

Minute Statement on measures taken by the European Commission during the management of the contamination of the Belgian food supply with PCBs and dioxins.

Expressed by the Scientific Committee on Food during the plenary meeting on 23 September 1999.

The Committee discussed the request for an opinion on the adequacy in terms of consumer health protection of measures taken by the Commission during the management of the contamination of the Belgian food supply with PCBs and dioxins.

The Committee recognises that the available data do not provide a sound scientific basis to advise the Commission, on the basis of consumer health considerations, on the adequacy of the action levels set in the Commission Decisions¹ for PCBs in food products (including concomitant exposure to dioxins). Those action levels were set by the Commission as an emergency measure in response to safety concerns and were intended to be applied for a limited period of time. However, the Committee stresses that they primarily serve as an indicator for highly contaminated animal products to manage the time-limited contamination episode in Belgium. Therefore, imposition of these pragmatic action levels serves the desirable purpose of identifying highly contaminated foodstuffs and thereby limiting levels of exposure.

¹ Commission Decisions 1999/551/EC and 1999/449/EC.