

## Mouse found baked into loaf of bread

Britain's biggest food producer has been fined nearly £17,000 after a father making sandwiches for his children found a mouse baked into a loaf of bread.



Photo: SWNS

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Stephen Forse, 41, spotted the rodent squashed into the crusts of the Hovis Best of Both loaf.

The animal was missing its tail, raising fears it might already have been eaten.

Premier Foods, which makes the bread, was fined £16,821.14 after the firm admitted it had failed to ensure all stages of food production were protected against contamination.

Oxford Crown Court heard how Mr Forse, from Kidlington, Oxon., bought the £1 loaf from his local Tesco store in January last year.

He took the loaf home and was making cheese sandwiches for his six-year-old twins Matthew and Jonathan and daughter Hannah, eight, when he noticed the 4cm long animal squashed into the corner of the crusts.

[Bean sprouts salmonella warning \(http://www.telegraph.co.uk/health/healthnews/8032522/Salmonella-warning-over-bean-sprouts.html\)](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/health/healthnews/8032522/Salmonella-warning-over-bean-sprouts.html)

Mr Forse, a police driving instructor, said: "I noticed a dark coloured object imbedded in the corner of three or four slices.

"Initially I thought it was where the dough had not mixed properly prior to baking.

"As I looked closer I saw that the object had fur on it.

"I continued to prepare some sandwiches for the children from another loaf of bread that was in the fridge, checking carefully each slice in turn as I still felt quite shaken.

"As I was feeling ill I couldn't face eating anything myself. I sat with the children as they ate theirs.

"My eight-year-old daughter actually commented at one point 'why aren't you eating anything daddy?' to which I just replied that I wasn't hungry."

Mr Forse gave the loaf to environmental health officers who took it away for forensic analysis.

At a hearing on Friday Premier Foods pleaded guilty to failing to ensure all stages of food production were protected against contamination.

They also admitted failing to maintain a robust pest management system at its British Bakeries site in Mitcham, London.

Council technical officer Aileen Smith said: "Mice harbour disease, particularly salmonella which can result in severe diarrhoea, vomiting, fever and can be fatal to children, the elderly or those with a compromised immune system."

Council vice chairman George Reynolds added: "We just cannot tolerate sloppy standards when people's health is concerned.

"I cannot imagine what this must have been like for Mr Forse and his family but I am thankful, at least, that their health appears not to have been affected."

Tesco yesterday declined to comment.

Premier Foods is Britain's largest food producer, with an estimated 99 per cent of UK households buying their products and 47.2million people consuming their food.

A spokesman said: "We apologise profusely for the distress caused as a result of this isolated incident."

He said production was stopped when the firm was told of the find and there had been a 'thorough investigation'.

He added: "There was no evidence of mice within the bakery and no history of any similar issues."

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