

Background - Risk Assessment of T-2 and HT-2 mycotoxins in Food

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This is a paper for discussion.

This does not represent the views of the Committee and should not be cited.

1. The mycotoxins T-2 (T2)/HT-2 (HT2) were previously assessed by the COT in 2018 (COT, 2018) and 2021 (COT, 2021), reviewing their presence in the diet of infants and young children and the potential implications of combined mycotoxin exposure, respectively.
2. In 2020, the European Commission proposed establishing maximum levels for T2/HT2 which are lower than the current indicative levels set out in the European Commission Recommendation 2013/165/EU. The COT was asked by the FSA to assess the risk to UK consumers from T2/HT2 in foods. This will aid the FSA in their review of the T2/HT2 and development of risk management options, taking into consideration the following:

- the occurrence of T2/HT2 in commodities produced and imported into the UK and its annual variability and the effects of processing;
- exposures of UK consumers to these mycotoxins in the diet; and,
- the existence of mitigation measures.

3. As part of this work, the COT considered “the existing health-based guidance values (HBGVs) for T2/HT2 mycotoxins set by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA)” in February 2023, and agreed a HBGV for FSA risk assessments going forward (TOX/2023/04).

4. The previous discussion paper (TOX/2023/04) also provided an overview of JECFA’s recent 2022 evaluation of T2, HT2 and 4,15-diacetoxyscirpenol (DAS) in food. At that time, only the summary and conclusions were publicly available. JECFA established a new group ARfD for T2, HT2 and DAS of 0.32 µg/kg bw, and also a group TDI of 0.025 µg/kg bw for T2, HT2 and DAS, alone or in combination. The COT noted that these HBGVs are broadly in line with EFSA’s HBGVs which were established in 2017 (a group ARfD of 0.3 µg/kg bw for T2, HT2 and NEO and a group TDI of 0.02 µg/kg bw for T2 (x 1), HT2 (x 1) and NEO (x 0.3)). Overall, the COT was content to continue using EFSA’s HBGVs for future risk assessments.

5. JECFA’s evaluation of T2, HT2, and DAS from their 93rd meeting was published in March 2023 (JECFA, 2023). However, this ‘yellow paper’ summary report does not include the complete toxicological dataset used for their risk assessment. It is not known when the full toxicological monograph will be published by JECFA.

6. This discussion paper provides an assessment of T2/HT2 based on UK occurrence data for T2/HT2 mycotoxins across a range of food groups. Neosolaniol (NEO) and 4,15-diacetoxyscirpenol (DAS) have not been included, as the FSA did not think there was sufficient data available for these compounds to be included at present.