

Request

I am looking for food testing data for fish (antibiotics, heavy metals) and vegetables (pesticide).

I am looking for the following Information:

- 1) Test results for antibiotics and heavy metals in fish farmed or caught in the UK
- 2) Test results for pesticides in carrots grown in the UK
- 3) Frequency of the tests, and on what samples they have been performed and by who

The last 12 months or the calendar year of 2018 would suffice.

When you give the test results for antibiotics, could you kindly indicate what antibiotics have been tested for.

Response

Antibiotics in fish

The Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) is responsible in the UK for monitoring food for residues of veterinary medicines, including residues of antibiotics. The VMD has published surveillance results for 2018 at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/residues-of-veterinary-medicines-in-food-2018>

If you require any more detailed information, including on the frequency of sampling, the products tested and who carries out this work for the VMD, you should contact the VMD direct.

Pesticides in carrots

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) carries out the monitoring of pesticides residues in food for the UK. The results of its monitoring programme, which are reviewed by the Expert Committee on Pesticide Residues in Food, are published at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/pesticide-residues-in-food-results-of-monitoring-programme>

Similarly, if you require any more detailed information you should contact the HSE direct.

Local authority sampling data

The FSA is the Central Competent Authority for food safety in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and has a statutory function to protect public health and consumers' other interests in relation to food and drink. Day to day responsibility for enforcement of food law, however, rests with local authorities of which there are 387 in the three countries.

These responsibilities include taking food samples. Local authorities decide their own sampling priorities using a risk-based approach and review these each year, taking account of the results of previous sampling programmes and intelligence. They may include taking samples outside of the national monitoring programmes to test for pesticide or veterinary medicine residues or taking samples to test for heavy metals. The number of samples taken will depend on a range of factors including the number and types of businesses, the results of past inspections and other types of intervention. Local authorities conduct the sampling, arrange for relevant testing and carry out enforcement activity where required.

In terms of your request for sampling data, the FSA holds only partial information. This is provided in the appended table.

To put this partial data into context, please note the points below.

- [Food Standards Scotland](#) (FSS) is responsible for food safety in Scotland so you would have to request any data on local authority sampling in Scotland from FSS.
- Sampling is only one of a number of different approaches that local authorities take to assessing compliance with food law - during inspections, for example, they will check traceability, raw material specifications and certificates of analysis.
- Sampling is not conducted on a random or representative basis but, rather, is used as part of a targeted approach.
- The FSA collects data through its [Local Authority Enforcement Monitoring System \(LAEMS\)](#) on an annual basis and this provides information on the total number of samples local authorities collect but it does not provide details of what particular testing was undertaken or the results of that testing.
- Some, but not all, local authorities report sampling results using the FSA's United Kingdom Food Surveillance System (UKFSS) - use of the system is voluntary.
- Some data may not as yet have been processed and reported to the FSA.

From the partial data that is available to the FSA through UKFSS, it indicates that in 2018:

- Eighteen samples of fish were analysed for heavy metals – the FSA holds details of the results for four of these samples, all of which were satisfactory.
- There are no samples recorded on UKFSS of fish analysed for antibiotics.
- One carrot sample was analysed for pesticides – the sample was satisfactory and free from detectable levels of pesticide residues.

Table – Sample results form UKFSS

Sample Reference	Sample Date	Premises Type	Food Description	Country	Analyst Comments
Testing of fish for heavy metals					
22600753990	13/08/2018	Manufacturers / processors	Vac Packed Kippers	UK	<p>The expanded measurement uncertainties for the metals (k=2) were: Arsenic - 12.45%, Cadmium - 18.67%, Lead - 24.65%, and Mercury - 18.20%.</p> <p>The metals results have been corrected for recovery, where appropriate. The recoveries were: Arsenic - 105%, Cadmium - 102%, Lead - 110% and Mercury - 96%.</p> <p>As a result of the analysis, I am of the opinion that the levels of lead, cadmium and mercury were acceptable and complied with the limits in Commission Regulation (EC) No. 1881/2006 setting maximum levels for certain contaminants in foodstuffs (as amended) which is enforced in England by the contaminants in Food (England) Regulations 2013.</p> <p>There are no European wide limits for arsenic in fish. Most arsenic in food is present in less harmful organic forms.</p> <p>Inorganic arsenic is the most toxic form and in food typically accounts for no more than 1 to 3 per cent of the total arsenic present. Arsenic in fish is mainly present in the forms of arsenobetaine and arsenocholine which are not considered to be a significant risk to health.</p> <p>As a result of the analysis, I am of the opinion that the level of total arsenic was of the same order as the levels normally found in fish. Consequently, I am of the opinion that the level of arsenic in the sample is unlikely to be harmful to health.</p> <p>As a result of the analysis, I am of the opinion that the sample did not contain the polyaromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) tested for above the indicated limits of quantification and was satisfactory in this respect.</p>

Sample Reference	Sample Date	Premises Type	Food Description	Country	Analyst Comments
81400220104	24/08/2018	Manufacturers / processors	FROZEN HERRING	UK - NOT SPECIFIED	The levels of those heavy metal contaminants found in the sample were not excessive. It was free from detectable levels of pesticide residues and was considered satisfactory in this regard.
81400220096	24/08/2018	Manufacturers /processors	FROZEN MACKEREL	UK - NOT SPECIFIED	The levels of those heavy metal contaminants and pesticides found in the sample were not excessive.
81400250729	23/10/2018	Manufacturers / processors	HERRING	UNITED KINGDOM	The levels of those heavy metal contaminants and organochlorine pesticide residues for which analysis was conducted were not excessive.
567HQ22880004612	19/03/2018	Retailers	SEA BASS	UK - NOT SPECIFIED	Not provided
567HQ22880004614	20/03/2018	Retailers	HADDOCK	UK - NOT SPECIFIED	Not provided
567HQ22880004610	19/03/2018	Retailers	YELLOW FIN TUNA	UK - NOT SPECIFIED	Not provided
567HQ22880004621	20/03/2018	Retailers	HADDOCK LOIN	UK - NOT SPECIFIED	Not provided
567HQ22880004609	19/03/2018	Retailers	MSC COD LOINS	UK - NOT SPECIFIED	Not provided
567HQ22880004615	20/03/2018	Retailers	HAKE	UK - NOT SPECIFIED	Not provided
567HQ22880004603	15/03/2018	Retailers	SALMON	UK - NOT SPECIFIED	Not provided
567HQ22880004604	15/03/2018	Retailers	HAKE	UK - NOT SPECIFIED	Not provided
567HQ22880004616	20/03/2018	Retailers	COBBLER (BASA)	UK - NOT SPECIFIED	Not provided
567HQ22880004605	15/03/2018	Retailers	PLAICE	UK - NOT SPECIFIED	Not provided

Sample Reference	Sample Date	Premises Type	Food Description	Country	Analyst Comments
567HQ22880004608	19/03/2018	Retailers	SCOTTISH SALMON FILLET	UK - NOT SPECIFIED	Not provided
567HQ22880004607	15/03/2018	Retailers	COD	UK - NOT SPECIFIED	Not provided
567HQ22880004606	15/03/2018	Retailers	SMOKED COD	UK - NOT SPECIFIED	Not provided
567HQ22880004611	19/03/2018	Retailers	ASC SMOKED COBBLER	UK - NOT SPECIFIED	Not provided
Testing of carrots for pesticide residues					
80200412315	18/06/2018	Restaurants and other Caterers	Carrots	UNITED KINGDOM	<p>The level of the active substance Boscalid found in the sample was within the relevant EU maximum residue limit; the sample was free from detectable levels of other pesticide residues. The levels of those heavy metal contaminants for which analysis was conducted were not excessive.</p> <p>The heavy metals results are not corrected for recovery, the values for which are as follows: Arsenic 86%, Cadmium 86%, Lead 87%, and Mercury 90%</p>