

SPECTRUM

Does processing alter the pesticide content?

Peeling, cooking, leavening – processing methods have an influence on the levels of pesticide residues in food. Whether marmalade or beer contain higher or lower residue levels than the raw orange or the malt is determined in processing studies. The BfR has evaluated a number of these studies on behalf of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and derived specific processing factors for many different pesticide-food combinations. The processing factor indicates the factor by which the pesticide residue increases or decreases through the typical processing of food. In this way, a European database currently containing data on 143 different active pesticidal substances has been built up. These factors help to improve the risk assessment and provide monitoring authorities with the first indications of whether a processed food was made from a raw product which complied with the maximum legally permitted residue level of a pesticide.

More information:
www.bfr.bund.de/en > A-Z index: processing factors



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Don't put bamboo utensils in the microwave

Whether it's multiple use coffee-to-go cups or the set of dishes with the animal motif, the trade has a large range of "bamboo ware" on offer for children as well as adults. The brightly coloured dishes are light and breakproof and contain bamboo fibres as a filler. From a health point of view, however, these products are not all suitable for use as dishes because of the plastics that are used. Melamine resins made from melamine and formaldehyde are often used in the manufacture of bamboo ware. The BfR has established that excessive quantities of these substances transfer from the dishes to the food at high temperatures and can therefore pose a risk to health. According to the information given by the manufacturers, food in bamboo dishes may not be heated in the microwave for this reason. By the way, advertisements for bamboo ware sometimes bear statements such as "contains no plastic" or "100% natural". These markings are misleading, because they do not take into consideration that these products are also made of plastic, state laboratories and consumer protection centres complain.

More information:
www.bfr.bund.de/en > A-Z index: melamine

Lashing out

Eyelash growth serums promise long, thick eyelashes. They are marketed in Germany as cosmetic products. The active substances they contain are based on the endogenous hormone Prostaglandin F. A BfR safety assessment revealed that lash boosters of this kind constitute a health risk. The BfR bases its findings among other things on clinical studies and long-term observations with a drug authorised in the US for the treatment of reduced eyelash growth containing an active compound structurally related to Prostaglandin F. Hyperpigmentation of the skin and eyelashes was observed along with itchy, reddened eyes, changes in the structure of the fatty tissue on the eyelid and reduced intraocular pressure. In addition to this, brown pigment can permanently accumulate in the iris. Consumers can identify eyelash growth serums containing prostaglandins if an ingredient has "prost" as part of its name.



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