

**Advice 09-2018 of the Scientific Committee of the FASFC in regard to action levels for chemical contaminants (aluminium, nitrates and nitrites, tributyltin) in foodstuffs.**

**Background & Terms of reference**

The Scientific Committee is requested to propose action limits for certain combinations of chemical contaminants / foodstuffs for which no maximal limits exist in legislation in order to provide the FASFC a scientific basis in view of the protection of the safety of the food chain.

More specifically it is asked to propose action limits for:

- aluminium in biscuits and bread, baby food with cereals, cocoa powder, tea, wheat, wheat flour, spinach and lettuce;
- nitrate and nitrite in meat products;
- tributyltin in molluscs (octopus, mussels, squid, scallops and other shells).

**Methodology**

The Scientific Committee used a methodology described in the document "Inventory of actions and action limits and proposal of harmonization in the framework of official controls - Part 1 Action limits for chemical contaminants" (AFSCA, 2017) in order to propose action limits.

The action limits have been calculated by dividing the toxicological reference value of the compounds by the 97,5<sup>th</sup> percentile of consumption of concerned foodstuffs. The calculated values were then rounded to one significant figure, as a multiple of the decimal order of magnitude of the calculated value, unless the calculated value is greater than or equal to 12,5 and lower than 17,5 (or, by analogy, in another decimal order of magnitude), to which case a rounding to 15 is used (or, by analogy, in another decimal order of magnitude).

**Results**

Proposed action limits for each matrix/parameter combination are shown in tables here-under.

**Aluminium**

<b>Foodstuff</b>	<b>Proposed action limit (mg/kg)</b>
Baby foods with cereals	20
Biscuits	30
Cocoa powder	90
Chocolate	90
Spinach	80
Wheat	70
Wheat flour	70
Bread	20
Lettuce	80
Tea	2000

### Nitrites and nitrates

Foodstuff	Proposed action limit for nitrites (mg/kg)	Proposed action limit for nitrates (mg/kg)
Meat products (excepted those included in Annex 1)	70	300

### Tributyltin

Foodstuff	Proposed action limit (µg/kg)
Squid	300
Mussels	150
Oysters	700
Scallops	300
Other shells	2000
Shrimps	200
Crab	150
Norway lobster	500
Lobster – Homarus vulgaris	80

### **Conclusions**

The Scientific Committee has proposed action limits for matrix/parameter combinations without maximal limits in legislation, in particular for aluminium, nitrates and nitrites, tributyltin in different foodstuffs.

The full text is available on this website in dutch and in french.