

EU Policy on contaminants in food: Recent developments and outlook

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The EU legislation on contaminants Council Regulation (EEC) No 315/93 of 8 February 1993 provides that food containing a contaminant in an amount which is unacceptable from the public health viewpoint shall not be placed on the market (food can only be placed on the market when it is safe). Furthermore, it is foreseen that contaminant levels shall be kept as low as can reasonably be achieved by following good practices at all stages of the production chain and in order to protect public health, maximum levels for specific contaminants shall be established where necessary.

In recent years, regulatory levels for several contaminants have been established and updated and this to take account of the outcome of risk assessments performed by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). The maximum levels are established in [Commission Regulation \(EU\) 2023/915 of 25 April 2023 on maximum levels for certain contaminants in food and repealing Regulation \(EC\) No 1881/2006](#). Despite these frequent updates to the EU contaminants legislation, there is still a lot of work ahead!

In the presentation, recent and future developments on EU legislation on contaminants in food shall be presented. Climate change, changes in dietary patterns, novel/new foods, Green deal policies (Farm to Fork strategy, Biodiversity strategy), circular economy etc entail new challenges for the safety of the food chain. In addition, in order to continue to ensure a high level of food safety it is necessary not to address single contaminants individually but also address more attention to the combined exposure to multiple contaminants.

In addition, particular attention shall be paid to the analytical requirements and analytical challenges for an effective EU policy on contaminants in food. Indeed, for an effective risk management and enforcement, it is not only sufficient that a method of analysis is available, but the method of analysis must be able to be used for routine control, be reliable, sensitive, quick and preferably cheap.

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