

Common complaints about insects in food

The following is a list of food complaints that due to farming methods, the nature of the food and the subsequent processes, are sometimes unavoidable and would not result in us taking any action.

I have opened a jar of strawberry jam and I have found a wasp inside the jar. What should I do?

Wasps or fruit flies that tend to be attracted to ripe fruits sometimes accidentally become included in the product during harvesting. A small number of these insects can be missed during the sorting and manufacturing process as they are small and light. They are harmless and we advise you to contact the manufacturer.

I have opened a tin of tomatoes and have found a maggot inside, how did it get in there?

Small grubs can be found in tinned vegetables. They can be quite long (3-4cm) greenish brown to cream in colour with dark bands. These can look very much like maggots or caterpillars but they are moth larvae. The moth larvae live inside the food and are difficult to spot when the vegetable is being grown or processed. EC directives put limits on the amount of pesticide residues in food so there isn't much more that the industry can take to stop this from happening. The larvae are killed and sterilised during the canning process and are harmless. These larvae can also be found in frozen vegetables such as sweetcorn.

I have found some small grey specks in my flour, they appear to be moving! and now I think I have seen some in the sugar. What are they, where do they come from?

These are **psocids**, commonly known as booklice. They are tiny insects that are often associated with packaged dry goods such as flour, milk powder, sugar or semolina. Psocids can be found living in food cupboards, living in wall crevices and kitchen units. They are associated with dark warm humid places and are **not** caused by poor hygiene or caused by the shop or manufacturer. They are harmless, but if you find them you can take the following actions to get rid of them;

- Throw away all infected food.
- Use a **dry** cloth to clean the cupboard
- Dry the joints in the cupboard using a hairdryer.

How do I prevent Psocids?

- Keep your kitchen and cupboards as dry and ventilated as possible. E.g If your kettle is located on a worktop beneath a cupboard; this can create humid conditions in the cupboard above.
- Ensure that once opened, dried food should be stored in a clean airtight container.