

European Union comments for the
CODEX COMMITTEE ON CONTAMINANTS IN FOOD
14th Session

Virtual session, 3-7 and 13 May 2021

Agenda Item 15:

Discussion paper on cadmium and lead in quinoa

(Codex Circular Letter CL 2021/22-CF)

European Union Competence
European Union Vote

The European Union (EU) welcomes the discussion paper on cadmium and lead in quinoa, prepared by the Codex and JECFA secretariats.

The EU considers that as the MLs for lead should be established at a level as low as reasonably achievable, because there is no evidence for a threshold for critical lead-induced effects and the current levels of dietary exposure to lead might affect neurodevelopment in foetuses, infants and children. Therefore, the EU would be in favour to extend the Codex ML of 0.2 mg/kg for cereals to quinoa.

The EU considers that the MLs for cadmium should be established at a level as low as reasonably achievable, because the mean exposure for adults across Europe is close to, or slightly exceeding, the EU TWI of 2.5 µg/kg bw and subgroups such as vegetarians, children, smokers and people living in highly contaminated areas may exceed the TWI by about 2-fold. As literature, studies and also data from EU stakeholders indicate that compared to other cereals quinoa shows a higher uptake of cadmium from the soil, which also depends on the cultivar and the soil, the EU would be in favour of the establishment of a Codex ML of 0.15 mg/kg for cadmium in quinoa.