# Contaminants in food: clarification of certain maximum levels

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EU clarifies maximum levels for contaminants affecting cereals, oats, and rice

Commission Regulation (EU) 2024/1756 of 25 June 2024 amending and correcting Regulation (EU) 2023/915 on maximum levels for certain contaminants in food

## Update

The EU has clarified the rules on maximum levels of certain contaminants relating mainly to cereals, oats, and rice set out in Regulation 2023/915. The clarifications include applicable rules on sampling and analysis; the point in the supply chain (processed or unprocessed materials) where maximum levels apply; and the meaning of the term “placed on the market for the final consumer”.

## Impacted products

All food

## What is changing?

Maximum levels for contaminants in food are given in Annex I of Regulation 2023/915.

The new Regulation clarifies the following points in Annex I:

- Ergot sclerotia and tropane alkaloids in baby food and processed cereal-based foods for infants and young children: removal of outdated reference to applicable sampling and analysis rules. These are now set out in Regulation 2023/2782.
- T-2 and HT-2 toxins, maximum levels in bakery wares containing high levels of oats: levels will now apply to bakery wares containing at least 75% oats (previously 90%).
- Hydrocyanic acid in linseed: maximum level previously applied to “unprocessed” linseed now applies to linseed at all processing stages.
- Unprocessed oats before milling: maximum levels for ochratoxin A and zearalenone apply to unprocessed oats placed on the market with the husk included, even if the husk is not for consumption.


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- Unprocessed cereals placed on the market: wording amended to clarify that the maximum contaminant levels for unprocessed cereals apply at the stage just before first-stage processing.
- Ochratoxin A: “placed on the market for the final consumer” refers only to “cereals”, not to “products derived from unprocessed cereal grains”.
- Rice products: for certain contaminant maximum levels, “rice products” are excluded. The text is amended to clarify that this exclusion applies only to rice products where rice is the only cereal ingredient.
- Zearalenone: “placed on the market for the final consumer” refers only to “cereals, bran and germ”, not to “cereal flour and semolina”.
- Dioxins and PCBs in venison: this applies to meat of Cervidae (deer and related species).
- Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons in certain products for infants and young children: a distinction is introduced between products placed on the market as powder and as liquid.
- Dehulling: dehulling (removing the hull of a seed) is considered part of the cleaning process, not of first-stage processing.

## Why?

The experience gained since Regulation 2023/915 entered into force has revealed a lack of clarity of some points in Annex I, which are now clarified.

## Timeline

These amended rules apply from **16 July 2024**.

## What are the major implications for exporting countries?

The clarifications should remove legal uncertainties for businesses and avoid potential disputes with enforcement authorities regarding the interpretation of contaminant maximum levels.

## Background

Commission Regulation (EU) 2023/915 set the maximum levels for certain contaminants in food. For more information see EU legislation on contaminants – maximum levels explained.


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## Resources

Regulation 2023/915 on maximum levels for certain contaminants in food

## Sources

Commission Regulation (EU) 2024/1756 amending and correcting Regulation (EU) 2023/915 on maximum levels for certain contaminants in food

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