

RE: Reject Application A1115: Stop the irradiation of Blueberries and Raspberries

I oppose the irradiation of blueberries and raspberries. I, therefore, call on you to reject Application A1115 for the irradiation of Raspberries and Blueberries and to ensure that it is not approved.

The NSW government has made an Application to Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) to irradiate blueberries and raspberries. These berries are considered by many to be “superfoods” and valued for their high antioxidant levels, anthocyanin and Vitamin C content.

Irradiation would see these tiny berries exposed to ionising radiation at doses ranging from 150 Gray (Gy) - 1 kGy. This is equivalent to exposing them to approximately 1.5 million – 10 million chest X-rays (calculated at the low end of chest X-ray exposure).

Ionising radiation changes the molecular structure of food, producing free-radicals, depleting antioxidants such as vitamin C and nutrition, and creating chemical compounds unique to radiation exposure.

Numerous scientific studies have shown potential health risks associated with irradiating food. In fact, in 2008 -2009 up to one hundred Australian cats developed neurological disorders linked to the consumption of irradiated cat food. The risk to humans has not been ruled out.

Irradiation is not necessary for quarantine purposes of pest management as both radiation-free and chemical-free options exist.

Once exposed to high levels of ionising radiation, these fruits prized for their natural goodness can no longer be considered “fresh” – they will appear fresh, but in fact be “processed.”

Finally, I am not confident that I will be able to distinguish between irradiated and non-irradiated food as labelling requirements are under review. There is no assurance in this application that labelling requirements will remain. Irradiated food must be labelled “treated with radiation” or “irradiated –’

I call on you to reject A1115 as it is not in the public interest. I look forward to your response and to working with you to keep our food nutritious, healthy and safe for all Australians and New Zealanders.

Thank you,

Joanna Koniuszewski

4 September 2016