

COMMITTEE ON TOXICITY OF  
CHEMICALS IN FOOD, CONSUMER  
PRODUCTS AND THE ENVIRONMENT



STATEMENT ON  
SURVEILLANCE FOR THE MYCOTOXIN  
STERIGMATOCYSTIN

1. We have been informed of the results of a surveillance exercise conducted by the Joint Food Safety and Standards Group of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and the Department of Health in which food samples collected between May 1997 and March 1998 were analysed for the presence of the mycotoxin, sterigmatocystin.[1]
2. We welcome the new data and are reassured that no sample contained detectable levels of sterigmatocystin using a sensitive reliable analytical procedure, (Limit of Detection  $3\mu\text{g/kg}$ ). In the absence of any detectable contamination of foodstuffs there is no evidence of any risk to human health from sterigmatocystin.
3. We have been advised by the Committees on Carcinogenicity and Mutagenicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment that sterigmatocystin is an *in-vivo* mutagen, an animal carcinogen and a potential human carcinogen.[2]
4. We reiterate our earlier comments [3] that, as there is a continuing possibility of sporadic instances of significant mycotoxin contamination occurring in foodstuffs, we *recommend* continued vigilance to ensure this mycotoxin does not contaminate the food supply.
5. Surveillance should continue for mycotoxins whose presence in the diet is likely to result in widespread exposure of the UK population and for those mycotoxins where toxicological data indicate a specific hazard.

June 1998

## REFERENCES

1. Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food 1998, Food Surveillance Information Sheet No. 162, 9 pp., October 1998.
2. Committees on Toxicity, Mutagenicity and Carcinogenicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (1991). 1991 Annual Report of the Committees on Toxicity, Mutagenicity and Carcinogenicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment. London: HMSO.
3. Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, (1987) Mycotoxins. Food Surveillance Paper No. 18. London: HMSO.