2017 Fipronil contaminated eggs - Things to know

23 August 2017

Millions of eggs have been removed from supermarket shelves after the discovery that some eggs, originating from farms in the Netherlands, were contaminated with an insecticide called fipronil. So far, contaminated eggs have been found in 16 European countries.

No cases of illness from eating contaminated eggs have been recorded, and no acute health effects are expected from the current levels of exposure of the eggs containing fipronil. The health risk to consumers is low and European food safety authorities are advising that there is no need for people to stop eating eggs with a few exceptions:

- Eggs marked with the code 2NL-4015502 have shown the highest levels of contamination and should not be eaten. If you find eggs marked with this code, throw them away.
- There is an additional list of egg codes that have shown elevated fipronil concentrations which can be found on the website of The Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority. They advise that eggs bearing these codes should not be consumed by children.

Washing or cooking eggs will not remove the fipronil contamination from the eggs.

It is safe to eat chicken as in general the meat we eat comes from broiler chickens and not laying hens.

Although the health risk is low, the contamination stems from the illegal use of fipronil to control mites, on a number of farms in the Netherlands. Fipronil is a chemical that is used by vets to combat fleas, mites and ticks in dogs and cats. The use of fipronil in food-producing animals is illegal in the EU and a criminal investigation into the case is underway. While the investigation goes on the transport of eggs, laying hens and manure from the businesses implicated has been stopped.

National authorities and retailers are taking measures to recall and remove from sale contaminated batches of eggs, and products. Some retailers have removed all eggs from sale, as a precautionary measure.

Please check the advice of your national food safety authority for more information on what action, if any, you should take:

- The Netherlands
- Belgium
- United Kingdom
- Denmark
- Germany
- Ireland
- France
- Sweden
- Austria
- Italy
- Luxembourg
- Poland
- Romania
- Slovenia
- Slovakia
- Switzerland
- European Commission statement