

közvetlen károsításával genotoxikus hatást válthat ki. A szakértők azt is megerősítették, hogy a vesébe jutva az OTA rákkeltő lehet. Ezért a szakértők egy ún. kitettségi tartományt számítottak ki, ami a kockázatelemzők számára lesz hasznos eszköz. Segítségével elemezni lehet az esetleges élelmiszerbiztonsági aggodalmakat, amik abból származnak, hogy egyes élelmiszerekben és takarmányokban olyan anyagok találhatóak, amik egyszerre genotoxikusak és rákkeltők.

Korábbi állásfoglalásában az EFSA felállított egy tolerálható heti bevitt, aminek alapja a vesére gyakorolt toxicitás és rákkeltő hatás mértéke.

A szakértők a kitettségi tartomány kiszámításával most egy konzervatívabb megközelítést alkalmaztak, és megállapították, hogy az egészségügyi kockázat a legtöbb fogyasztói csoport esetében fennáll. Az EFSA tudományos állásfoglalása az Európai Bizottságnál jelenleg zajló megbeszélésekben hasznosítható tájékoztatást és tanácsot ad majd arra vonatkozóan, mi legyen az OTA maximális határértéke az élelmiszerekben.

Az EFSA egyeztetéseket folytatott az érintett felekkel és a különböző résztvevőkkel az állásfoglalás-tervezettel kapcsolatban, és a beérkezett véleményeket figyelembe véve véglegesítette véleményét.

### ***Listeria* fagyasztott zöldségekben: a kockázatok csökkentésének lehetősége**

**Az EFSA felmérte a *Listeria* fertőzésből származó közegészségügyi kockázatokat a fagyasztásuk előtt leforrázott zöldségek esetében. Ez az eljárás rövid ideig tartó, forró vízzel vagy forró gőzzel való kezelést jelent. A vizsgálat arra a következtetésre jutott, hogy az e termékek fogyasztásával járó kockázat alacsonyabb, mint az azonnal fogyasztható termékek, így a füstölt hal, a főtt hús, a kolbász, a pástétomok és a lágysajtok fogyasztásának kockázata – amely termékek esetében általában *Listeria* fertőzöttségre szokás gondolni.**

Az élelmiszeripari vállalatok gyakran alkalmazzák a fagyasztás előtti forrázást, mivel ez leállítja azokat az enzimeket, amelyek által vezérelt folyamatokat, amik az íz, a szín és a textúra csökkenését és sérülését eredményezik.

Az EFSA szakértői meghatározták azokat az élelmiszeripari elhárítási tevékenységeket, amiket az élelmiszeripari cégek alkalmazhatnak a fagyasztott zöldségek fertőződési kockázatának csökkentésére. Ide tartozik az élelmiszer előállítására szolgáló környezet tisztítása és fertőtlenítése, a víz, az időtartam és a hőmérséklet ellenőrzése a feldolgozás egyes fázisaiban, illetve a megfelelő címkézés.

A szakértők hangsúlyozták annak fontosságát, hogy az élelmiszer előállítására szolgáló környezetet fo-

lyamatosan monitorozzuk a *Listeria monocytogenes* kimutatása érdekében. Erre azért van szükség, mert a *Listeria* sokáig túlélhet az élelmiszer előállítására szolgáló környezetben, és onnan később behatolhat az élelmiszerekbe.

Az EFSA arra is kidolgozott ajánlásokat, hogyan csökkenthetők a kockázatok otthonainkban. A kulcselem a jó higiénés gyakorlat folytatása, vagyis a fagyasztott vagy kiolvasztott zöldségeket tiszta fagyasztóban vagy hűtőszekrényben kell tárolni, megfelelő hőmérsékleten, és a biztonságos elkészítés érdekében követni kell a címkén található utasításokat. Általában lényegesen csökkennek a kockázatok, ha a kiolvasztás után a zöldségeket alaposan megfőzzük.

A fent ismertetett munkát az EFSA egy több országot érintő eset hatására végezte el. Az eset 2015 és 2018 között 53 embert érintett, és 10 ember halálát okozta.

## **Food Safety News:**

### **WHO: Unsafe food continues to affect millions in Europe**

**The European region cannot afford to lose focus on other health threats during the coronavirus outbreak, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).**

Officials from the WHO's Regional Office for Europe said unsafe food is still affecting millions during the COVID-19 pandemic and the region must continue to improve food safety.

It is estimated that every year, 23 million people fall ill in the WHO's European region and 4,700 die from eating contaminated food, according to data published by the WHO in 2015. Unsafe food also plays a role in the socioeconomic development of countries as it affects international trade and market opportunities.

In 2019, WHO Europe warned these figures were just the tip of the iceberg and the true number of cases was unknown. The stats translate to 44 people falling sick every minute from contaminated food.

A European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) survey last year found while 2 in 5 Europeans are interested in food safety, only 1 in 5 say it is their main concern when choosing food. Unsafe food containing harmful bacteria, viruses, parasites or chemical substances causes more than 200 diseases.

“The COVID-19 pandemic is a timely reminder of the dangers posed by pathogens and the importance of good hygiene practices. Although food

is not the source or a vehicle of transmission of COVID-19, the emergency has shown all too painfully the impact these diseases can have on public health and socio-economic wellbeing,” said Bernhard Url, EFSA’s executive director.

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### **Australia sees decline in *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella***

**Rates of *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella* infections in Australia have almost halved since the lockdown because of the Coronavirus pandemic that began in March.**

The Food Safety Information Council revealed that since the COVID-19 shutdown started, reported rates of these infections per 100,000 people have declined compared to the past two years.

This shows the effectiveness of good handwashing, and that there has been less bulk catering as fewer people have been eating out or entertaining, according to the health promotion charity.

In April, 839 *Salmonella* infections were recorded compared to 1,383 in 2019. For May, 818 cases were reported versus 1,172 in the same period the year before, according to the Australian Department of Health’s National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System. These figures convert to a reporting rate of 3.4 in April compared to 5.5 in April 2019 and 3.3 in May versus 4.7 in May 2019.

For *Campylobacter*, 1,438 cases were recorded in April compared with 2,427 in 2019 and 1,830 for May compared with 2,687 in 2019. Rates were 8.5 in April 2020 compared with 14.3 the year before and 10.8 in May 2020 versus 15.8 in May the year before.

Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* (STEC) reports were also down from 51 in April 2019 to 21 this year and from 56 in May 2019 to 30 in 2020.

### **Handwashing and social distancing impact**

Cathy Moir, council chair, said in a normal year there are an estimated annual 4.1 million cases of food poisoning that result in 31,920 hospitalizations, 86 deaths and 1 million visits to doctors.

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### **Herbicides purchased for this planting season and ready for the field are now illegal**

**Just as it was looking like American agriculture was going to survive the pandemic and planting was turning out successful, rural areas learned they were losing the weedkiller dicamba to protect the soybeans they’ve put the ground.**

Xtendimax, FeXapan, and Engenia the dicamba based herbicide brands sold by Bayer, Corteva, and BASF, are no longer legal for use by farmers, according to the June 3 federal court ruling.

Dicamba is a broad-spectrum herbicide first registered in 1967. It is widely used in grain crops and grasslands and was long considered safe if used properly under label instruction.

The ruling by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit reportedly vacated the federal registrations of the three dicamba herbicide brands effective immediately. Issues of “drift damage” to nearby organic fields and whether it is “safe enough” landed dicamba in courts about four years ago.

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## **EFSA News**

### ***Pesticide residues in food: the latest trends can be followed using an internet data sheet***

**EFSA has published its annual report on pesticide residues found in food in the European Union. The report is based on data from the official national control activities carried out by EU Member States, Iceland and Norway and includes both targeted and random sampling.**

A total of 91,015 samples were analysed in 2018, 95.5% of which fell within legally permitted levels. For the subset of 11,679 samples analysed as part of the EU-coordinated control programme (random collection), 98.6% of samples were within legal limits.

The report gives a snapshot of the presence of pesticide residues in food in the EU and any possible risk to consumer health. It also provides risk managers with important information on which to base decisions regarding future control measures.

Bernhard Url, EFSA’s Executive Director, said: “For many years this report has supported the work of the European Commission and Member States in ensuring the proper use of pesticides in line with EU legislation and targets. Efficient collection and rigorous analysis of such data will continue to be of central importance in ensuring the safety of food sold in the European Union.”

The section on randomly collected data is particularly useful as it covers the same basket of products on a three-year rotation, which means upward or downward trends can be identified for specific goods.

For example, between 2015 and 2018 the proportion of samples with residue exceedances increased in bananas (from 0.5% to 1.7%), sweet peppers (1.2% to 2.4%), aubergines (0.6% to 1.6%) and table grapes (1.8% to 2.6%). On the other hand, exceedances fell in 2018 compared to 2015 for broccoli (from 3.7% to 2%), virgin olive oil (0.9% to 0.6%) and chicken eggs (0.2% to 0.1%).

This year EFSA has translated the results of the coordinated programme into browsable charts and graphs, to make the data more accessible to non-specialists.

The national control programmes are risk-based, targeting products that are likely to contain pesticide residues or for which legal infringements have been identified in previous years. These programmes give important information to risk managers but – unlike the data from the EU coordinated programme – they do not provide a statistically representative picture of the levels of residues that one would expect to find in food on the shelves in shops across Europe.

EFSA carried out a dietary risk assessment as part of its analysis of the results. This suggested that the food commodities analysed in 2018 are unlikely to pose a concern for consumer health. However, a number of recommendations are proposed to increase the efficiency of European control systems, thereby continuing to ensure a high level of consumer protection.

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### ***Ochratoxin A in food: public health risks assessed***

**EFSA has published a scientific opinion on public health risks related to the presence of ochratoxin A (OTA) in food naturally produced by moulds that can be found in a variety of foodstuffs including cereals, preserved meats, fresh and dried fruit, and cheese.**

New data that have become available since the last assessment in 2006 suggest that OTA can be genotoxic by directly damaging the DNA. Experts also confirmed that it can be carcinogenic to the kidney. Therefore experts calculated a margin of exposure (MOE). This is a tool used by risk assessors to consider possible safety concerns arising from the presence in food and feed of substances which are both genotoxic and carcinogenic.

In its previous opinion, EFSA established a *tolerable weekly intake* (TWI) based on toxicity and carcinogenicity to the kidney.

Experts have now used a more conservative approach by calculating MOE and concluded that there is a health concern for most consumers groups. EFSA's scientific advice will inform the European Commission in the ongoing discussion on maximum levels of OTA in foodstuffs.

EFSA consulted stakeholders and different parties on its draft opinion and comments received were considered when finalising it.

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### ***Listeria in frozen vegetables: how to reduce risks***

**EFSA has assessed the risks to public health from *Listeria* contamination of vegetables that are blanched – scalded in hot water or steam for a short time – before they are frozen. They conclude that the risks associated with the consumption of these products is lower than for ready-to-eat foods such as smoked fish, cooked meat, sausages, pâté, soft cheese – which are usually associated with listeria contamination.**

Food business operators often blanch vegetables before freezing them because this stops enzyme actions which can cause loss of flavour, colour and texture.

EFSA's experts identified relevant control activities that food business operators can implement to lower the risks of contamination of frozen vegetables. These range from cleaning and disinfection of the food producing environment to water, time and temperature control at different processing steps, and accurate labelling.

They stress the importance of monitoring the food producing environment for *Listeria monocytogenes*. This is because *Listeria* can persist in the food processing environment from which it can contaminate food.

EFSA also makes recommendations on how to reduce risks at home. The key is to maintain good hygiene practices such as storing frozen or thawed vegetables in a clean freezer or refrigerator at the appropriate temperature and following the instructions on labelling for safe preparation. In general, risks are much lower if vegetables are cooked properly after defrosting.

This work was triggered by a multi-country outbreak that affected 53 people and caused 10 deaths between 2015 and 2018.