

Nitrate surveillance: Appendix 2

Letter used from January 2021 for samples collected in GB

Date
xxxx

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: UK Nitrate Monitoring Programme

Thank you for your continued support of the UK Nitrate Monitoring Programme by allowing ADAS to collect field samples of your product, for analysis of nitrate content.

As you may be aware, GB retained law 1258/2011 came into force in December 2011. This Regulation amends GB retained law 1881/2006 which sets maximum limits for nitrate levels in lettuce and spinach, together with a statutory requirement for Member States to monitor nitrate levels in certain vegetables.

The GB retained law 1258/2011 has applied in the UK since 23 December 2011 and sets out new, permanent limits in green leafy vegetables; except the limits for rocket which applied specifically from 1 April 2012. It ends the previous temporary derogations which permitted the UK and some other EU countries to exceed maximum limits, without compromising consumer food safety, for fresh lettuce and spinach grown and intended for consumption on their own respective territories. Limits have also been included for rocket for the first time under this new Regulation. Furthermore, the regulation now allows Member States to communicate results of the monitoring programme to the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) on a regular basis, rather than the mandatory deadline of June 30 each year. This change will, however, not affect the programme. I have attached details of the permitted maximum nitrate limits in Appendix 1.

I am pleased to provide you with the analytical results for recent sample(s) of your product, collected as part of the monitoring programme, in Table 1. Data collected will be collated, anonymised and published by the Food Standards Agency.

Although the information we have provided is simply for your information, if you do find any analytical results for nitrate in produce from your farm that are above the maximum limits, then you may wish to verify your application of the Code of Good Agricultural Practice and the controls you have in place. It is, therefore, expected that any potential breaches of limits would be addressed through voluntary review of agronomic practices. Other action(s) could be considered in the event of a breach that presents a food safety concern. In this case the FSA would take appropriate action in the interest of consumer safety. Any additional data on nitrate in leafy vegetables you may have as part of your own monitoring would be most useful and such information can be submitted to the Food Standards Agency directly or via a Trade Association and will be treated in confidence.

If you have any queries about your results please feel free to contact me at the above address, or for more general queries about the monitoring programme, please contact Mr Ian Smith at the Food Standards Agency (Tel 020 7276 8375).

Yours sincerely

Angela Huckle
Associate Director
ADAS Horticulture
RSK ADAS Ltd
cc: Ian Smith, Food Standards Agency
Encs