



Food Irradiation Eye

keeping an eye on food irradiation in Australia and the world

July-August 2005

Community closes down Food Irradiation plant!

In April this year, nuclear irradiation company CFC Logistics announced it would shut down its plant in Milford, Pennsylvania (USA) after finding its gamma irradiator not economically viable. The company had been planning to irradiate beef for the “school lunch program” but was not able to maintain its operations after no states ordered the irradiated beef.

After the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced its approval of irradiated meat for school lunch, Milford community members, indigenous representatives and national organisations such as Public Citizen and Weston Price Foundation played important roles in making sure the market for irradiated beef never eventuated.

That effort, combined with a strong, on the ground community awareness campaign about the dangers of nuclear irradiation and risks associated with food irradiation in general, brought the life of the plant into question.

The company, which had built its irradiator inside a cold storage facility, will have the irradiator and radioactive materials removed, but will continue

CONGRATULATIONS MILFORD!



During Global Week of Action against Food Irradiation 2003: About 300 citizens of Milford Square, PA participated in a rally and traditional native Lenape Nation ceremony to protest the installation of a nuclear food irradiation facility in their township. Speakers from local, state and national organizations called for the removal of the facility and a moratorium on irradiated meat in the National School Lunch Program. (photo: Public Citizen)

to operate its more profitable cold storage business on the site.

This victory is a win for all of us and a reminder that the food irradiation industry can be stopped.

While we may think that there is no logic to developing the

food irradiation industry in the first place, targeting the industry's market has proven: they'll close themselves down when it's not economically “rational”!

For more info about the Milford campaign: www.Nocobalt-4-food.org

Global Campaign Against Food Irradiation Campaign escalates

FRANCE: “More than 300 people protested six food irradiation facilities throughout France on March 5, ratcheting up a growing international campaign against the technology. A wide range of organizations – from farmers’ unions to consumer groups to environmental associations – have joined in the “French Committee Against Food Irradiation.”

The nationwide campaign has several demands, including scaling back the list of foods that can legally be irradiated in France – frog legs, chicken, shrimp,



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cereals, and dried fruits and vegetables – to include only foods allowed by the European Union, which are spices and dried herbs.

The campaign is also pushing for comprehensive inquiries into irradiation of unapproved foods, and the immediate removal of all unlabeled irradiated foods from the market. Irradiation in Europe has reached a critical moment, as has the campaign against it.

A 1999 European law requiring irradiated foods to be labeled has cut deeply into sales. About 17,000 tons of foods were irradiated annually in France in the early 1990s. That was slashed to 5,000 tons in 2002. The director of irradiation company Isotron explained in an interview: "Compulsory labeling dissuaded many agri-food companies from using irradiation because they feared how consumers would react." As a consequence, one facility was dismantled last December and two others are provisionally closed."

Visit www.irradiation.info to learn more about the European campaign against irradiation. Source: *Food Alert!* vol 6 no 2 May/June 2005 www.citizen.org

UK: Undeclared irradiated ingredients lead to food recalls

On August 1, 2005, Food Navigator reported: "The UK's Food Standard Agency announced the withdrawal of three food products last week due to the presence of Sudan I, undeclared irradiation and contamination..."

... Nong Shim brand noodle based snacks have been withdrawn due to the undeclared presence of irradiated ingredients. The agency has now identified further companies that have imported the implicated Nong Shim Brand products, which were listed in the original food alert.

They are Korea Foods Company, J K Foods, Rose Kibong, Green Farm, S W Trading, Songs Supermarket and Jo Enterprise. The above companies have either imported the products directly from Korea or from other Member States and all have now withdrawn the implicated products from sale."

Source: <http://www.foodnavigator.com/news/ng.asp?id=61647>

HAWAII: Irradiation set to expand

The Us Department of Agriculture is proposing a change to irradiation guidelines and an expansion of irradiation approvals to allow irradiation of fruit and vegetables from Hawaii, Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands to mainland USA.

Comments are (were) due on August 9, 2005. Public comments and official information are available on: www.epa.gov/feddoCKET This application is Docket No. 03-077-1. Federal Register and related information on the Internet at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppd/rad/webrepor.html>

New irradiation plant proposed near Honolulu.

According to the Honolulu Star-Bulletin on June 27, 2005, Hawaiian company, Pa'ina Hawaii, plans to build a commercial gamma irradiation facility near Honolulu Airport to treat Hawaiian fruits and vegetables for export.

Pa'ina President Michael Kohn said he hopes to have the facility in operation by February 2006 and that it will have the potential "to treat 80 million pounds of papaya per year."

Pa'ina plans to use a Graystar Genesis irradiation unit, which keeps Cobalt-60 in a 20-foot deep pool of water, which shields it from human contact, Kohn said.

A public meeting about the application is to be announced within 60 day. Notice of the meeting will be announced on the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's Web site at www.nrc.gov. <http://starbulletin.com/2005/07/27/news/story3.html>

Bee products to be traded across the Tasman

Western Australia is now accepting some bee products from New Zealand while NZ government is considering the importation of Australian bee products. Hives are irradiated in Australia and possibly N Z. Irradiation may be used as quarantine measure to facilitate trade. Sydney Morning Herald 12/08/05



What up? Food Irradiation Goss

Australia – New Zealand:

Despite bad publicity associated with the irradiation of Australian mangos exported to New Zealand last mango season, it appears that the irradiation industry and import-export companies will be teaming up again this summer.

A reliable source has indicated it that **Australian irradiated paw paws will soon be exported to New Zealand.**

Last season Queensland mango growers were not informed that their mangos were going to be irradiated and exported. Qld grower Del Norman was "appalled" to hear that her fruit had been irradiated before export to NZ. She was worried that irradiated fruit could damage the reputation of her orchard, and spoil any chance of further export to New Zealand.

A recent International Atomic Energy Association food irradiation newsletter *Food and Environmental Protection* boasts the mango 'test market' to New Zealand as a success.

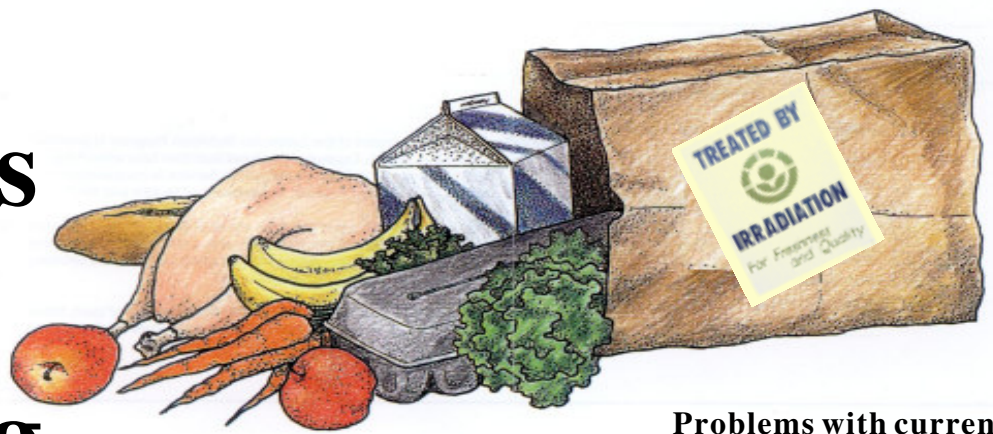
A Trans-Tasman campaign will work to stop any exports.

OFF THE MARK

YOUR HONOR... WHEN MY CLIENT
AGREED TO BE IRRADIATED HE



The Problems with Labelling



Problems with current labelling regulations:

Over the past few years, Australia has entered the process of approving the irradiation of food for domestic consumption and export.

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) has so far approved: herbs, spices, herbal infusions and tropical fruit, including mangoes, paw paws, lychees, breadfruit, carambolas, custard apples, longans, mangosteens, and rambutans, for irradiation. FSANZ bases its approvals on its findings after a consultation process that “the benefits [of irradiating these products]...outweigh the costs.”

Food Irradiation Watch opposes all irradiation of food and products that enter the food chain and believes that consumers should be able to make informed choices about what they put into their bodies. Current labelling regulations regarding irradiated food are inadequate and deceptive, denying consumers the right to know and to choose whether or not they want to consume irradiated products. We believe that well documented community opposition to irradiation means that the majority of accurately informed consumers will not choose irradiated foods.

The Australian public fought hard in the 1980's, and after amassing a record number of petitions, won a moratorium on food irradiation that lasted 1999. Even after food standards were changed to allow irradiation, the overwhelming majority of submissions in response to irradiation applications were opposed. For example, in the final assessment round of the application to irradiate tropical fruit 675 submissions were opposed to the approval. Only 16 were in favour. The application was approved anyway.

It is our belief that inaccurate and inadequate labelling makes it impossible for consumers to make informed choice about irradiated food. A true test of the market for irradiated food can, therefore, not be conducted until labelling is comprehensive, non-biased, and accurate.

The government has forced irradiation on the public despite clear community opposition. We now call on the government to either repeal irradiation approvals to-date, and to ban further approvals, or to back up its belief in the process of irradiation by implementing and enforcing clear, non-biased and truthful labelling of irradiated products – allowing the consumer to decide.

- Current labelling is limited to packaged irradiated "food" products only.
- Loosely irradiated products such as fruit, which comprise a major sector of food that may be irradiated in Australia– or non-packaged products, will not be labelled and require only signage nearby at the point of sale.
- “Therapeutic” and pharmaceutical products may also be irradiated but require no labelling.
- Labelling laws do not require the use of the word radiation or irradiation, which is an accurate description of the process.
- Labelling laws permit the inclusion of a positive statement about the process, with no requirement for mentioning potential risks.

inaccurate and inadequate labelling makes it impossible for consumers to make informed choice about irradiated food

Current labelling situation in Australia and New Zealand:

Australian and New Zealand regulations are detailed in Food Standard 1-5-3 the Irradiation of Food. Therapeutic goods fall under different guideline, and there is no requirement for labelling irradiated therapeutic goods.

The Standard states: “The label on a package of food which has been processed by ionising radiation must include a statement that the food has been treated with ionising radiation.” Non-packaged irradiated products are required to have a sign nearby the food display.

Examples of accepted language:

- ‘TREATED WITH IONISING RADIATION’,
- ‘TREATED WITH IONISING ELECTRONS’
- ‘IRRADIATED (name of food)’

Spotlight on labelling around the world: Regulations that exist in other countries

The European Union:

Any irradiated food or any irradiated food ingredient of a compound food must be labelled with the words “irradiated” or “treated with ionising radiation.”



The sticker on these irradiated mangoes exported to New Zealand reads: "Irradiated to Protect New Zealand's Environment"

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The United States of America:

Since 1986, all irradiated products must carry the international symbol called a radura. This must also be accompanied by the statement: "Treated with irradiation" or "Treated by irradiation."

The Food and Drug Administration requires that both the logo and statement appear on packaged foods, bulk containers of unpackaged foods, on placards at the point of purchase (for fresh produce), and on invoices for irradiated ingredients and products sold to food processors.

Processors may add information explaining why irradiation is used; for example, "treated with irradiation to inhibit spoilage" or "treated with irradiation instead of chemicals to control insect infestation."

New Zealand:

While Australia and New Zealand share FSANZ, the New Zealand Food Safety Authority has been more accurate in its public information about labelling of irradiated products, stating clearly that fruit will not be labelled.

"Under the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code, which the New Zealand Food Safety Authority is responsible for enforcing in New Zealand, foods that have been irradiated must be clearly labelled showing that they have undergone this treatment.

For items such as fruit that do not carry labels, a statement must be displayed beside the produce stating that it has been treated with ionising radiation."

Canada:

Canadian law requires both the radura mark and a written statement about irradiation to be on packaged irradiated products. Non-packaged irradiated products must carry both the radura mark and written statement to be "displayed immediately next to the food."

The radura symbol is required to "appear in close proximity on the principal display panel" or on the sign to one of the following statements or a written statement that has the same meaning:

- (a) "treated with radiation"
- (b) "treated by irradiation" or
- (c) "irradiated".

Conclusion:

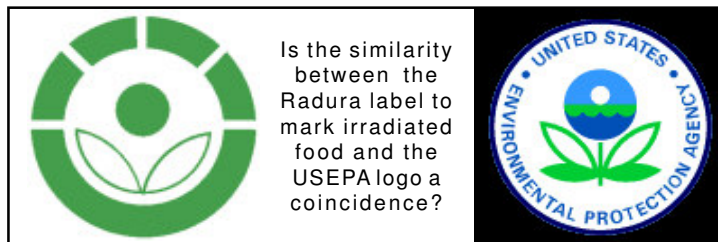
Australian consumers deserve access to clear and truthful information about the food they are eating. Australian labelling laws should fall in line with, or exceed, (first) world practices.

It is critical that labelling laws be amended to:

- Clearly identify all irradiated products that enter the human food chain
- Label products accurately and without bias, using the words radiation or irradiation

Of its close trading partners, Australia is the only country that allows the use of the term "ionising electrons" without requiring the use of the word "radiation" or "irradiation." As in these other countries, all labelling should require the use of the word "radiation" or "irradiation" in its text.

Furthermore, no positive statement about irradiation should be allowed to be on the label, unless there is also a requirement for a balancing statement mentioning potential hazards or risks.



Food Irradiation Watch supports the Australian regulation which does not require the use of the "Radura" mark in Australia. In fact, Food Irradiation Watch calls for an abolition of the use of the "Radura" mark. The "Radura" mark, which is required in the USA and Canada is, in itself, a deceptive graphic attempt to associate a positive image with radiation. While the word "Radura" comes from "rad" referring to radiation, a sterilising process, the mark looks like a life-giving budding flower. The symbol is also very similar to that of the US Environmental Protection Agency. Food Irradiation Watch would, however, support the inclusion of a graphic if it included the internationally recognised symbol of radiation.

The current labelling regimen allows the irradiation industry to hide behind ambiguous and biased labelling, to market irradiated products. Labelling irradiated products accurately and comprehensively is the only way to guarantee the public's right to choose whether or not to purchase them.

We call on the government and industry who promote or use irradiation to show their confidence in the technology, as well as the marketplace, by actively supporting labelling amendments that would allow the consumer to choose.

ACTION:
Join our labelling campaign

Contact your local health minister and Food Standard Australia New Zealand to voice your concerns over Australia's labelling laws.

Sample letters and contact details available at www.foodirradiationinfo.org

A yellow rectangular box containing contact information for Food Irradiation Watch. On the left is a line drawing of an envelope. On the right is the Food Irradiation Watch logo, which features a radiation symbol and a fork. The text reads: "For the latest campaign news, fact sheets and further information contact: Food Irradiation Watch PO Box 5829 West End Qld Australia 4101 ph. 0411 118 737". At the bottom, it provides the email address "foodirradiationwatch@yahoo.com.au" and the website "www.foodirradiationinfo.org".