

Radioactivity in Food and the Environment (RIFE) report 2021

Area of research interest: [Radioactivity in Food and the Environment](#)

Project status: Completed

Conducted by: Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science

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This report covers sampling and analysis carried out in 2021 as part of the radiological monitoring programme. The main purpose of the programme is to make sure that discharges from the UK nuclear sites do not cause unacceptable exposure to radioactivity through our food. It is available on [gov.uk](#).

Key findings

The key findings of the RIFE report 2021 are:

- the total radiation dose to members of the public in the UK is significantly below the annual dose limit of 1 millisievert for all exposures
- the exposure of consumers to radioactivity in 2021 was similar than in 2020 for most nuclear sites

Where the results come from

The report combines our monitoring results with those of the Environment Agency, Natural Resources Wales the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency and Food Standards Scotland. It brings together our data on food from habits surveys and data on environmental sources of radioactivity to provide a comprehensive picture for people who live close to nuclear sites and eat locally produced food.

Habits surveys

Habits surveys are conducted to establish the habits of people living and working near nuclear sites in the United Kingdom. This includes the food they eat and the activities they carry out in the area around nuclear sites. The information from the surveys and data on the levels of radioactivity found in food and the environment are used to calculate the level of radiation they are exposed to.

In 2022, habits surveys were carried out at:

- [Aldermaston and Burghfield](#)
- [Springfields](#)
- [Sellafield](#)

The results were used to improve the assessment of doses to the members of the public near nuclear licensed sites.

RIFE Survey

As well as the publication of RIFE 27, we are also inviting members of the public to take part in a survey looking at how best to take RIFE forward. There are a maximum of 14 questions and the survey should take about 15 minutes to complete. You can access the survey via [this link](#).

FSA Explains

Radioactivity

Radioactivity has been around since the Earth formed. It exists naturally in the atmosphere, soil, seas and rivers. It is also created by human activity during energy production and military operations.

Very small amounts of radioactivity get into our food and drink. Most of the radioactivity found in food results from natural rather than man-made sources.