

**RESIDUES OF VETERINARY DRUGS AND OTHER CONTAMINANTS IN MEAT AND MEAT PRODUCTS OF SWITZERLAND**

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**Key words:** veterinary drugs, contaminants, meat, meat products

**Background**

Occasional alarming news in media from time to time suggest that our food is contaminated with toxicologically critical substances to a great extent. Especially products of animal origin are suspected; vegetable products exhibit a better image from the start. More or less dangerous substances are generally spread in our natural environment or in that determined by technical influences. As a consequence, food may contain unwanted or even dangerous substances. Some years ago, several cases of poisoning occurred in France and Spain when consumers ate beef livers contaminated with Clenbuterole, a  $\beta$ -agonist, by illegal application [1].

Besides facts like those mentioned above there are, nevertheless, also unproven or simply false charges and statements. In most cases it is difficult for a person without relevant knowledge to decide whether or not there might be a real danger. Neither the size of headlines nor the consumers' occasionally cited competence offer an objectively valid criterion.

**Objectives**

To gain a summary survey of the contamination of meat and meat products in Switzerland in 1998 [2].

**Methods**

Residues of veterinary drugs: Determined by enzyme linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA), verified by GC-MS; HPLC; GC with ECD; CHARM-test

Chlorinated hydrocarbons: GC

Heavy metals: Atomic absorption spectrophotometry (AAS)

**Results, conclusions**

The results show clearly that only a very few number of the analysed samples are contaminated with residues of veterinary drugs or other contaminants. From a consumers' point of view it can be stated that there is very little or no danger when eating meat in Switzerland.

**References**

- [1] Salleras, L.; Dominguez, A.; Mata, E.; Taberner, J. L.; Moro, I. and Salva, P.: Epidemiologic study of clenbuterol poisoning in Catalonia, Spain. Public Health Reports 1995: 110: 336.
- [2] The data are based on results from 1998 and were published in "Mitteilungen des Bundesamtes für Veterinärwesen 6, 111-114 (1999)" in March 1999.

