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**From:**

**Sent:**

Friday, 11 December 2020 1:36 PM

**To:**

**Subject:**

Submission RE: A1193: Irradiation as a phytosanitary measure for all fresh fruit and vegetables

**Importance:**

High

**Categories:**

I am amazed 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 oppose the blanket approval of irradiation for all fresh fruit and vegetables. I have concerns about the nutritional level of irradiated food as well as the environmental and social impacts of irradiating our food. Alternatives to irradiation exist and I do not believe that the irradiation of these fruits for quarantine purposes benefits my family. I am also worried that irradiated food will not be adequately labelled.

Numerous studies have shown the potential health risks posed by irradiated food. The approval of regularly eaten fruit and vegetables could significantly increase the amount of irradiated food in our diet. This is especially true for vegetarians and vegans who have a higher proportion of fruit and vegetables in their diet. 11% of the Australian population consider themselves to be vegetarian or vegan, and this number is rising.

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 has been conducted.

Irradiation has been shown to deplete vitamin E, 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.

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.

Food irradiation does not inactivate dangerous toxins which have already been produced by bacteria.

Irradiation can cause mutations in bacteria and viruses leading to potentially resistant strains.

Irradiating fruit and vegetables extends their shelf life, misleading consumers by making old food with lower nutrient content look fresh. Irradiation also kills off bacteria that produce the warning smells indicating that food is going 'off'.

There is the potential for radioactive spills and contamination of surrounding land and water from irradiation plants.

Irradiation allows food to be transported over greater distances, leading to greater air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions contributing to global warming

Finally, I am not confident that these fruits will be adequately labelled. This will lead to foods being marketed as “fresh” though they are processed. Irradiated food and their packages must be individually labelled “treated with radiation” or “irradiated.” A1092 does not assure me that this will be the case.

For these reasons I call on you to reject A1193 and to rescind all previous irradiation approvals. I look forward to hearing your response to my concerns.

Thank you,

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