

Brussels, XXX
[...]
[...] (2024) XXX draft

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

of XXX

on monitoring the presence of N-nitrosamines in food

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COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

of **XXX**

on monitoring the presence of N-nitrosamines in food

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 292 thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) Panel on Contaminants in the Food Chain (CONTAM) adopted a risk assessment in 2023 on the risks for human health related to the presence of N-nitrosamines (N-NAs) in food¹.
- (2) The EFSA risk assessment was confined to the 10 carcinogenic N-nitrosamines occurring in food (TCNAs). The CONTAM Panel concluded that the Margin of Exposure (MOE) for TCNAs at higher exposure levels raises a health concern.
- (3) The CONTAM Panel recommended that more occurrence data should be gathered on the presence of N-NAs also in processed foods other than processed meat (i.e. raw meats, vegetables, cereals, milk and dairy products, fermented foods, pickled preserves, spiced foods, etc.) and of products cooked in different ways, with and without the addition of nitrate and nitrite. Also data on the possible occurrence of carcinogenic N-NAs in food other than the TCNAs should be obtained. Simultaneously further work should be performed to standardise a sensitive analytical method to quantify the carcinogenic N-NAs, both volatile and non-volatile, in different food products.
- (4) More information should be gathered on the factors that lead to relatively high levels of N-NAs in certain foods in order to be able to identify the measures to be taken to avoid or reduce the presence of N-NAs in these foodstuffs.
- (5) It is therefore appropriate to recommend the monitoring of N-NAs in food, the identification of the factors resulting in their high levels, and to gather more information on the measures to be taken to avoid or reduce the presence of N-NAs in these foodstuffs.

HAS ADOPTED THIS RECOMMENDATION:

- (1) Member States with the active involvement of food business operators should monitor N-nitrosamines (N-NAs) in food, in particular cured meat products, processed fish, cocoa and derived products, beer and other alcoholic beverages, processed vegetables, cereals, milk and dairy products, or fermented, pickled and spiced foods. At least the 10 carcinogenic N-nitrosamines (TCNAs) i.e. N-nitrosodimethylamine (NDMA), N-nitrosomethylethylamine (NMEA), N-nitrosodiethylamine (NDEA), N-nitrosodipropylamine (NDPA), N-nitrosodibutylamine (NDBA), N-nitrosomethylaniline (NMA), N-nitrososarcosine (NSAR), N-nitrosomorpholine

¹ EFSA CONTAM Panel (EFSA Panel on Contaminants in the Food Chain, Scientific Opinion on the risk assessment of N-nitrosamines in food. EFSA Journal 2023; 21(3):7884, 278 pp. <https://doi.org/10.2903/j.efsa.2023.7884>

(NMOR), N-nitrosopiperidine (NPIP) and N-nitrosopyrrolidine (NPYR) should be analysed.

- (2) The sampling for monitoring purposes is recommended to be done in accordance with Regulation (EC) 333/2007². The recommended methods of analysis are based on tandem mass spectrometry (MS/MS) coupled either to liquid (LC-MS/MS) or gas chromatography (GC-MS/MS). Other methods of analysis for example using detection via thermal energy analyzer (TEA) can be applied, provided that evidence is available showing that they generate reliable results for the individual N-NAs.

The limit of quantification (LOQ) for the determination of each N-nitrosamine should be lower than 1 µg/kg for the TCNA and not be higher than 5 µg/kg for other N-NAs when analysed.

- (3) Member States, with the active involvement of food business operators, should carry out investigations to identify the factors leading to high levels in food, the identification of the factors resulting in their high levels, and to gather more information on the measures to be taken to avoid or reduce the presence of N-NAs in these foods.

Member States and food business operators should provide to EFSA, by 30 June of each year, the data for the previous year for compilation into one database in line with the requirements of EFSA's Guidance on Standard Sample Description (SSD) for Food and Feed and EFSA's additional specific reporting requirements³.

Done at Brussels,

For the Commission

Member of the Commission

² Commission Regulation (EC) No 333/2007 of 28 March 2007 laying down the methods of sampling and analysis for the control of the levels of trace elements and processing contaminants in foodstuffs, OJ L 88, 29.3.2007, p. 29. ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2007/333/oj>

³ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/call/call-continuous-collection-chemical-contaminants-occurrence-data-0>