

First Consensus Workshop on Food Safety, **Brussels, July 10th-12th , 2002**

Residue and contaminants levels of food sold to consumers:

Food testing results from consumer organisations -

defining the problem

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Frequently Tested Aspects of Food Quality:

- Nutritional Value
- Taste
- Correct Labelling
- Packaging
- Microbiology
- Residues and Contaminants

Some Examples of our Testing Results:

- Naturally Occurring Contaminants:
 - Aflatoxins in Figs (02/2001) ↪ partially high levels
 - Aflatoxins in Hazelnuts (07/2001) ↪ traces
 - Ochratoxin A in Coffee (08/2001) ↪ moderate levels
 - Fusarium Toxins (deoxynivalenol, nivalenol, zearalenon) in Bread (02/2002) ↪ low levels
 - Other Contaminants: Nitrosamines, PAHs, Heterocyclic Aromatic Amines, Acrylamide

Environmental and Packaging Contaminants:

- Tuna Fish in Oil (09/2001)
 - ↳ moderate level of cadmium, low levels of organotin (e.g. TBT), no BADGE, no NOGE
- Smoked Salmon (07/2001)
 - ↳ moderate levels of organotin (e.g. TBT)
- Butter (04/2002)
 - ↳ traces of PCBs
- Other Contaminants: Dioxins

Pharmaceuticals:

- Honey (10/1999)
 - ↳ several samples with antibiotics residues
- Eggs (04/2000)
 - ↳ unauthorised antiparasitic agent

Pesticides:

– Flavoured Black Tea (01/2000)

↳ high levels of residues

– Organic Vegetables (10/2000)

↳ at most traces of residues

– Fruit Teas (e.g. dogrose, hibiscus, apple) (12/2001)

↳ high levels of residues, PCP as a post-harvest contaminant

– Baby Food (03/2002)

↳ no traces of pesticide residues

What do these results mean?

- **ALARM!?**
 - Every time a maximum residue limit (MRL) is exceeded, this means an acute risk for public health.
- **NO PROBLEM!?**
 - Residues at lower levels than the MRL are demonstrated safe. Even if MRLs are sometimes exceeded, this means no risk.

Current lack of knowledge

- Newly-discovered contaminants
(e.g. fusarium mycotoxins, acrylamide)
 - Possibly synergistic effects of multiple residues
 - Bound residues of pesticides and pharmaceuticals
 - Realistic consumption data
 - If residues are ubiquitous spread, there is no control group for epidemiological studies
- ↳ Levels of residues and contaminants should be **As Low As Reasonably Achievable**.

What do we need?

- Further Research
- Both extensified and intensified control activities of the food safety authorities
- More transparency