

# Recall Trend Report

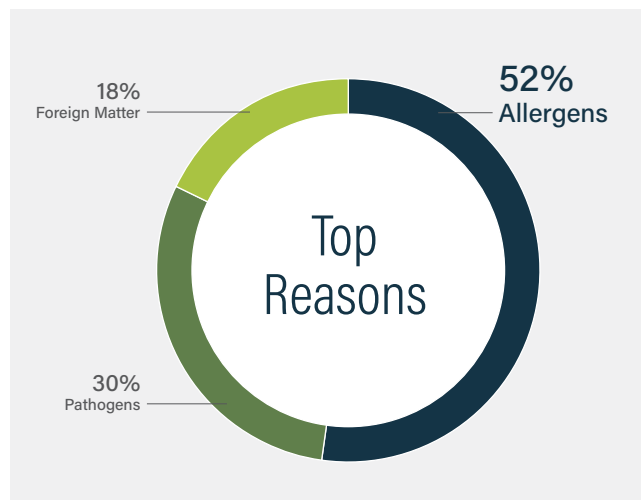
JANUARY - APRIL 2020



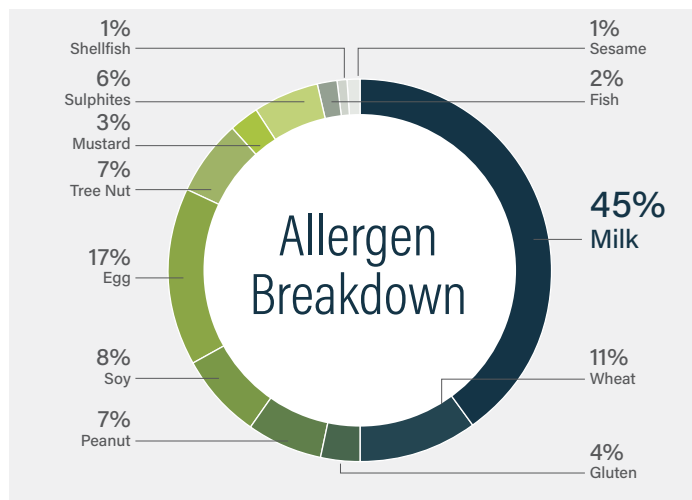
As coronavirus challenges the food industry, consumer goods continue to be recalled and are reported by FoodTrack as usual. The following data in this trend report calls out the trends found between January 1, 2020 and April 30, 2020.

The top three reasons for recall across the U.S. and Canada during these months were Allergens, Pathogens, and Foreign Matter (Graph 1). Food allergen warnings have been dominated by milk, standing at 45% (Graph 2).

**FDA, FSIS, & CFIA Food Recalls**



GRAPH 1



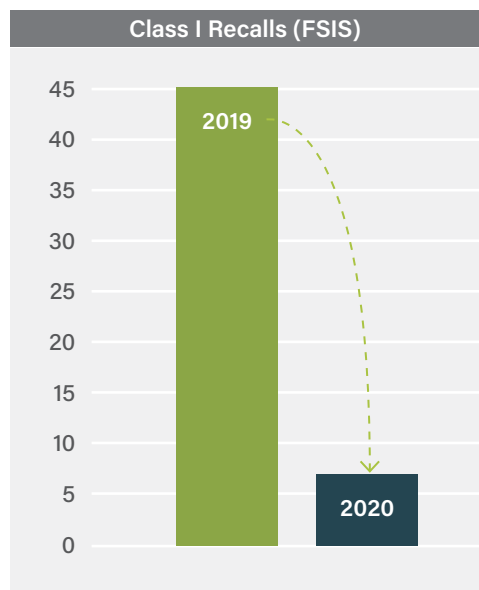
GRAPH 2

Though COVID-19 is not transmissible by food, we have clearly seen the effects it has on our industry. Supply chain disruptions have upended businesses as consumer demand shifts, rippling out to an understaffed transportation industry impacted by lock-downs. Compounding this, food processing plants are grappling with containing worker outbreaks, resulting in halted production and closures. On top of it all, federal regulations have been relaxed at the same time that inspections are halted or delayed. This creates a ripe environment for food safety failures.

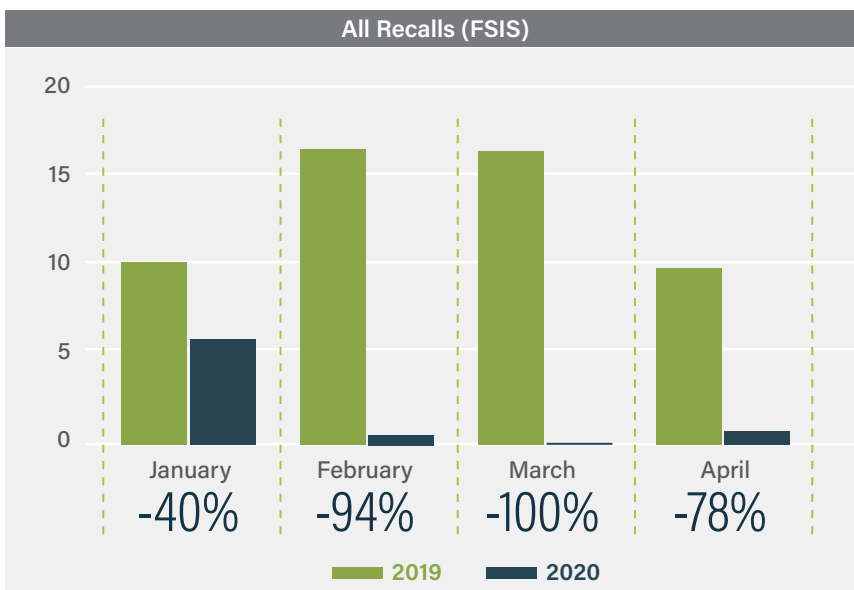
Graph 3 shows a dramatic decrease from 46 Class I FSIS recalls in Jan–Apr 2019 to only 7 for the same period in 2020. Graph 4 demonstrates the unprecedented decline in all FSIS recalls reported in the U.S., with a remarkable drop to 0 recalls in March.

The significance of this decline to our food safety assurance becomes apparent as we consider the role a steady number of recalls has in a working system focused on prevention of foodborne illness outbreaks. When the food safety plans and inspections are operating as they should, targeted recalls ensure harmful products never make it to the shelves.

**FSIS Recalls January – April**



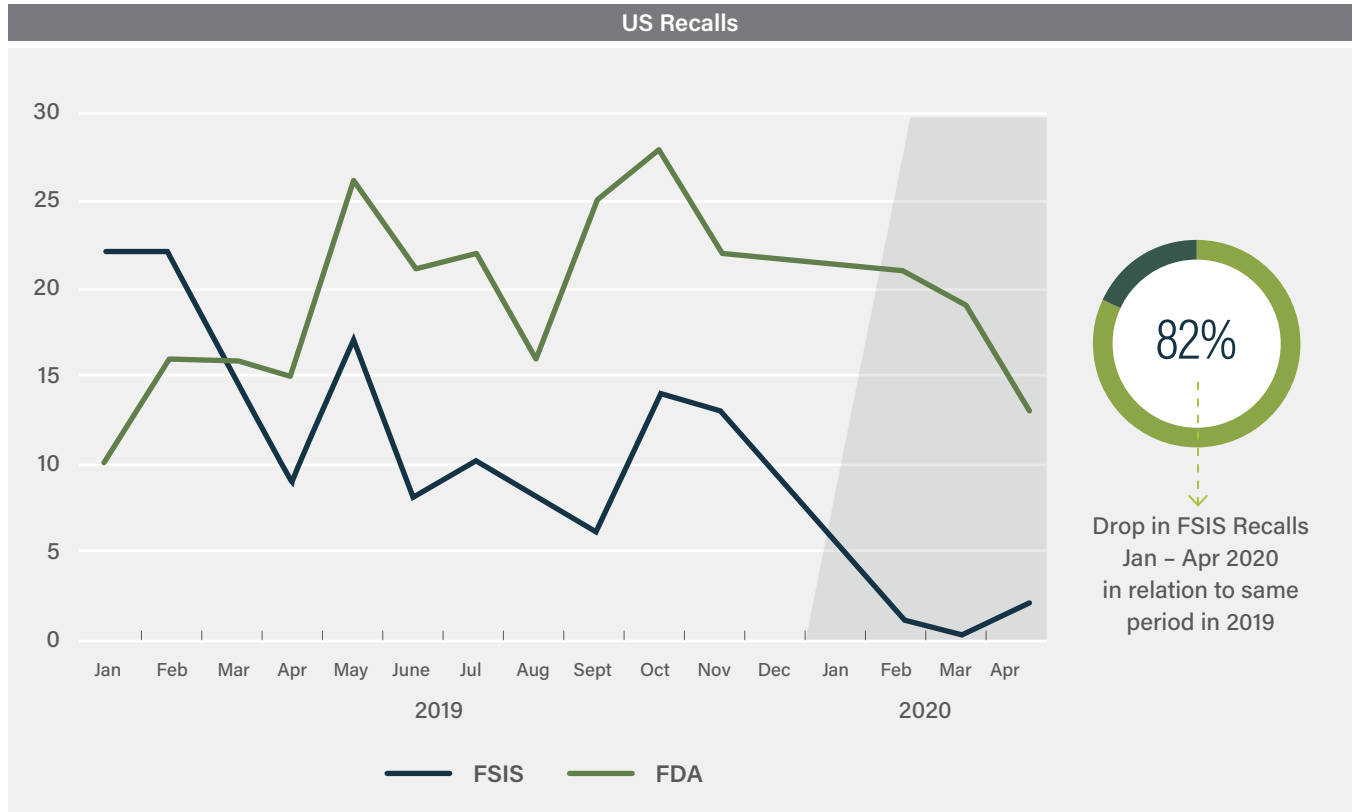
GRAPH 3



GRAPH 4

As foodborne illness investigations have diminished, the number of food recalls reported has rapidly declined. Steady since 2017, the average number of USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) recalls has been 33 per quarter; but, in Q1 of 2020, there were only 7. This reduction coincides with U.S. regional lock-downs, especially in March, as it reached the baseline of 0 recalls.

When directly compared to the same time period (January–March) in 2019, total FSIS Recalls in 2020 were down 82% from the previous year (*Graph 5*).



GRAPH 5

We are still in the early stages here, and clear trends have yet to develop. The effects of the virus will undoubtedly impact the food industry for months, and possibly even years, to come. As the pandemic evolves, **FoodTrack will continue to track these trends and report accordingly.**

If you have any inquiries about this report or if you are not already subscribing to our COVID-19 Daily Round-up, please email [amelesius@foodtrack.net](mailto:amelesius@foodtrack.net).