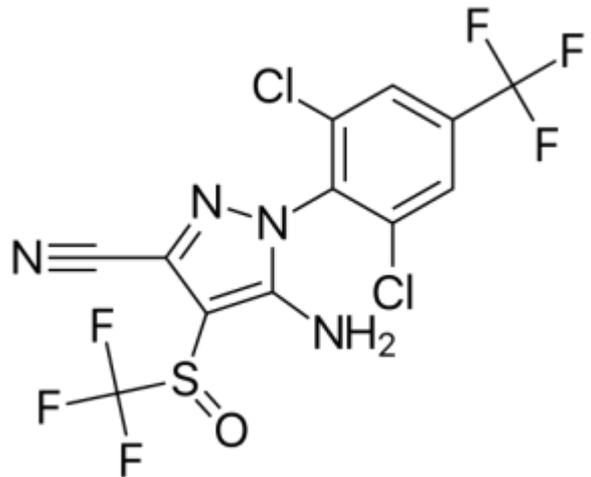


Testing for toxins in our food is always a serious issue. Recently, Europe and parts of Asia, had a scare with an insecticide, Fipronil, found in millions of chicken eggs.

What is Fipronil?

Fipronil is used as a pesticide to protect crops as well as in veterinary medicine to kill off fleas, lice, ticks, roaches, and mites, making it highly toxic. As you can imagine, it is not allowed anywhere near animals in the food production chain, yet somehow, it found its way into chicken coops. We have already seen Fipronil endanger honey bees, resulting in the use of the toxin on corn seeds banned in order to protect the insect.



Fipronil is so dangerous because it can be absorbed by the skin, as well as ingested orally. So, when the insecticide somehow mixed with “Dega 16,” a cleaning agent and sanitizer used on many poultry farms, millions of eggs across fifteen EU countries, as well as Hong Kong and Switzerland, were recalled after they were found to contain Fipronil. More than 150 poultry farms in the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, and France had to be shut down and several German supermarkets pulled eggs from their shelves.

If substantial amounts of the toxic substance are ingested, it can cause damage to the liver, thyroid glands, and kidneys. However, if an adult were simply to eat a normal amount of eggs laced with Fipronil, they might have to deal with irritated eyes and skin, nausea, and vomiting. Germany's Federal Institute for Risk Assessment did estimate that with the current Fipronil levels, a child who weighs around 35 pounds (16 kilograms) could eat 1.7 eggs per day without reaching the threshold where the toxin would become dangerous.

But how did Fipronil Get into the Eggs?

As mentioned earlier, the toxin can be absorbed through the skin, or feathers, in this case. If a pest infestation was treated with Fipronil mixed with "Dega 16", it could have been absorbed by the chickens, and then traces of it can be found later in animal products, such as eggs.



via <http://www.dw.com>

How Can We Test for Fipronil Earlier So This Doesn't Happen Again?

Since this incident, it has become an urgent concern for the analysis/quantitation of Fipronil, and its toxic companion, Amitraz and their metabolites in the European Community as well as in parts of Asia. Even though the use of Fipronil is prohibited for use on food producing animals, it still finds its way into the food on your plate.

Companies, like Phenomenex, have begun to run applications on the insecticide, to learn how to better catch the toxin before it is too late. Chromatography can save the day!

In our technical note, [Fipronil, Amitraz, and their Metabolites from Egg Albumin](#), we used a method, utilizing a SCIEX QTrAP 6500+ with IonDrive Pos/Neg switching, an ultra-high performing [Kinetex® core-shell](#) HPLC particle morphology with a selective Polar C18 column chemistry, and a modified [QuEChERS](#) clean-up to reach below the 5 µg/kg MRL level.

Interested in how the application turned out? [Click here!](#)

What Happens Now?

As the egg-tastrophe continues across Europe and Asia, a lot are wondering how it will be resolved so it doesn't happen again.

European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Vytenis Andriukaitis, said, "First things first. Our common job and our priority now is to manage the situation, gather information, focus on the analysis and lessons to be learned in a view to improve our system."

The European Commission plans to hold a meeting with ministers and regulators on

September 26th to discuss how things will proceed.

Learn more about the Fipronil toxin, and how it might affect you.

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Summary



Article Name

It's an Egg-tastrophe! Fear of Fipronil

Description

Recently, Europe and parts of Asia, have had to recall and destroy millions of eggs that had traces of the insecticide, Fipronil.