

Radioactivity in Food and the Environment (RIFE) Report 2015

Area of research interest: [Radioactivity in Food and the Environment](#)

Key findings

The key findings of the report were:

- The total radiation dose to members of the public in the UK is significantly below the EU annual dose limit of 1 millisievert for all exposures.
- The exposure of consumers to radioactivity in 2015 was similar to 2014 for the majority of nuclear sites.
- In 2015, habit surveys were carried out at Bradwell, Harwell, Sizewell and Sellafield in England, and in Chapelcross and Rosyth in Scotland. The results were used to improve the assessment of doses to the members of the public near nuclear licensed sites.
- Following the Fukushima accident in Japan in 2011, food import controls from that country were introduced, and further revised during 2012. Monitoring at UK ports of entry showed little or no radioactivity in food.

Where the results come from

The report combines our monitoring results with those of the Environment Agency, the Northern Ireland Environment Agency and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency. It also combines our data on food with data on environmental sources of radioactivity to provide a comprehensive picture for people who live close to nuclear sites and eat locally produced food.

The science behind the story

Radioactivity has been around since the Earth began and it exists naturally in the atmosphere, soil, seas and rivers. It is also created by human activity during energy production and military operations, and very small amounts get into the food and drink we consume. However, the vast majority of radioactivity found in food results from natural rather than man-made sources.

The main purpose of our monitoring programme is to make sure that levels of radioactivity released into the environment as a result of routine nuclear activities does not present an unacceptable risk to the food we eat.

Research report
PDF

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