

submissions

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Sent: Monday, 5 November 2012 5:33 PM
To: submissions
Cc: k.wilkinson@ministers.govt.nz; Catherine.King.MP@aph.gov.au; Health@ministerial.qld.gov.au; Agriculture@ministerial.qld.gov.au
Subject: Application A1069 for the Irradiation of Tomatoes and Capsicums
Categories: Blue Category

I oppose the irradiation of tomatoes and capsicums. I, therefore, call on you to ensure that Application A1069 for the irradiation of tomatoes and capsicums is rejected.

The Queensland Government has made an Application to Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) to irradiate tomatoes and capsicums. Irradiation is being presented as an "alternative" to certain pesticides, which are being phased out due to their potentially harmful residues. Irradiation, however, has not been proven safe. The public is being offered a false choice. Numerous scientific studies have shown the potential health risks posed by irradiated food. And numerous chemical-free alternatives exist. I choose my food both pesticide and irradiation-free.

Tomatoes are part of our everyday diet. I understand that there are further plans to seek approval to irradiate up to 16 more fruit and vegetables, including zucchinis, honey dew melons, rockmelons, nectarines, strawberries, cherries, apricots, plum, peaches, table grapes, and apples. These foods are regularly consumed by the Australian and New Zealand public and these proposals will have a significant impact on my diet.

Here are some of my concerns about irradiated tomatoes and capsicums:

- Irradiation has been shown to deplete vitamin C, vitamin A, proteins, essential fatty acids and other nutrients in food.
- Irradiation produces free radicals in food and has been linked to health problems such as nutritional deficiencies, immune system disorders, and genetic damage.
- In 2008 and 2009 one hundred Australian cats developed neurological disorders leading to paralysis, some died, because of the consumption of irradiated cat food. The public outcry led to the banning of irradiated cat food in Australia. At the time of this writing, in 2012, irradiated pet food is being investigated as the potential cause of death and illness in dogs, suggesting that the problem may not be species specific as previously claimed. The risk to humans cannot be ruled out.
- I am not confident that it will be labelled. Labelling of irradiated foods in Australia and New Zealand is also under threat. The government has proposed a review of mandatory labelling with the aim of removing labelling requirements. All irradiated food should be individually labelled "treated with radiation" or "irradiated -- "

I call on you to reject A1069 as it is not in the public interest: neither the health and safety of irradiating tomatoes and capsicums nor the assurance the consumers will have choice through labelling has been demonstrated and these cannot be guaranteed.

I look forward to your response regarding these matters and to working with you to keep our food nutritious, healthy and safe for all Australians and New Zealanders.

Thank you

Kara Vandeleur
5 November 2012