# Assessment report on the findings of the National Residue Control Plan 2012 and the Import Control Plan 2012

BfR opinion No 013/2014, 23 January 2014

The National Residue Control Plan (NRCP) is a programme to monitor food of animal origin such as meat, milk and honey for residues of undesirable substances. Additionally, on the basis of the Import Control Plan (ICP), food of animal origin from countries outside of the EU is monitored.

For residues of pharmacologically active substances and environmental contaminants such as heavy metals or dioxins, Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) and Maximum Levels are set, which must not be exceeded in food of animal origin. The aim of food control as part of the NRCP and the ICP is, to check that these MRLs and Maxiumum Levels are complied with, to detect non-compliant use of substances (e.g. prohibited or non-allowed pharmacologically active substances) and to investigate the causes of increased levels of residues and contaminants. In this process, sampling is risk based.

The Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety (BVL) has presented the findings from the 58998 samples which were monitored by the official control laboratories of the federal states as part of the NRCP 2012 and from the 1338 samples of the ICP in 2012. In 350 findings (0.59 %) of the NRCP samples, residues and contaminants were non-compliant. The rate is thus lower than the findings of the year 2011 (0,73 %). In 8 findings of the 1338 samples of the ICP the limit values for residues and contaminants were exceeded. Nevertheless, the rate of exceeded limit values decreased slightly for food of animal origin imported from countries outside of the EU.

The Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) has assessed the risk of findings (NRCP, ICP) for human health in 2012. In order to estimate exposure levels for the various consumer groups, data of the National Nutrition Survey II were used. These data were complemented with data from a survey on the consumption frequency of rare foods. The BfR concludes that single or occasional consumption of monitored food (NRCP, ICP) in 2012 with non-compliant levels of residues of pharmacologically active substances and contaminants do not imply a risk to consumers. In the opinion of the BfR, the total number of positive findings are still on a low level. For example, levels above the MRLs of antimicrobial residues were found only in 0.09 % in the NRCP and 0.33 % in the ICP.

In view of the BfR, the detected levels of heavy metals and other contaminants in offals, fatty tissues and muscles give no indications on an additional health risk. Even when Maximum Levels of monitored food (NRCP, ICP) in 2012 for lead, cadmium or mercury were exceeded, no health risk is expected, given the typical eating habits of the German population. However, it must be emphasised that overall the intake of lead and cadmium from all food, i.e. both animal and plant-based food combined, is high. Therefore, levels in excess of the Maximum Levels for cadmium and lead in offals and other animal tissues are not acceptable. Further efforts are required to minimise the levels of certain heavy metals and organochlorinated compounds (PCB and dioxins).

| | BfR risk profile: Assessment on the findings of the National Residue Control Plan 2012 (Opinion No. 13/2014) | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **A Who is affected** | **General population** | | | | |
| **B Probability of health impairment if products are eaten once-only or occasionally** | Practically non-existent | **Unlikely** | Possible | Likely | Certain |
| **C Severity of health impairments if products are eaten once-only or occasionally** | No impairment | Slight impairment [reversible/ irreversible] | Moderately severe impairment [reversible/ irreversible] | Severe impairment [reversible/ irreversible ] | |
| **D Informative value of the available data** | **High:** Essential data are available and free of contradictions | Medium: Some essential data missing or contradictory | Low: Large amounts of data missing or contradictory | | |
| **E Controllability by consumers** | Control not necessary | Controllable by taking precautionary measures | Controllable by refraining from consumption | Not controllable | |

Dark blue shaded fields designate the characteristics of the risk assessed in this opinion
(more detailed information on this can be found in the text of BfR Opinion No. 13/2014, 23.01.2014).

**Explanations**

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

**Row A - Affected population**
Beside the general population, in single cases children are considered as a special group of consumers.

**Row C - Severity of health impairment**
The health impairment may differ dependend on the substance assessed.

**Row D - Informative value of the available data**
The aim of food control as part of the NRCP and the ICP is, to check that MRLs and Maxiumum Levels are complied with, to detect non-compliant use of substances (e.g. prohibited or non-allowed pharmacologically active substances) and to investigate the causes of increased levels of residues and contaminants. The sampling is risk based and in this regard the informative value of the available data is high. Within the scope of the National Residue Control Plan and Import Control Plan only non-compliant samples are reported. These data are used by BfR for risk assessment.

**Row E – Controllability by consumers**
Though, in single cases, the BfR recommends precautionary measures (e.g. lead in game) or refraining from consumption (e.g. dioxins and PCBs in sheep liver) for special groups of consumers.