

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and tropane alkaloids in baby food and processed cereal-based foods for infants and young children: removal of outdated reference to applicable sampling and analysis rules.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.

- 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](#).

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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