

COT Risk analysis framework

If risk assessment indicates a need to reduce the risk associated with a chemical in food, then the Food Standards Agency will consider risk management. Risk management options include regulatory measures to limit the use of a particular chemical, or limiting the amounts allowed to be present in different types of food. This normally happens internationally, for example by European directives, in order to have similar standards of safety for imported food as for UK-produced food. Other risk management measures include withdrawing affected foods from sale, or advising people to eat less of certain types of foods.

Advice on eating certain types of food needs to take into account people's eating habits and so can differ in different countries.

The Food Standards Agency makes decisions on risk management for food chemicals, not the COT. However, the COT may be asked to advise on the risks associated with different risk management options, in order to support the Agency's decisions. The COT also conducts risk assessment of chemicals in consumer products and the environment. In these cases, other Government departments are responsible for the risk management.

Risk communication includes an interactive exchange of information amongst risk assessors, risk managers, consumers and other interested parties, collectively known as stakeholders.

To facilitate the risk communication, the COT publishes its papers and draft opinions on this website. People with an interest in a topic being discussed by the COT are welcome to submit additional information or to request an invitation to attend COT meetings.

If the COT identifies risks associated with chemicals in the environment or in products other than food, then the risk management is the responsibility of other Government departments.