

Health assessment of fipronil levels in chicken meat in Germany based on the first analysis results for pullets and laying hens from the few affected businesses in Germany

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The German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) prepared a risk assessment on 30 July 2017 on the basis of a notice in the European Rapid Alert System for Foods and Feeds (RASFF): <http://www.bfr.bund.de/cm/349/health-assessment-of-individual-measurements-of-fipronil-levels-detected-in-foods-of-animal-origin-in-belgium.pdf>

On the basis of official analysis results from Germany the BfR assessed the limited available data on chicken meat. The data relate exclusively to pullets and laying hens from the few businesses affected in Germany. The data from Germany on fipronil levels reached values of up to 0.175 mg per kg in chicken meat. According to the latest available information, a product containing fipronil was used illegally in sheds in which laying hens were kept for egg production. The meat of laying hens can be used, for example, as boiling fowl. Broilers and fattening chickens are produced in separate businesses. The BfR has received no indications of the use of fipronil in businesses of this kind.

The health risk assessment of the fipronil levels was made on the basis of one instance of full utilisation of the acute reference dose (ARfD), which is defined as the quantity of a substance per kg body weight which can be ingested with one meal or in the course of one day without any recognisable health risks for consumers.

According to the latest available scientific information, this data situation shows that an acute health risk to the observed consumer groups, including children, is unlikely.

The BfR received official analysis results on chicken meat (exclusively pullets and laying hens) originating from the few affected businesses in Germany. Levels of fipronil (measured as the sum of fipronil and its sulfone metabolite) of up to 0.175 mg/kg were measured in chicken meat. If the European consumption data (EFSA PRIMo, Version 2) are used as the basis, a degree of utilisation of the ARfD of up to 23 % results for the consumer groups observed, including children. The ARfD for fipronil is 0.009 mg per kg body weight. The ARfD is defined as the quantity of a substance per kg body weight which can be ingested with one meal or in the course of one day without any recognisable health risks for consumers.

The BfR calculated a fipronil content of 0.77 mg per kg chicken meat at which the ARfD is not exceeded for any of the observed consumer groups, including children. The equivalent value for eggs is 0.72 mg per kg. These differences result from the maximum value of daily consumption upon which the calculations were based.

According to the latest available scientific information, this data situation shows that an acute health risk to the observed consumer groups, including children, through the consumption of the meat of laying hens is unlikely.

Updated information on the fipronil occurrences from the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection of the state of Lower Saxony (German only):

<https://www.ml.niedersachsen.de/aktuelles/pressemitteilungen/aktuelle-informationen-zum-fipronil-geschehen-156482.html>

More information on the subject of fipronil at the BfR website

http://www.bfr.bund.de/en/a-z_index/fipronil-201485.html



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About the BfR

The German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) is a scientifically independent institution within the portfolio of the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL) in Germany. It advises the Federal Government and Federal Laender on questions of food, chemical and product safety. The BfR conducts its own research on topics that are closely linked to its assessment tasks.

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