

Beat: News

Plastic in Snickers bar prompts Mars recall in 55 countries.

Snickers.

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USPA NEWS - Plastic in Snickers bar prompts Mars recall in 55 countries.

Mars Inc has recalled chocolate bars and other products in 55 countries, mainly in Europe, due to choking risk after a piece of plastic was found in a Snickers bar in Germany.

All of the recalled products, which include Mars, Snickers and Milky Way bars, were manufactured at a Dutch factory in Veghel, a Mars spokeswoman said on Tuesday. They were sold in European countries including Germany, France and Britain, and in certain countries in Asia.

The recall, in effect since Monday, follows a Jan. 8 complaint from a consumer in Germany, she said, who found red plastic in a Snickers bar and sent it back to the company.

"We cannot be sure that this plastic was only in that particular Snickers," a spokeswoman from Mars Netherlands said. "We do not want any products on the market that may not meet our quality requirements, so we decided to take them all back."

It was not immediately clear how much the complex recall would cost the company, which is unlisted and therefore does not disclose detailed financial information. The spokeswoman declined to comment on financial implications of the recall, which is the first to affect the factory.

Time delays between customer complaints and recalls are not uncommon since companies often receive notices, some fraudulent, about foreign objects in food, said Stephen Robb, a partner at Weightmans LLP in Leicester, who represents manufacturers and their insurers on product liability matters.

Consumer product recalls can result in heavy reputational and financial hits, as Nestle learned last year when it recalled its Maggi noodles from India after a package was found to have unsafe levels of lead.

Cadbury's 2006 recall of more than 1 million chocolate bars after a salmonella outbreak cost that company roughly 20 million pounds.

Mars Netherlands said it was working closely with the Dutch food safety authority on the matter, according to a statement.

The recall affected all Mars and Snickers products, Milky Way Minis and Miniatures as well as certain kinds of Celebrations confectionery boxes with best-before dates ranging from June 19, 2016 to Jan. 8, 2017. Those dates may not be the same in other countries, the spokeswoman said.

Mars, based in Mount Olive, New Jersey, is one of the world's biggest food companies, with 29 chocolate brands including M&M's, Galaxy, Twix, Bounty and Maltesers. Aside from chocolate, Mars makes Wrigley gum, Uncle Ben's Rice, Dolmio pasta sauce and Pedigree pet food.

(Additional reporting by Hans Seidenstuecker in Frankfurt, Lisa Baertlein in Los Angeles and Thomas Escritt in Amsterdam; Editing by Mark Trevelyan and Andrew Hay)

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