

Irradiation Threatens Public Health

- ❖ Irradiation destroys vitamins—up to 90% of vitamin A in chicken, 86% of vitamin B in oats and 70% of vitamin C in fruit juice. As the shelf life increases, more nutrients are lost.
- ❖ Irradiation produces new compounds in food that have been linked to cancer and genetic damage in rat and human cells.
- ❖ Fifty years of research has shown serious health problems in lab animals that ate irradiated foods, including premature death, mutations, nutritional deficiencies, prenatal death and other reproductive problems, fatal internal bleeding, suppressed immune systems, organ damage, tumors and stunted growth.
- ❖ Irradiation facilities that function with radioactive cesium-137 or cobalt-60 threaten workers and communities with radioactive leaks and accidents. Many of the facilities in Brazil operate with cobalt-60.
- ❖ Irradiation can kill bacteria, but it doesn't kill viruses or remove dirt, toxins, urine, feces and grime picked up in slaughterhouses or unhygienic processing facilities.

Irradiation Threatens the Environment



- ❖ Irradiation encourages monoculture and the growth of cash crops, threatening biodiversity. It sacrifices ecological sustainability by encouraging mass production that is dependent on increased chemical pesticide use.
- ❖ Radioactive waste to run irradiation facilities is transported long distances, increasing the risk of radioactive accidents that would damage the local ecosystem and threaten public health.
- ❖ Irradiation facilities have a record of leaks and accidents that threaten local ecosystems.

Irradiation Contributes to an Unsustainable World

- ❖ Food irradiation is a very expensive resolution of the food safety problem, addressing symptoms instead of causes. Food that is produced in a sustainable manner does not need irradiation.
- ❖ Irradiation encourages massive, wasteful and costly transportation of food. Food that is grown and consumed locally does not need irradiation.
- ❖ The massive adoption of food irradiation erodes the people's right to choose where and how their food is produced. A food system that is democratic and empowers citizens to make wise choices does not need irradiation.
- ❖ Food irradiation paves the way for multinational corporations at the expense of small food producers who do not need irradiation.

**The Bottom Line:
The multinational
agri-businesses
and the nuclear industries
need irradiation—
we don't!**

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FOOD IRRADIATION IS NOT FOOD SECURITY!



**Food Irradiation
Is Another Tool for
Global Food Trade
by Transnational
Corporations**

Food is irradiated by exposure to high doses of ionizing radiation—

the equivalent of millions of chest x-rays. Proponents of irradiation state that it kills bacteria and extends shelf life. In truth, irradiation only masks the filth in food caused by unregulated factory farming and unsanitary conditions in large corporate slaughterhouses. By extending shelf life, irradiation allows multinational corporations to produce food in the Global South, then irradiate and ship it to the consuming nations; thereby, gaining greater control over the global food supply. These companies need irradiation—consumers and concerned citizens, environmentalists, labor advocates and small-scale food producers do not!

Brazil, with four growing seasons and a land-mass approximating the size of the United States, is a major world exporter of fruits and vegetables - in excess of 84 billion pounds annually. However, Brazil's agricultural economy has several strikes against it because of the weakness of the Brazilian currency, which encourages exports. Post-harvest losses are significant due to the lack of infrastructure to move produce across a large and very sensitive environment.



For these reasons, leaders in Brazil are pushing for irradiation, to the delight of the irradiation industry. While Brazil is currently home to eleven facilities that irradiate food, Surebeam and Tech Ion Industrial Brazil are planning to build a twenty-one more. Brazil has the most liberal food irradiation legislation in the world.

Any food can be irradiated in Brazil, at any dose, and for any reason.



Increased irradiation in Brazil carries with it several concerns. First, the very delicate environment could be imperiled by the expansion of roads and train services, driven by exploding agricultural production, through what was once rainforest or savanna. Second, farmland in Brazil is cheap—US\$700 per acre, compared to US\$3850 in Illinois in the United States. Cheap land lures prospectors from the across the world that want to grow lucrative cash crops for export, pushing indigenous peoples from their land. American farmers have been moving in and buying up land for vertical production of soy beans, maize and pigs - at times reaching into the Amazon's fertile land.

Irradiation Threatens Independent Farmers

- ⊕ Irradiation extends the shelf life of foods, causing surpluses. Corporations, unwilling to let their investments rot in storage, dump the food in the Global South and disguise it as "aid."
- ⊕ These cheap imports drive farmers in the Global South out of business. Their land and labor is bought to grow cash crops, which are irradiated and shipped back to consuming nations.
- ⊕ Independent family farmers in the US and Europe are put out of business as production moves overseas.



Irradiation Facilitates Trade That Sacrifices People for Profit

- ⊕ Because irradiation extends shelf lives, multinational food corporations can produce in the Global South where labor is cheap and environmental standards are weak.
- ⊕ By masking "barriers to trade" such as invasive insects and unsanitary food production with irradiation, multinational food corporations reap massive profits by selling at high prices in consuming nations.
- ⊕ The labor and the resources of the Global South are thus shipped overseas without just compensation. The people are not reimbursed for the destruction of their environment and their low standard of living caused by neo-liberal trade agreements.