

Brussels, 27 November 2001

Dioxin in Feed Byrne welcomes adoption by Council of dioxin limits in feed

Health and Consumer Protection Commissioner David Byrne today welcomed the adoption by the Council of a Directive setting legally binding limits on the presence of dioxin and other contaminants in animal feed. Any feed or feed material exceeding these strict limits is excluded from the feed and food chain. The measures on feed are a key element of the comprehensive strategy the Commission put forward to improve the safety of feed and food in response to the dioxin contamination problems of the past. Byrne thanked the Belgian Presidency for facilitating a rapid agreement on the proposal the Commission put forward in July this year. An equivalent proposal setting maximum limits in foodstuffs will be adopted by the Council in the next days.

"I am pleased to see the Ministers recognise that we need to be uncompromising and severe on contaminants in animal feed. This new legislation, in setting legally binding limits, sets a new milestone in the EU's feed and food safety strategy" Byrne said commenting the outcome of today's Council. He added: "Only very few countries in the world have yet set legally binding levels for dioxin presence in feed. These measures, as part of a comprehensive strategy, will undoubtedly reduce the presence of dioxins in feed and food. Our strategy aims to deal with a complicated cycle of contamination necessitating simultaneously measures to reduce the presence of dioxins, furans and PCBs in environment, feedingstuffs and foodstuffs. While these measures offer protection of consumer health, the ultimate goal must be to further reduce dioxin release at the source, to stop it from entering the environment."

The Council Directive adopted today is a part of an overall strategy to reduce the presence of dioxins and PCBs in environment, feed and food. Measures to limit or to eliminate the emission of dioxins into the environment through source-directed measures are of major importance to reduce the overall contamination by dioxins. These measures are addressed in a Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee on a Community strategy for dioxins, furans and PCBs, which the Commission adopted on 24 October 2001 (see IP/01/1492 of 25 October 2001).

The adopted Directive is an amendment to the Council Directive (1999/29/EC) on the undesirable substances and products in animal nutrition. It fixes strict but feasible maximum levels for dioxin in feedingstuffs.

The maximum levels for dioxins and furans in feed materials and feedingstuffs established by the adopted Directive, form the first step of the measures concerning feedingstuffs. In a forthcoming Commission Recommendation, the

establishment of action levels and, over time, target levels for feed materials and feedingstuffs is foreseen which are lower than the maximum thresholds adopted today. The action levels will act as a tool for "early warning" triggering a proactive approach from competent authorities and operators to identify sources and pathways of contamination and to take measures to eliminate them.

The target levels are the levels to be achieved ultimately, acting as the driving force for measures, which are necessary to further reduce emissions into the environment

In a separate Declaration attached to the Directive the Commission underlined the importance of national monitoring activities in the Member States to verify the respect of the limits as set. The declaration announces Commission initiatives for establishing concrete guidelines for this monitoring work, notably for the number of samples to be taken for each category of feed materials and feedingstuffs. The data obtained from this and other monitoring exercises will form the basis for any further revision of the maximum limits adopted today.

The Directive will enter into force on 1 July 2002.

See also: IP/01/1045 of 20 July 2001 (Commission proposes strategy to reduce dioxin in food and feed) at

http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/health_consumer/library/press/press169_en.pdf

And also MEMO/01/270 of 20 July 2001 (Factsheet on dioxin in food and feed) at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/health_consumer/library/press/press170_en.pdf

ANNEX: Maximum limits for dioxin in feedingstuffs

Feedingstuffs	Maximum content relative to a feedingstuff with a moisture content of 12 %
All feed materials of plant origin including vegetable oils and by-products	0.75 ng WHO-PCDD/F-TEQ/kg ^(1,2)
Minerals	1.0 ng WHO-PCDD/F-TEQ/kg ^(1,2)
Animal fat, including milk fat and egg fat	2.0 ng WHO-PCDD/F-TEQ/kg ^(1,2)
Other land animal products including milk and milk products and eggs and egg products.	0.75 ng WHO-PCDD/F-TEQ/kg ^(1,2)
Fish oil	6 ng WHO-PCDD/F-TEQ/kg ^(1,2)
Fish, other aquatic animals, their products and by-products with the exception of fish oil ⁽³⁾	1.25 ng WHO-PCDD/F-TEQ/kg ^(1,2)

Compound feedingstuffs, with the exception of feedingstuffs for fur animals, of feedingstuff for fish and of feedingstuffs for pet animals	0.75 ng WHO-PCDD/F-TEQ/kg ^(1,2)
Feedingstuffs for fish Feedingstuffs for pet animals	2.25ng WHO-PCDD/F-TEQ/kg ^(1,2)

(1) Upperbound concentrations; upperbound concentrations are calculated assuming that all values of the different congeners less than the limit of determination are equal to the limit of determination.

(2) These maximum limits shall be reviewed for the first time before 31 December 2004 in the light of new data on the presence of dioxins and dioxin-like PCBs, in particular with a view to the inclusion of dioxin-like PCBs in the levels to be set and will be further reviewed before 31 December 2006 with the aim of significantly reducing of the maximum levels.

(3) Fresh fish directly delivered and used without intermediate processing for the production of feedingstuffs for fur animals is exempted from the maximum limit. The products, processed animal proteins produced from these fur animals cannot enter the food chain and the feeding thereof is prohibited to farmed animals which are kept, fattened or bred for the production of food."