation

The National Authority for Trade and Consumer Protection (NATCP) carried out a full inspection of a retail and wholesale unit in the 19th district of Budapest, based on a public interest report and with the assistance of National Tax and Customs Administration (NTCA) patrols. The inspection revealed serious hygiene and food safety deficiencies but the shop operator took immediate action to remedy the problems following the inspection and the follow-up inspection showed significant progress.

The investigation found that the exterior and interior of the shop was in a state of poor repair, the lack of cleaning and maintenance posed a serious risk. A storage area off the shopping area was found to be in a chaotic and disorganised state with expired and non-expired food, various tools, household textiles and cat food. The cat litter found in the room made it clear stray animals were not excluded, which in itself posed a serious hygiene risk. In the premises, which functioned as a changing room for employees, the shop operator also carried out food production activities, including the sale of raw milk from bottled cans for market sale. This activity is subject to an official authorisation and strict hygiene conditions, which the company did not comply with.

It is important to note that raw milk without proper heat treatment is a particularly risky food, as it can naturally contain pathogenic bacteria (e.g. *Salmonella* spp., *Listeria monocytogenes*, *Escherichia coli*) and micro-organisms that can spread infections of animal origin and can be seriously harmful to human health. If the milk is bottled under inadequate hygienic conditions the risk of contamination and spread of infection is multiplied, which was increased in the case above. The bottled raw milk was stored unmarked and untraceable in the cold store making it unsafe for consumption. During the inspection the firm destroyed the unmarked lots on its own initiative.

Other shortcomings found by the authority included expired foodstuffs, products with non-Hungarian language markings and olive oils without a certificate of origin, the marketing of which was blocked.

Due to the serious irregularities, the NATCP temporarily suspended the activities of food distributors and also decided to suspend immediately the activities related to food production. The National Food Chain Safety Office (Nébih), which is competent in this matter, will carry out the related administrative procedure.

The business took immediate action to address the problems and during a follow-up inspection two days later, the authority found significant progress: the warehouse had been cleaned, painted, inappropriate items removed, the commercial area tidied up and the bottling of raw milk had been stopped.

The President of the NATCP, Dr. Lilla Németh-Weingartner noted that "the National Authority for Trade and Consumer Protection attaches the utmost importance to the control of food distribution in order to protect the health of consumers. All food businesses must fully comply with the relevant hygiene and traceability requirements. This inspection has once again shown that

swift and decisive action by the authorities is not only necessary but also effective in ensuring the safety of Hungarian families and promoting the lawful behaviour of businesses."

Compliance with the legislation is strictly monitored by the Authority and as shown in the example above, two days can be enough to get things working properly. Against this background, the NATCP will continue to carry out continuous and rigorous checks to protect consumers.

12 June 2025.

National Authority for Trade and Consumer Protection