



**LIVSMEDELS  
VERKET**

NATIONAL FOOD  
ADMINISTRATION

GENERALDIREKTÖREN  
DIRECTOR GENERAL

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19 September 2005

Dnr 1959/2005  
Saknr 6141

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### **A need for risk assessment by EFSA of lead (Pb) extracted from ceramic ware.**

The German Bundesinstitut für Risikobewertung, the Norwegian Scientific Committee for Food Safety and the Swedish National Food Administration have all come to the conclusion that the current European Community legislation on food contact materials (Directive 84/500/EEC) regarding permitted levels of lead migration from ceramics does not provide adequate protection from adverse health effects and therefore needs to be revised. Attached to this letter are the risk assessments carried out by the Norwegian and German authorities.

The current maximum limit is 4 mg Pb/l (for products < 3 litres and excluding flat products like plates) in a 4 % acetic acid test solution. Some foods with a low pH, for instance orange juice, cause similar migration (~ 4 mg/l) of lead as does the test solution. The current Provisional Tolerable Weekly Intake for lead is 25 µg/kg bodyweight (WHO, 2000; SCF 1989), corresponding to 215-250 µg/day for an adult, and 70 µg/day for a 20-kg child. Regular consumption of only one glass of juice (~ 0.2 litre) stored in a ceramic jug applying to the maximum limit for lead migration, may result in an unacceptable lead intake. Thus the amount of lead leached from ceramics for foods may be legally acceptable, although not giving adequate protection from adverse health effects.

This urgent issue has been raised with the Commission by several national authorities without any response so far. **We therefore ask EFSA to re-evaluate the scientific basis for the maximum migration of lead from ceramic ware.** Also, based on the national risk assessments mentioned above, the task could very well be broadened to cover migration of other metals (*e g* cadmium and barium), from ceramic ware, and also migration from glass.

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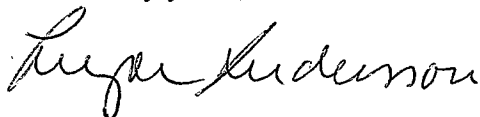
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We propose that this issue is discussed in the EFSA Advisory Forum as soon as possible.

Contactperson is Ph.D. Senior Toxicologist Kierstin Grawé.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Inger Andersson', written in black ink.

Inger Andersson

CC:

Professor Dr. Reiner Wittkowski, Bundesinstitut für Risikobewertung,  
Berlin, Germany

Dr. Kirstin Færden, Norwegian Food Control Authority, Oslo, Norway

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