

ADVICE 10-2020

Subject:

**Request for exemption from the legal
requirement to use potable water in a food
ingredient manufacturing process**

(SciCom 2019/23)

Scientific opinion approved by the Scientific Committee on 24 April 2020.

Key terms:

Potable-quality water, exemption, production, food ingredient

Summary:

Question

The Scientific Committee has been asked to assess the food safety risks posed by the use of purified canal water, process water and boiler water a food ingredient manufacturing process.

Method

The advice is based on expert opinion on the technical file introduced by the operator.

Advice

The Scientific Committee notes that there are (regularly) numerous non-compliances with regard to the quality of purified canal water used in the production process of a food ingredient, in particular with regard to certain pesticide residues, microbiological indicator parameters and trihalomethanes. The risks in terms of food safety were assessed by the Scientific Committee and found to be very low in the context of the manufacture of the food ingredient referred to in the technical dossier. Indeed, this water is only used during the pre-treatment of the raw materials. However, the current process applied to purify canal water does not completely rule out the presence of chemical contaminants in the food ingredient and its by-product. The Scientific Committee is of the opinion that the food ingredient and its by-product, in view of their origin, should not be contaminated by chemical contaminants, such as residues of pesticides or human medicinal products due to chemical contaminants possibly present in the canal water.

With regard to process water, the Scientific Committee notes that non-compliances occur almost systematically for the indicator parameter 'free residual chlorine', and sporadically for certain microbiological indicator parameters and the indicator parameter 'pH'. The Scientific Committee assesses the food safety risks, with regard to the use of this process water in the manufacture of the food ingredient referred to in the technical dossier, as very low.

As regards boiler water, the Scientific Committee has no comments.

Uncertainties

The uncertainties in this advice are those inherent to an expert opinion.

Conclusions

The Scientific Committee is of the opinion that the food safety risks related to the use of purified canal water, process water and boiler water, in the manufacture of the food ingredient referred to in the technical file, are very low. However, the use of insufficiently purified canal water may give rise to the introduction of chemical contaminants into the food ingredient and its by-product. Therefore, the Scientific Committee recommends adding an additional activated carbon filtration step in the purification of canal water.