

From: submissions
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: STOP food irradiation

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 8 December 2020 4:51 PM
To: submissions <submissions@foodstandards.gov.au>; tim.wilson.mp@aph.gov.au; robin.taubenfeld@foe.org.au
Subject: STOP food irradiation

Dear Food Standards decision-makers,

I believe exercising informed choice in food processing technologies is an essential part of taking responsibility for one's own health and that requires the ability to easily avoid irradiated food even if, as a pensioner, I can't always afford to buy organic. The government should require the highest standards of labelling to allow consumers to exercise choice to avoid irradiated food and restrict the use of irradiation to ensure that the majority of fresh food available in mainstream supermarkets is not irradiated.

Numerous studies have shown the potential health risks posed by irradiated food. Irradiation has been shown to deplete vitamin C, vitamin A, proteins, essential fatty acids and other nutrients in food and has been linked to health problems such as nutritional deficiencies, immune system disorders, abnormal lymph cells, and genetic damage.

In 2008-9, irradiation was responsible for neurological disorders leading to paralysis and in some cases, death, of up to one hundred Australian pet cats. Irradiated cat food is now banned in Australia. The European Food Safety Authority acknowledges that the risk to humans cannot be ruled out. In 2003, concerns over the safety of irradiated food led the European Union to rule out further irradiation approvals. The Australian Senate followed suit with a call for approvals to be halted until further research has been conducted. Claims that irradiated foods are safe are indefensible as no research on long term consumption of an irradiated diet have been conducted.

While irradiation is promoted as beneficial to Australian farmers; each approval also enables irradiated imports from overseas. Irradiation is a tool of large agri-business – and supports mass production systems that diminish the power of local food producers and destroy local markets.

Irradiation will not eliminate the use of chemicals and pesticides in crop production; it will be used in conjunction with these and other food processes.

I oppose the blanket approval of irradiation for all fresh fruit and vegetables. I have concerns about the wholesomeness of irradiated food as well as the environmental and social impacts of irradiating our food. Numerous alternatives to irradiation exist.

I am also worried that irradiated food will not be adequately labelled. A1092 does not assure me that irradiated foods will not be marketed as “fresh” though they are processed. Irradiated food and their packages must be individually labelled “treated with radiation” or “irradiated.”

The approval of regularly eaten fruit and vegetables could significantly increase the amount of irradiated food in our diet.

For these reasons I call on you to reject A1193 and to rescind all previous irradiation approvals.

I was shocked to hear that FSANZ has changed the date of public consultation on this important matter without properly informing the public. I ask you to extend the public consultation period.

I look forward to hearing your response to my concerns.

Regards

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