

Impact on potential consumer exposures to ochratoxin A from the proposed setting of maximum levels for certain dried fruits and nut products

Regulation (EC) No 1881/2006 sets maximum limits (MLs) for Ochratoxin A (OTA) in a range of products including cereals, coffee, dried vine fruit, wine, grape juice, and spices. Member States and the European Commission are presently discussing proposals to introduce additional limits for certain categories of foods including non-vine dried fruits, oilseeds and nuts.

Data on the levels of OTA in foodstuffs published since 2005 have been combined with publicly available summary data from the EFSA Comprehensive European Food Consumption Database using MS Access, MS Excel and Palisade @RISK software to assess potential intakes of OTA under a set of scenarios:

Scenario 1 – Data on levels of occurrence based on levels reported in the literature representing the position without any MLs.

Scenario 2 – Data censored using the MLs set out in the current Regulation, representing the present situation.

Scenario 3 – Data censored using proposed current MLs and proposed MLs for figs and pistachios only.

Scenario 4 - Data censored using all current and all proposed MLs.

Scenario 1 gave estimates of intake up to 43 ng/kg bw/week for high level consumers. This was below the EFSA TWI of 120 ng/kg bw/week. After applying maximum limits described in Scenario 2, high level intakes ranged up to 36 ng/kg bw/week. Average and high level intakes were on average 36% lower following the application of current maximum limits. The application of additional maximum limits (Scenarios 3 and 4) did not result in any further significant reductions in average or high level intakes.

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