

office for risk assessment

The Office for Risk Assessment and Research Programming of the Dutch Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority assesses possible food and product safety threats. The Office plans to issue advice to the minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality and to the minister of Health, Welfare and Sports on the following subjects.

Subsequently these advices will be published as soon as possible and always within 4 weeks.

(June - August 2010)

- **Resistance against Antimycotics**

The ministry of agriculture has requested advice on research into the consequences of resistance of the pathogenic fungus *Aspergillus fumigatus* against antimycotics. Resistance of *A. fumigatus* against antimycotics may be selected by use in agriculture. The Office for Risk Assessment will advise the ministry to launch a quantitative investigation into the costs caused by this resistance and the costs of possible countermeasures.

- **Risks of exposure to acrylamide in foods**

University Maastricht has carried out an epidemiological study of the relationship between exposure to acrylamide in the diet and the occurrence of cancer. The results have been published in a PhD thesis. This study was requested by the ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (LNV), the ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports (VWS) and the Food and Consumer Product Authority (VWA). VWA has also recently investigated the levels of acrylamide in a number of foods. In response to the thesis and the reports received from Maastricht, the Office for Risk Assessment of VWA will release an opinion on acrylamide to the Ministers of VWS and LNV.

- **Microbiological risks of wool**

The Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority wishes a better picture of the microbiological risks that may occur in the Dutch wool production chain. This is necessary to develop effective and efficient supervision of the production of raw wool. To support this development the Office for Risk Assessment performs a qualitative assessment of potential risks and proposes various options to manage these risks.

- **Nitrosamines in latex gloves**

The Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority (VWA) has found that latex (rubber) gloves regularly contain nitrosamines and nitrosatable substances. These substances may be formed during the vulcanisation process. Several types of nitrosamines are known to be carcinogenic; nitrosatable substances may be converted into nitrosamines in certain conditions. Therefore, the VWA has also requested RIVM to measure to what extent nitrosamines may be released during use of the gloves. Based on the measurements, the RIVM has made a risk assessment. The Office for Risk Assessment will issue an opinion about possible risks for the user.

- **Health limit cadmium**

In 2009 the health limit for cadmium has been reduced by EFSA. This advice will focus on the possible consequences of this reduction and the possibilities for reduction of the exposure to cadmium for (certain) consumers.

- **Pyrrrolizidine alkaloids in animal feed, milk and honey**

In 2006 the Office for Risk Assessment prepared an advice regarding health risks of alkaloids in Ragwort. Following the advice, procedures of chemical analysis of alkaloids were developed, and levels of alkaloids

were determined in animal feed, honey and milk. Recently the findings in animal feed were used to prepare a health risk evaluation of such alkaloids for horses. In the second half of 2010 levels of alkaloids will be measured in food duplicates to define the exposure of humans to alkaloids in the Netherlands. The results will be used to define whether or not special emphasis on food items such as honey and milk is necessary.

- **Risks related to the petting zoo and to care farms**

In petting zoos and care facilities, animals may carry pathogens. The type and number of pathogens determine the health risk to a large extent. Specifically for the groups at risk such as small children, pregnant women and the elderly, options for risk management are formulated.

- **Risk of dead, wild rodents**

In some regions of the Netherlands the populations of brown and black rats are growing. Up till now the carrions of these animals are left behind or end up in compost. One could question if this could be a risk for public and/or animal health. When such a risk is present, management options will be presented.

- **Public health risk of *C. psittaci***

Contact with psittacidae is an important risk factor for acquiring psittacosis. Like *Coxiella burnetii*, the causal agent of psittacosis is transmitted by contaminated aerosols. Management options will be proposed to reduce the public health risk.