Contaminants in the food chain

Contaminant levels in food and feed are usually too low to harm consumers and animals but they can cause effects such as food poisoning and their presence or accumulation over time might affect animal and human health.

WHAT KIND OF FOOD CONTAMINANTS ARE IN FOOD & FEED?

Natural toxins
From fungi, algae or plants including some weeds and sea plankton

Metals & inorganic substances
Lead, mercury and substances like nitrates or fluorine

Unauthorised veterinary medicines
Prohibited use in food-producing animals

Environmental contaminants
Industrial and consumer chemicals present in air, soil and water

Process contaminants
Formed during processing like high-temperature cooking

HOW ARE CONSUMERS & ANIMALS PROTECTED?

DATA COLLECTION
Member States tell us if foods are contaminated and by how much

RISK ASSESSMENT
Scientists estimate the exposure of humans and animals to contaminants and the potential risks

RISK MANAGEMENT
Data and advice provide a scientific basis for decision-making by risk managers

Visit the EFSA topic page: www.efsa.europa.eu/en/topics/topic/contaminantsfoodfeed

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