

Irradiation Free Planet!

Three years ago US anti-irradiation activists in the small Pennsylvania township of Milford Square initiated the first ever international week of action against food irradiation. Their community was facing the development of a nuclear irradiation plant.

Calling themselves No Cobalt-4-Food, they founded & launched International Anti-food Irradiation Day, which was designated to be the first Sunday prior to Thanksgiving. As the idea caught on, the day of action became a week of action to allow flexibility for people in other countries to participate.

That year, 2003, action took place in U.S., Australia, Italy, Brazil, and the Philippines to oppose the use of irradiation technology for food, and also to oppose food irradiation facilities that use Cobalt 60 as their gamma radiation source. Since then, the anti-food irradiation movement around the world has taken on various colorful manifestations. Direct actions have taken place in France, an international lobbying effort and a Global Declaration took place last year, Australia has produced a highly successful guide to eating irradiation-free and the US has managed to hold the industry at bay. The great news is that the community of Milford Square won the battle against the irradiator and it has now been shut down and the Cobalt-60 has been removed!

Unfortunately, other communities still face the threat of becoming home to nuclear irradiation plants – and the list of approved foods grows longer in the US. Irradiation trials of Philippine mangoes are taking place. Australian irradiated mangoes have once again appeared in New Zealand shops and Japan seems to be following the US down the irradiation path. The

campaign goes on and the week of action continues. Though they could hang up their boots and take a rest, the people of Milford Square will be joining us this year to celebrate the International Week of Action. Milford Square sits on the traditional lands of the Lenape Nation. The community will be holding a Sacred Ceremony.

For more information on the Milford Square, Pennsylvania campaign: www.nocobalt-4-food.org Photos from Nocobalt-4-food.org courtesy of Stew Schrauger

Irradiation in the European Union

The EU has placed on ban on further irradiation approvals due to scientific research questioning the safety of some chemicals formed when food is exposed to radiation. The “radiolytic products” in question are “cyclobutanones” which have been linked to genetic damage.

The EU campaign now has the challenge of not only maintaining this ban, but winding back existing approvals so Europeans can enjoy eating irradiation-free.



The International Week of Action Against Food Irradiation started in 2003 with about 300 citizens of Milford Square, Pennsylvania, participating in a rally and traditional native Lenape Nation ceremony to protest the installation of a nuclear food irradiation facility in their township. Milford Square will be holding a ceremony again this year.

Irradiation Free Planet is being produced as part of the International Week of Action Against Food Irradiation. It contains updates and information on food irradiation campaigns and food issues from around the world and is being distributed internationally through worldwide anti-food irradiation, environment, anti-nuclear, food, and social justice networks.

Report from France

French Collective Against Food Irradiation is once again taking part in this year's 'international week of action against food irradiation'. Although food irradiation is still not widely accepted by European consumers, civil society must continue to draw awareness to the dangers related to food irradiation and inform citizens on the expansion of irradiation facilities throughout the world, and especially in developing countries.

The French Collective is a collaboration of food, environment, anti-nuclear and other organizations. Members include:

Action Consommation,
Agir Pour
l'Environnement,
Les Amis de la Terre –
France,
Association Léo Lagrange
pour la Défense des
Consommateurs,
Association pour
l'Information sur la
Dénaturation des Aliments
et de la Santé (AIDAS),
ATTAC – France,
Biocoop,
Collectifs Bure-Stop,
Confédération Paysanne,
CRiRAD,
Ecoforum,
EKWO,
Fédération Nature et Progrès,
Food and Water Watch Europe,
Mouvement pour les Droits et le Respect des
Génération Futures (MDRGF),
Réseau Sortir du Nucléaire.

This year, the French collective is writing a report on the global food irradiation situation. The document will be published and widely disseminated through our member organizations and the media. We hope that this action will reinvigorate the debate on food irradiation in France and Europe because the struggle against food irradiation is not over!

France allows the irradiation of: frozen herbs, garlic, shallots, ca-sein, egg whites, frozen shrimp, poultry and frozen frog's legs, plus more... (For a complete list of French and other EU approvals see: <http://www.irradiation.info>)

United Kingdom and Ireland

Irradiation monitoring is taking place in Europe. This year, both the UK and Irish governments reported finding illegally irradiated products. The UK reported that 50 percent of food supplements tested were either wholly irradiated or contained an irradiated ingredient. None of the irradiated products were labeled. A full report naming the brands is available: www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2006/feb/irradexercise

Also in the UK, AEA Technology, a company that was formerly part of the UK Atomic Energy Authority, was found guilty in February 2006 of a series of failings that led to a Cobalt-60 transportation incident 2 years ago. The company was reprimanded and fined for exposing its employees and subcontractors "to potentially very high risks from radiation". More info: www.hse.gov.uk/press/2006/e06017.htm



In Ireland, 14 samples of noodles tested positive for irradiated ingredients – none of them were labeled. All irradiated products were removed from sale. A list of brands can be found in the report. www.fsai.ie/industry/surveys/Irradiation_Noodle_2005.PDF

Japan update

Japanese organics and anti-food irradiation campaigners have expressed concern that there is a new push for irradiation in Japan. Irradiation got a bad reputation in Japan in 1978 when campaigners exposed the illegal use of irradiated vegetables in baby food. The vegetables were labelled as 'animal feedstuff', "because there is no law regulating the irradiation of animal feedstuff. And these irradiated vegetables were then re-labelled and supplied to baby food manufacturers such as Wakodo, Meiji, and Snow Brand. The subcontractor and irradiator, Radiye Kogyo, were found guilty in June 1984 and the presidents of these companies were sentenced to eight months imprisonment." (Food Irradiation Network Japan, Risks and Problems Regarding Food Irradiation, 1999)

Food Irradiation remains a controversial technology in Japan. Only potatoes have been approved for irradiation. Hiroko Kubota from Food Irradiation Network – Japan reports:

“The Japanese Government is now going ahead to promote legal procedures for irradiation of spice and herbs (94 items) from December 2005. The Governmental Atomic Committee launched the subcommittee for food irradiation, and the sub-commission had published the report to promote it. Now, the Atomic Committee authorized the report and is pushing to Ministry of Health and Labor to permit the irradiation for spice and herbs.

“Food Irradiation Network-Japan has worked to organize a new alliance against food irradiation in June. A large meeting was held in September and the newly formed “No-Irradiated Food Alliance” now comprises over 40 citizen groups, organic agriculture groups and anti-nuclear groups.”

United States update

While food irradiation appears to be expanding internationally, its presence has decreased in the United States over the last several years. There are roughly 50 irradiation facilities in the United States, but most of them are used for medical supplies and other non-food items. Several years ago, many major grocery stores carried irradiated food, primarily irradiated beef. However, irradiated food, which the US government requires to be labeled, has proved unpopular with consumers. Irradiated food sold in restaurants, hospitals and schools does not require a label. As a result, many grocery stores took irradiated food off their shelves.

Public rejection has led numerous irradiators to pull the plug on their operations. The most notable irradiation company to be driven out of business was industry cheerleader SureBeam; its demise in 2004 signaled a marked decline in the U.S. industry. The food irradiation facility operated by CFC Logistics in Milford Township, Pennsylvania also shut down after just a year and a half of operation, citing low demand for irradiated food. Many local residents welcomed CFC Logistics' closure with glee; two grassroots groups in the

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community had fought the facility tooth and nail, opposing both the plant's safety risks and irradiated food.

On May 29, 2003, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) chose to include irradiated ground beef in federal nutrition programs, including the program that provides food for school lunches, despite overwhelming public opposition. In September 2004, irradiated ground beef was available to schools and cost 29-80 cents more per pound than non-irradiated ground beef. The choice to serve irradiated beef was left up to local school officials. Although Nebraska, Texas and Minnesota made requests for irradiated beef the first year, their orders were never filled, which is believed to be due to the higher cost of irradiated ground beef. For the past three school years, not one state placed an order for irradiated ground beef on behalf of its school districts. A dozen school districts, including Los Angeles, Washington DC, and Iowa City, have banned irradiated food, citing health concerns and parental opposition.

Nonetheless, there are still several food irradiators operating in the U.S., as well as a few self-promoting entrepreneurs who are betting that the irradiation industry still has a future. Huisken Beef Company, based in Minnesota took over the SureBeam irradiator operating at a Texas university; Sadex purchased SureBeam's irradiator in Sioux City, Iowa; Food Technology Services in Florida irradiates food; and Hawaii Pride operates an irradiator for papaya and other tropical fruit in Hilo, Hawaii.

New Updates

One of those still enamored with irradiation is the head of Wegman's supermarkets, which are found throughout the northeast. Probably the only large grocery store chain selling irradiated ground beef, the company went so far as to issue a press release this summer entitled "Some Like it Pink" which trumpeted the return of irradiated meat to its shelves. This unfortunate press release instructed consumers, in direct contradiction to guidance given by the USDA, that they could cook their irradiated beef however they like. This is risky advice for consumers, as the USDA has repeatedly said that irradiating food does not make it sterile, and that irradiated beef should still be cooked to 160 degrees. Food & Water Watch and a New York group, Rochester Against the Misuse of Pesticides (RAMP), have filed a complaint with the USDA regarding Wegman's unsound advice.

Another company attempting to revive the U.S. irradiation industry is Pa'ina Hawaii, which is trying to build a food irradiation facility next to the airport in Honolulu, Hawaii. This poorly chosen site would use cobalt-60 to irradiate produce for export. A grassroots organization, Concerned Citizens of Honolulu, opposes this plant

because it would bring radioactive material to an airport, with its risk of aviation accidents and terrorist threats, and it would also be located near Pearl Harbor and other military bases and in a tsunami evacuation zone. On behalf of the local group, Earthjustice Hawaii has petitioned the Nuclear

Regulatory Commission to require an environmental review of this proposal. In a big win, the NRC agreed to an environmental assessment, which is currently being conducted.

Food irradiation has received more media attention in the U.S. recently

in response to the recent E.coli outbreak in spinach. The CEO of Sadex Corporation, David Corbin, ate a plate of spinach that had been inoculated with E.coli and then irradiated. This corporation, along with other irradiation companies, has been making claims that future outbreaks could be controlled through the use of irradiation. However, the FDA has only approved the use of irradiation on fruits and vegetables for plant pests not for food safety concerns caused by E. coli and other bacteria. All of which speaks to a fundamental flaw in advocating food irradiation: it does not address the underlying problems that cause contaminated food. Rather than zapping food at the end of the line, the food industry should deal with the conditions like dirty slaughterhouses, crowded feedlots, and contaminated water that create and spread food safety problems.

More Info: see fwwatch.org/food/usfoodirradiation/

New Zealand

Australian irradiated mangoes are back on the shelves in New Zealand. Friends of the Earth New Zealand reports:

"Irradiated Australian mangoes have just recently appeared in a range of Auckland shops. The labelling varies a lot between shops. Earlier this year, Friends of the Earth NZ uncovered and exposed unlabelled irradiated mangoes at several outlets, all from Fresh World fruit and vegetable stores." Despite media coverage and appeals to all relevant government bodies from both New Zealand and Australia, no prosecution took place.

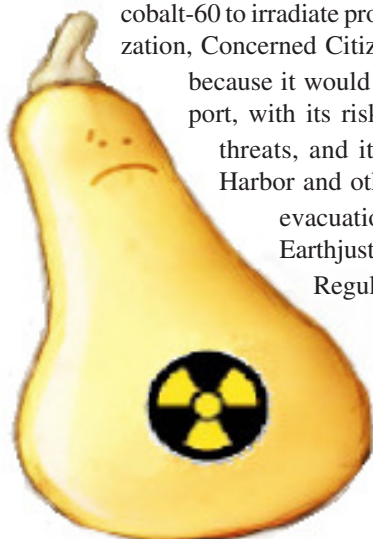
Australia's mango season has just started again (remember, we in the Southern Hemisphere are in spring right now). This time around "some of these stores have prominent signs saying "Irradiated Mangoes", as well as having separate stickers on the mangoes stating that they have been irradiated. Other Fresh World stores have not displayed the signs, but each mango has a separate sticker stating that they have been 'Irradiated to protect the New Zealand Environment'.

"However some mangoes have appeared in the smaller supermarket chains, with only the almost unreadable words "Irradiated Fruit" on the tiny label," which contains other information and a picture of a mango carrying a suitcase which say "export quality" (see photo below). "So far they have not appeared in the major Woolworths or Food Town supermarket chain."

"Currently we are trying to get a leading TV current affairs programme to expose the foisting of nuked food onto unsuspecting consumers. So far, each year these mangoes have come in, the network here has generated negative publicity for the mangoes and their retailers. We have to get the regulators to act on the totally inadequate labelling, as it is a breach of the requirement in the Food Safety Code that all irradiated products must be clearly labelled."

Hear, hear! Australia and New Zealand share one food authority. One of our next major steps is to change labelling laws in our countries. Of course, stopping the shipment of irradiated mangoes to New Zealand would also be fun and a great thing to do. The mangoes exported to NZ are being irradiated in Queensland, Australia. Any tip-offs on when the next load is set to go would be greatly appreciated by campaigners here in Australia.

Right: Enlarged image of label that appeared on Australian Mangoes on sale in New Zealand, which is only 1.9cm X 2.6cm



Australia

Irradiation week events: Not surprisingly, food will play a large part in Australian Food Irradiation events this year. Food Irradiation Watch in Brisbane, Queensland will be holding an “Irradiation-Free Morning Tea” as part of the International Week of Action on Food Irradiation. The morning tea will be the first event in a weekend of activities and workshops themed “Towards a nuclear-free future.” The purpose of the weekend is to educate, inform and empower community members to take action against the nuclear industry in all its guises. Herbal teas and tropical fruit are among products approved for irradiation in Australia and New Zealand. The “Irradiation-Free Morning Tea” will feature non-irradiated and organic foods and beverages.

Mangoes are a symbol of summer in Australia and many Australians are outraged that they have now been approved for irradiation. Friends of the Earth Melbourne will be holding a mango action in the city to raise awareness about the plight of this Australian icon.

In Narangba, Queensland, home to Australia’s third nuclear irradiation plant and the first designed specifically for food, community members are planning an awareness raising walk through the Narangba Industrial Estate – Australia’s irradiated exported mangoes are being irradiated at the Steritech nuclear irradiation plant here.

The community continues the fight at Narangba. The Narangba community is also currently involved in a class action to sue the state government for placing dangerous industries, such as the nuclear irradiation plant, in their midst. To accommodate the nuclear facility, the industrial estate was re-zoned to a “Hazardous, Noxious, and Offensive Industries” area. Chemical plants, tanneries and other toxic industries now operate in the estate. Last year, a fire at Binary Chemicals released a toxic plume in to the air and water that has been linked to numerous health problems in the community. Chemicals released into the air and water by the Binary fire include: 2,4 D, diuron, glyphosate, chlorpyrifos (banned in the US due to the risks to children), and bifenthrin (banned in Europe due to its toxicity and link with cancer). Some of these chemicals are still being produced by other corporations at Narangba Industrial Estate. The irradiation facility continues to operate and now treats food.

In early days of opposition to the nuclear irradiator, community leaders organized several large walks through the area, which sits on Salt Water Creek, a designated protected wetland. Brisbane Region Environment Council representatives lead the walks pointing out unique ecological features, including waterways, native animal habitats and plants. Six years on, in June this year, Michael Petter once again led a tour through the industrial estate. Students from the “Students of Sustainability” conference learned not only about nuclear irradiation, but experienced first hand the legacy of toxic industrial development. None of the previously preserved natural areas were accessible. Due to the chemical fire, tailings dams had been built up to attempt to contain pollutants within estate boundaries. The entire non-business area is now a fenced off, waste zone.

Local property values have dropped and residents are suffering the physical, social and financial consequences of living near a toxic time bomb. The commu-

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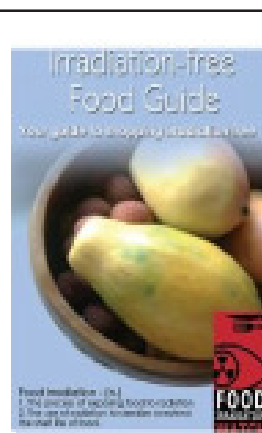
nity is now suing for compensation and to have all of the “Hazardous, Noxious and Offensive Industries” removed.

You can take a ‘virtual tour’ of the Narangba Industrial Estate at www.brisbane.foe.org.au/narangba.htm A second real and public tour of the Estate is being planned for the near future.

Irradiation-free Food Guide a resounding success

In 2005, Food Irradiation Watch surveyed over 1000 companies on their irradiation policies and practices. The results of this research were compiled in to a pocket size guide to eating irradiation free, released in March 2006. After an initial print run of 5,000 ran out in one month, the Guide was reprinted thanks to generous donations from our supporters. Now over 19,000 copies of the Guide have been distributed around Australia. According to Food Irradiation Watch campaigner, Robin Taubenfeld, “The Guide has been the most successful way of raising awareness in the Australian community. During the campaign to stop the development of a nuclear irradiation plant and the introduction of food irradiation, we held rallies, forums, public meetings, actions, letter writing campaigns and stalls. We lobbied politicians, wrote submissions, stopped trucks and finally occupied the construction site. A protest camp was then maintained near the site for 8 months. We did it all! The Guide grew out of a desire to produce a more educational campaign and to appeal to a wider audience. Our ultimate goal is a ban on food irradiation in Australia. We strongly believe that informed consumers will reject irradiated food – and that ultimately it should be the consumer’s choice. Inadequate and biased labelling regulations make it very difficult for consumers to get informed. The Guide has been developed to do just that! We hope the Guide will get consumers to demand better labeling or irradiation-free policies from the brands they chose. It appears to be working. In October, three companies sent through newly formed irradiation-free policies.”

Irradiation-free honor roll: Several companies stand out in the efforts to oppose food irradiation in Australia this year. The Pancake Parlour restaurant chain in Victoria has distributed an average of 200



Welcome on board!

Kookaburra Raw Peanuts and Camp Oven Mixes Cake Mixes, Grove Fruit Juice and Baker’s Delight have all sent

us their irradiation-free policies and will now be listed in the GREEN section of the Irradiation-free Food Guide. While Kookaburra and Grove are new to the Guide, Baker’s Delight is listed in this year’s version in the Red (non-respondent) category. It is great to see them make the effort to get in to the Green. We hope all of these companies’ commitment will inspire others to go irradiation-free!

Irradiation-free Food Guides at each of its ten stores, making it a great disseminator of information as well as a dedicated pro-organic, irradiation-free business and a delicious place to eat. Abundance Herbs based in Brisbane has been a great campaign supporter and one of the only businesses we have seen that labels their products "free from irradiation." Sonia Fletcher from Abundance Herbs says all her products are labelled free from irradiation, pesticides, herbicides, GM ingredients and artificial fertilisers because people need to be aware of these potentially harmful processes. Sonia makes her own non-irradiated herbal infusions and has been a keen distributor of the Guide. Food Connect, an organic (or near organic) food delivery service based on Community Supported Agriculture principles has also been active in distributing guides, supporting the cause and feeding the campaign. Absolutely Organics in Western Australia and Happy High Herbs nationally have also been great irradiation-free food advocates this year.

The Irradiation-free Food Guide is available on line: www.foodirradiationinfo.org
A second edition of the Guide will be out next year.



Editorial:

Death by Chocolate? Irradiation mutated cocoa!

While our global food irradiation campaigns focus on the post-harvest treatment of food, recent surveying of the food industry shows that the use of radiation to process food takes on various forms. The International Atomic Energy

Agency (IAEA) has a whole program run jointly with the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) to promote the use of nuclear technology on food. Crops are now being radiation-mutated, the process of exposing the seed or seedling to radiation to obtain a desired mutation. Though they vary, some sort of labelling laws generally apply to irradiated foods. These other uses of radiation on our food lesser known and certainly not indicated on product labels.

The IAEA is promoting the development of radiation-mutation cocoa for chocolate. Experiments are already taking place in Ghana. This is where I must draw the line. I normally have a very healthy diet, but like many, I have a few addictions with which I am happy to live... one of them is chocolate. A major factor in opposing food irradiation has been the health of our children – but this time it is all about me! I don't want to eat radiation-mutated chocolate – I would rather pay a fair price to the Ghanaian farmers and let them grow cocoa sustainably – without the involvement of the nuclear industry or Genetically Mutated Organisms.

According to the International Atomic Energy Agency, gamma radiation is used to control CSSV or Cocoa Swollen Shoot Virus. "Gamma-radiation induced mutant cocoa varieties are now growing on 25 farms across Ghana... Under carefully controlled conditions, buds of cocoa plants are bombarded with gamma radiation at the laboratories of the Ghana Atomic Energy Authority (GAEC) in Accra. The radiation causes mutations in the cell DNA and emergence of new plant strains with new disease resistant properties... The successful genesis of this effort - climaxing in this promising mutant cocoa line being recommended for release as a new, high-yielding and disease-resistant variety - shows that mutation induction is a workable and efficient alternative to genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

Reference article: www.iaea.org/NewsCenter/Features/2006/Ghana/cocoa.html

by Robin Taubenfeld – Food Irradiation Watch and Friends of the Earth Brisbane, Australia



**We oppose all use
of nuclear
technology on our
food, whether it is
pre-harvest or
post-harvest. It
is unsafe and
unnecessary....**



HOT NEWS

Winners are Grimmers

Irradiation ruins horse feed

Good eating helps Japanese horses win Melbourne Cup

On November 8, Japanese horses Delta Blues and Pop Rock took out first and second place in Australia's most prestigious race, the Melbourne Cup. One of the main issues concerning overseas breeders and trainers bringing their horses to compete in Australia is maintaining their healthy diet.

Trainer Katsuhiko Sumii was behind the successful plan that ensured that his horses ate well in preparation for the race. "The main issue that threatened to derail the task related to feed" Sumii said... "Jet lag and time-delay issues had little or no bearing on the preparations, but the stable could not bring with it the usual feed the horses have in Japan. We like to use mashed soya beans but were told we could not bring it to Australia. Instead, we bought Australian feed and sent it over to Japan so the horses could get used to it."

Other horses were not so lucky. European trainers Luca Cumani and David Elsworth felt that lack of adequate feed played a part in dashing their horses' hopes at a win. According to the Age, "their horses ate poorly on occasions, particularly soon after their arrival in Melbourne, as their feed was rancid because of the irradiation process used to purify the food."

Full article:
[www.theaustralian.news.com.au/
story/0,20867,20719644-
2722,00.html](http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,20867,20719644-2722,00.html)

Why we oppose food irradiation:

- ⇒ Irradiated food is dangerous to human health
- ⇒ Food irradiation is used as a substitute for good sanitary practices in food production.
- ⇒ Irradiation plants and the transportation of nuclear material to them pose a threat to the environment, workers and surrounding communities
- ⇒ Food irradiation is used to lengthen food shelf life and food miles. It encourages globalisation of production which is detrimental to small family farmers around the world and to the environment
- ⇒ Good food doesn't need irradiating!

You don't have to stomach irradiated food!!!

Get involved in your local campaign!

AUSTRALIA

- ⇒ Food Irradiation Watch - www.foodirradiationinfo.org
PO Box 5829, West End, Brisbane QLD, 4101.

EUROPE

- ⇒ Food and Water Watch Europe - 104, Rue Robespierre
93170 Bagnolet, France

www.fwwatch.org/food/intlfoodirradiation

www.actionconsommation.org/publication/article.php3?id_article=0337

JAPAN

- ⇒ Japan Organics Association. info@joaa.net

NEW ZEALAND (Aotearoa)

- ⇒ Friends of the Earth NZ - PO Box 5599,
Wellesley Street, Auckland, NZ

e: foenz@kcbbs.gen.nz

UNITED STATES

- ⇒ Food and Water Watch -
www.foodandwaterwatch.org

1400 16th Street NW, Suite 225, Washington, DC
20036. p: 202-797-6550

- ⇒ No Cobalt for Food - www.nocobalt-4-food.org
p: 215-552-8903

