



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
HEALTH AND CONSUMERS DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

Safety of the Food chain
Chemicals, contaminants, pesticides

Brussels, 06 March 2009

Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health
Section Toxicological Safety
Conclusions of the meeting of 06 March 2009

The Standing Committee met on 06 March 2009 to assess the situation with respect to the presence of 4-Methylbenzophenone (4-MBP) and Benzophenone (BP) in cereals and other products originating from printing inks used on the food packaging.

Recent notifications under the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) have shown the migration of 4-MBP into cereals.

A survey undertaken in 2006 by the UK Food Standards Agency (UK FSA) has shown that a relevant number of products on the market contained high levels of BP¹.

At the request of the European Commission, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) is carrying out a risk assessment on 4-MBP and review the risk assessment on BP. EFSA expects to deliver its final opinion on 4-MBP and BP no later than May 2009.

On 4 March 2009 EFSA issued a statement on 4-MBP. EFSA stated that it is currently not scientifically sound to include 4 MBP into the group of substances for which the tolerable daily intake of Benzophenone applies. EFSA prepared a risk assessment based on the margin of exposure approach including an additional uncertainty factor. EFSA concluded that for adults the estimated exposure is unlikely to lead to a health concern. However, for children based on a highly conservative scenario (highest consumption and highest concentration in the cereal) a health concern, whilst unlikely, cannot be excluded.

Following the RASFF notification the European Printing Ink Association as well as the European Carton Board Manufacturers recommended to their members that printing inks containing 4-MBP and BP are not suitable for printing of food packaging unless a functional barrier is present that blocks the transfer into food also via the gasphase.

¹ <http://www.food.gov.uk/science/surveillance/fsisbranch2006/fsis1806>

The Committee endorsed the following conclusions:

- (1) Food contact materials printed with inks containing 4-Methylbenzophenone or Benzophenone should not be brought in contact with foods unless it is demonstrated in the company's in-house documentation that the transfer into food of the sum of 4-Methylbenzophenone and Benzophenone is below 0.6 mg per kg food. This can for example be ensured by an effective functional barrier made of aluminium or PET/SiO_x or an equivalent layer.
- (2) Member States are recommended to monitor the levels on foods on the market and to inform the Commission on the results.
- (3) Member States are recommended to monitor that food packers using food contact materials printed with UV cured printing techniques have documentation in place that demonstrates the application of appropriate measures to reduce the migration.
- (4) Member States are recommended to monitor that food contact material producers which use UV cured printing processes are applying good manufacturing practice as set out in Regulation (EC) No 2023/2006 and have documentation in place that demonstrates that appropriate measures are in place to reduce the migration.
- (5) The European Commission will continue to raise awareness of industry at EU level with respect to their responsibilities of ensuring that the food they produce is safe in all Member States. Member States will do the same at national level.
- (6) The European Commission and Member States will re-evaluate the situation in the light of the forthcoming final EFSA opinion and will evaluate whether there is a need for any harmonized measures at EU level.