

Title Food safety and acceptance of management options after radiological contaminations of the food chain

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Abstract

After an accidental radioactive release leading to contamination of the food chain, countermeasures may be used to reduce the radiological health risk to the population and to bring social reassurance. This paper analyses public acceptance and consumer's behaviour for various countermeasures for contaminated milk as revealed by a recent public survey in Belgium. The survey instrument used was Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing. A simulated news bulletin was included for a fast and realistic briefing on the situation investigated. The results show that clean feeding of dairy cattle and disposal of contaminated milk are the preferred options in case of contaminations above legal norms. For contaminations below legal norms, normal consumption of milk seems better accepted than disposal. Nonetheless, the expressed consumer's behaviour reveals a precautionary tendency: the presence of radioactivity at some step in the food chain could lead to avoiding purchasing products from affected areas. Finally, public trust building is revealed as a key element of a successful countermeasure strategy.