

UK supermarkets reject irradiation

A survey by The Food Commission, May 2002

In February 2002 The Food Commission conducted a survey of the nine major UK supermarkets to find out their policies on irradiated food. All of them replied that their policy was not to stock irradiated products. The supermarkets was also asked them how they check that their standards are maintained. This is what they told us.

Asda

Does not stock irradiated products. Asda says it makes its policy clear to suppliers, and relies on suppliers to check their products. Their policy depends on customer feedback rather than on government legislation.

Co-operative group

Does not sell any irradiated food and its brand specifications prohibit the use of irradiated ingredients. The Co-op sends samples for laboratory testing. They state: 'We are committed to full ingredient labelling and support the view that any irradiated ingredients should be labelled irrespective of the level, so the consumer can choose.'

Iceland

Does not stock irradiated products. Iceland states that all suppliers for Iceland own-label products go through a stringent approval and monitoring procedure.

Safeway

Does not stock irradiated products. Safeway states that it sends samples for laboratory testing, and that they are in favour of labelling of irradiated products.

Sainsbury's

Does not stock irradiated products. They said: 'We don't sell irradiated products because our customers don't want them. Sainsbury's monitors its products by sending samples for laboratory testing, and relying on the surveillance carried out by the suppliers of high risk products such as prawns and spices.'

Marks and Spencer

Does not stock irradiated products. M&S told us: 'The source and standard of all Marks & Spencer products and ingredients are specified to the manufacturer and are audited by Marks & Spencer technologists.'

Somerfield

Does not use irradiated ingredients in Somerfield own-brand products. Somerfield sends its samples for laboratory testing, carries out surveys on 'high risk' own-label products, and have made their suppliers aware of their policy.

Tesco

Policy is not to stock irradiated foods. They told us: 'Tesco is a customer focused business and our policy is not to stock irradiated foods or food products containing irradiated ingredients.'

Waitrose

Does not use irradiated ingredients in Waitrose own-brand products. Waitrose sends samples for laboratory testing. Their policy states that 'suppliers shall ensure that a suitable traceability system is in place to ensure that Waitrose product is not irradiated, and details of the system and any results obtained shall be made available to Waitrose.'