

We, the undersigned, urge you to support the report on food irradiation (rapporteur: Hiltrud Breyer, reference COS/2002/2008). The report considers which foods should be included in the Community list of foods authorised for treatment with ionising radiation. Your vote will have serious implications for consumers and agriculturists within Europe and throughout the world.

Below are key points of the report that we urge you to support.

- 1. No more food to be permitted for irradiation in the European Union.** If the flood doors are opened to allow a few categories of food to be irradiated, there is a danger that eventually most or all foods will also be approved for irradiation.
- 2. Better controls and enforcement of irradiated foods, particularly illegal and unlabelled irradiated foods, should be implemented.** Until existing Community legislation on food irradiation is effectively enforced in every Member State, new legislation allowing the irradiation of more foodstuffs cannot be supported.
- 3. Irradiation supports an unsustainable food supply trend.** Since irradiation allows food to be shipped greater distances, food can be produced in developing countries then sold cheaply to European consumers. This adds agricultural pressure for cash crops in third world countries, while harming the integrity of European farmers.
- 4. More peer-reviewed research into the long-term health effects of eating a diet composed of irradiated foods.** Research already conducted indicates that the chemicals created through the irradiation process cause prenatal death and other reproductive problems, fatal internal bleeding, suppressed immune systems, organ damage, tumours and stunted growth in lab animals. Questions remain whether irradiated foods are toxic or radioactive; whether they could cause mutations, cancer or nutritional deficiencies; and to what extent nutrients are destroyed. These are fatal health concerns that should not be overlooked.
- 5. Substitution principle to be applied in the interests of safety.** The use of radioactive materials for irradiating foodstuffs involves serious risks. Workers are at risk from accidental exposure, and human populations and the environment are at risk from spills and leaks.

We appreciate your attention to this serious matter and hope you support the report in order to protect consumers, workers and farmers from the hazards of food irradiation.

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