

Advice 01-2013 of the Scientific Committee of the FASFC on risks of carcinogenic and/or genotoxic compounds in food: Environmental contaminants (dossier Sci Com 2011/04)

In 2008 the Scientific Committee has given an introductory advice (advice 26-2008) on relevant carcinogenic and/or genotoxic compounds in the diet. In a second advice (advice 09-2010), the Scientific Committee handled contaminants that are associated with the transformation processes. This third opinion focuses on the risks of environmental carcinogenic and/or genotoxic contaminants in food. It describes, for each contaminant studied, carcinogenicity and genotoxicity, toxicological reference values, exposure and risk characterization. The compounds studied were classified into 3 categories based on risk. Others effects than carcinogenicity and/or genotoxicity (e.g. endocrine disruptors) were also taken into account for the classification.

Given the low MOE values for arsenic and lead, the Scientific Committee considered these two compounds as of high concern for food safety and as first priority to take action to reduce exposure.

Benzene, cadmium, methylmercury, dioxins & dioxins like polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB), non dioxins like PCB, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) and toxaphene are classified as priority 2 (medium concern). Nitro-PAH, 2-nitroanisole, polybrominated biphenyls, chlordane, heptachlor, dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT) and metabolites, hexachlorobenzene, hexachlorocyclohexane (lindane included), polychlorophenols and their salts are classified as priority 3 (low concern).

In addition, the Scientific Committee has identified gaps in the scientific knowledge and makes recommendations for research and for the control of the contaminants.

The Scientific Committee considers that a distinction must be made firstly, between the overall ranking of environmental contaminants according to the priority and, secondly, the specific recommendations for certain products and compounds that are globally not the first priority, but whose certainly needed further analyzes.

The full text is available on this website in dutch and in french, respectively under the section "Wetenschappelijk Comité/Adviezen" and "Comité scientifique/Avis".