

《意大利突击检查圣诞礼品与食品》

圣诞节来临前夕，500多名意大利卫生与安全检查员与军警一起出动，对全国各地的圣诞礼品和食品进行突击检查。

More than 500 health and safety inspectors with the Italian military police mounted a massive nationwide holiday crackdown on unsafe Christmas toys and food.

According to Italian authorities, 350 tons of food and 50,000 decorations and dangerous toys valued at approximately 3 million euros were seized in "Operation Santa Claus." Agents in 38 separate units conducted surprise inspections of warehouses and producers of traditional sweets, fish and meat destined for Italian Christmas tables, according to Italian media reports. More than 2,000 violations were signalled, resulting in the closure of 89 structures.

In Bologna, chocolate, pistachios, nuts and raisins (some four years expired) were found stored in dirty conditions, crawling with cockroaches.

In Caserta, dried cod – an Italian holiday staple – was found to have been rehydrated with non-potable water and whitened with lime to make it seem fresher than it was. Four tons of trout were confiscated from a farm near the city of Udine because there was no proper documentation of necessary fish farm sanitary regulations.

In Milan, 27,000 Christmas ornaments were seized that had been Made in China and imported into Italy from France, but lacked proper safety requirements and labelling. Agents seized another 21,000 Christmas toys, candles, ornaments and lights in Parma, Genoa, Rome and Ancona.

With an economic crisis squeezing the nation, Christmas spending is expected to be down significantly this year in Italy. According to consumer associations Federconsumatori and Adusbef, Italians' buying power has declined 13.2 percent since 2008, to an estimated 148 euros per family this Christmas. The percentage of Italians not giving gifts also rose from 11.8 percent in 2011 to 13.7 percent in 2012, according to a survey by consumer organization Confcommercio-Format.