

EFSA Panel on Contaminants in the Food Chain (CONTAM)
24/01/2019

Consultation: Draft Scientific Opinion on evaluation of the health risks related to the presence of cyanogenic glycosides in foods other than raw apricot kernels

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this consultation. IFST's Scientific Committee has provided the following general comments on this consultation:

- IFST welcomes the EFSA risk assessment; particularly that EFSA rightly stresses that exposure is dependent both on the glycoside concentration in the food and on the presence of enzymes that break it down to cyanide. It is a complex and detailed picture.
- IFST questions the technical robustness of trying to calculate a "European" exposure level. Cyanogenic glycosides are an example of a contaminant that is so specific to local diets that the EU-wide picture loses all resolution.
- For example:
 - Most of EFSA's data comes from Germany, where marzipan consumption would skew the dietary intake compared to the UK.
 - Cassava flour is only consumed by certain ethnic groups.
 - EFSA don't appear to have considered bamboo shoots, which are also consumed by some ethnic groups.
- IFST recommends the calculation of more localised exposures, limited to geographic areas or diets where the risk is higher. This would then help in targeting any future risk management that might be needed.

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