Foods subject to controls of radioactive contamination related to Chernobyl

Published by AGRINFO on 14 Feb 2024

EU extends list of foods to be controlled for radioactive contamination

Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2024/256 of 17 January 2024 amending Implementing Regulation (EU) 2020/1158 on the conditions governing imports of food and feed originating in third countries following the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power station

Update

Countries affected by the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear power station accident must fulfil certain requirements when exporting wild mushrooms and *Vaccinium* fruits to the EU (Regulation 2020/1158). The EU has now extended the list of foods affected to include processed products containing wild mushrooms and fruits of the genus *Vaccinium*. This affects exporters of these products in Albania, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Russia, Serbia, Switzerland, Türkiye, Ukraine, and United Kingdom excluding Northern Ireland (Great Britain).

Impacted products

Mushrooms, fruits, nuts, juices, waters, sugar confectionery, chocolate, bakery wares

What is changing?

Certain foods and food products exported to the EU from countries impacted by the Chernobyl accident must be accompanied by certificates demonstrating that they are free from radioactive contamination. This new Regulation amends the list of impacted products, as shown in Table 1.

For a full list of impacted foods (with CN customs codes) see the Annex to Regulation 2024/256.

The new Regulation also:

- specifies that for concentrated or dried products the maximum level is to be calculated on the reconstituted product as ready for consumption (footnote added to Art. 3)
- updates the legal references to the model official certificates (Regulation 2019/628 is replaced by Regulation 2020/2235 in Arts. 4.3 and 4.4)

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- specifies that controls on products containing ingredients of animal origin must be performed at a border control post (rather than a designated control point or border control post in the case of non-animal products).

Why?

The scope of Regulation 2020/1158 needs to be expanded to a wider range of products to ensure consumers are adequately protected from risks of radioactive contamination related to the Chernobyl nuclear power station accident.

Timeline

Date of application: 7 February 2024.

Products that are new to the list (mixtures and processed foods containing wild mushrooms/wild fruits of the genus *Vaccinium*) that were produced before 7 February 2024 can enter the EU without mandatory certificates until 7 March 2024.

Recommended Actions

Exporters in the listed countries of mixtures and processed products containing wild mushrooms or wild *Vaccinium* fruits should urgently check whether they are affected by this revised list of products. Exporters of affected products must ensure compliance with maximum levels of radioactivity, and must obtain official certificates from their competent authorities prior to export.

Businesses and competent authorities in the affected exporting countries must expand controls of radioactive contamination in wild mushrooms and *Vaccinium* fruits to mixtures and processed foods that contain these mushrooms/fruits.

Background

Regulation 2020/1158 was adopted in relation to the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power station on 26 April 1986 in order to assess the safety of food and feed imported from the following countries affected by the accident: Albania, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Russia, Serbia, Switzerland, Türkiye, Ukraine, and United Kingdom excluding Northern Ireland (Great Britain).

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The Regulation lays down maximum permitted levels of radioactive contamination in terms of caesium-137:

- for milk and milk products, and for food for infants and young children [Regulation 609/2013, Art. 2(2)(a,b)]: 370 Bq/kg
- for all other products concerned: 600 Bq/kg.

A list of the products that must be accompanied by an official certificate when entering the EU is given in Regulation 2020/1158 (Annex II, Art. 4).

Competent authorities of border control posts where products enter the EU must carry out identity checks and physical checks on these consignments.

Resources

Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2020/1158 on the conditions governing imports of food and feed originating in third countries following the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power station

Sources

Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2024/256 on the conditions governing imports of food and feed originating in third countries following the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power station

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Tables & Figures

Table 1
Changes to list of foods subject to EU controls of radioactive contamination

Products	Controls now extended to include foods containing:	
	>20% wild *Vaccinium* fruits	>20% wild mushrooms
Mixtures of cultivated and wild mushrooms		✓
Mixtures of wild and cultivated fruits	✓	
Mixtures of nuts and dried fruits	✓	
Jams, fruit jellies, marmalades, fruit or nut purées, fruit or nut pastes	✓	
Mixtures of juices	✓	
Flavoured waters	✓	
Sugar confectionery	✓	✓
Chocolate	✓	✓
Bread, pastry, cakes, etc.	✓	✓

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Source: based on Regulation (EU) 2024/256 (Annex)

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