

Fipronil in eggs (03/08/2017)

The public prosecutor's office, backed by the Food Agency, is currently investigating the use of Fipronil in the poultry sector. Fipronil is a prohibited substance in this sector and its use is thus illegal.

The judicial inquiry aims to get to the bottom of this illegal use of Fipronil. It is important to give the inquiry every chance of succeeding and, to this end, not furnish any information that might compromise its successful outcome. Needless to say, the FASFC fully respects the secrecy of the judicial inquiry.

The policy regarding the measures to be taken, is fully in line with the European guidelines on this matter, which were communicated by the European Commission to all member states via the RASFF system on 31 July. Both Belgium and the Netherlands follow this approach.

The FASFC insists on providing the consumer with as much information as possible on potential public health risks.

Based on the information it received, the FASFC has taken the preventive measure of temporarily shutting down the laying hens establishments concerned. The FASFC has taken samples in all of these poultry farms, which are currently being analysed for the presence of Fipronil. In addition, these businesses had to inform their wholesale and retail clients, so that the latter could proceed to remove the eggs from their shelves. The Food Agency sees to it that this product withdrawal actually takes place.

Considering that the levels of Fipronil found in the eggs have thus far been considerably lower than the limit value agreed upon by the EU countries, a recall similar to the one provided for in the public warning issued by the NVWA in the Netherlands is deemed unnecessary.

All eggs for which the analyses confirmed the presence of Fipronil will be destroyed in any case, even if the concentrations found thus far do not pose a public health risk in accordance with the European guidelines. Needless to say, Fipronil is an illegal substance which has no place in the food chain.

Businesses where Fipronil is found in the eggs can only resume their activities after the FASFC has ascertained that the substance no longer poses a threat to the safety of the food chain. The poultry farmers concerned have to be able to prove, by means of checks, that their new eggs are free of Fipronil. Afterwards, the FASFC will revisit the farms to take an official sample for analysis. Only if the findings of

these analyses carried out by the FASFC corroborate that Fipronil can no longer be detected in the eggs, the measures imposed on the poultry farms concerned will be lifted.

The investigation is still ongoing. Should the analyses still yield results that exceed the limit value agreed upon by the EU countries, the consumers will, of course, be notified immediately and the necessary measures will be taken to ensure the safety of the food chain.