

## Results of the National Residue Control Plan and Import Control Plan for 2013 confirm a high level of safety with foods of animal origin

BfR Opinion No. 035/2015 of 1 October 2015

The National Residue Control Plan (NRCP) is a programme for examining foods of animal origin, such as meat, milk and honey, for residues and contaminants. Animal-based products from third countries are examined on the basis of the Import Control Plan (ICP).

Maximum quantities and/or maximum levels which may not be exceeded have been established in many cases for residues of pharmacologically effective substances and environmental contaminants, such as heavy metals and dioxins, in foods of animal origin. The goal of food monitoring within the scope of the NRCP and ICP is to check for compliance with these maximum quantities and levels, to disclose the illegal use of prohibited or unauthorised substances and to identify the causes of increased levels of residues and contaminants. Sampling is carried out risk-oriented.

The Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety (BVL) has presented the results of the 57,679 samples which were examined by the monitoring authorities of the federal states as part of the NRCP 2013, as well as the 1,020 samples drawn within the scope of the ICP 2013.

In the NRCP samples, residues and contaminants were detected at unauthorised levels in 478 cases (0.83%). The rate of positive findings<sup>1</sup> is therefore slightly higher than it was in 2012 (350 cases).



Of the total of 32,441 samples which were examined for substances with an anabolic effect or for unauthorised substances, only 17 were positive (0.05%). Of the 1,020 ICP samples, the legally established maximum quantities of residues and maximum levels of contaminants were exceeded in 17 instances. The exceedance rate among foods imported to the EU from third countries still lies at a low level.

The Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) has assessed the health risk of the residue findings. The data from National Nutrition Survey II were used to estimate the exposure of the various consumer groups. These data were supplemented by data from a survey on the consumption frequency of rarely eaten foods. The BfR comes to the conclusion that if consumed only once or occasionally, foods with excessive levels of residues of pharmacologically effective substances or contaminants at the levels detected do not pose a risk to consumers. In the view of the BfR, the total number of exceedances continues to lie on a low level.

The levels of heavy metals and other contaminants determined in the NRCP in offal, fatty tissue and muscle give no indication of an additional health risk to consumers in the opinion of the BfR. Even in cases in which the maximum levels for lead, cadmium or mercury were exceeded, no health impairment is to be expected given the typical eating habits of the German population. It must be emphasised, however, that the overall intake of lead and cadmium from all foods, both animal and plant-based, is high. As a basic principle, further efforts have to be made to minimise the levels of certain heavy metals and organochlorinated compounds (PCB and dioxins).

---

<sup>1</sup> Positive findings means that the maximum permitted, levels, maximum residue quantities and/or zero tolerance were exceeded.

		BfR Risk Profile: Assessment of the Results of the National Residue Control Plan 2013 and the ICP 2013 (Opinion No. 035/2015)			
<b>A</b> Who is affected	General population 				
<b>B</b> Probability of health impairment if products are consumed once only or occasionally	Practically non-existent	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Certain
<b>C</b> Severity of the health impairment if products are consumed once only or occasionally	No impairment	Slight impairment [reversible/irreversible]	Moderate impairment [reversible]	Severe impairment [reversible/irreversible]	
<b>D</b> Informative value of available data	High: Essential data are available and free of contradictions	Moderate: Several important data are missing or contradictory		Low: Numerous important data are missing or contradictory	
<b>E</b> Controllability by the consumer	Control not necessary	Controllable through precautionary measures	Controllable by refraining from consumption	Not controllable	

Fields shaded in dark blue indicate the properties of the risk assessed in this opinion (more detailed information on this can be found in the text of BfR Opinion No. 035/2015 of 1 October 2015).

**Explanations**

The purpose of the risk profile is to visualise the risk outlined in the BfR opinion. It is not intended for risk comparisons. The risk profile should only be read in the context of the opinion.

**Line A**

Apart from the general population, children were also viewed as a special consumer group in certain instances.

**Line C**

The severity of the impairment can vary depending on the substance assessed.

**Line D**

The goal of food monitoring within the scope of the NRCP and ICP is to check for compliance with the applicable maximum levels, to disclose the illegal use of prohibited or unauthorised substances and to identify the causes of increased levels of residues and contaminants. Sampling is based on the available information and the informative value of the available data should be considered as high in this regard. Within the scope of the National Residue Control Plan and Import Control Plan, those samples are reported which are not marketable. Accordingly, the BfR makes a health assessment of these individual findings.

**Line E**

The information contained in the line "Controllability by the consumer" is of a descriptive nature and should not be seen as a recommendation by the BfR. In isolated instances, however, the BfR does recommend additional precautionary measures for certain consumer groups (e.g. lead in game meat) or complete avoidance (e.g. dioxins and PCB in sheep's liver).

BUNDESINSTITUT FÜR RISIKOBEWERTUNG (BfR)

The full version of this BfR Communication is available in German on <http://www.bfr.bund.de/cm/343/ergebnisse-des-nationalen-rueckstandskontrollplanes-und-des-einfuhrueberwachungsplanes-von-2013-belegen-hohes-mass-an-sicherheit-bei-lebensmitteln-tierischer-herkunft.pdf>