

# Ractopamine in food

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Centre for Food Safety  
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# Ractopamine and its usage

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- ❑ A veterinary drug (a beta-adrenergic agonist)
- ❑ Used as a feed additive to promote growth and increase muscle leanness
- ❑ JECFA has evaluated the safety of ractopamine
  - Not direct carcinogen nor intrinsically genotoxic
  - ADI: 0-1 mcg/kg bw/day
- ❑ Food safety concern is low compared to other beta agonists (e.g. clenbuterol and salbutamol – prohibited substances)
  - Shorter half-life in blood
  - Eliminate faster from the body

# Food Safety standards for Ractopamine - Codex

- ❑ Codex has established MRLs for Ractopamine hydrochloride in various tissues of cattle and pig

Cattle Tissue	MRL (µg/kg)	Pig Tissue	MRL (µg/kg)
Muscle	10	Muscle	10
Liver	40	Liver	40
Kidney	90	Kidney	90
Fat	10	Fat (include fat plus skin)	10

# International situation

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- ❑ Ractopamine is permitted for use in food producing animals in over 20 countries or jurisdictions (e.g. Australia, US, Canada, Japan)
- ❑ However, its use in food producing animals is not yet permitted in some other countries or jurisdictions (e.g. Mainland China and EU countries)

# Local situation (1)

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- ❑ Ractopamine hydrochloride has been registered as a pharmaceutical product in Hong Kong since 2007 for use in pigs as a growth promoter under a prescription given by a registered veterinary surgeon
  
- ❑ The Harmful Substances in Food Regulations (Cap. 132AF) governs the import and sale of food containing harmful substances (most are veterinary drugs):
  - Schedule 1: 41 substances MRLs in food (38 are VDs)
  - Schedule 2: 7 prohibited substances (All 7 are VDs)
  
- ❑ Ractopamine is not listed in either schedules of the Harmful Substances in Food Regulations (Cap. 132AF)

# Local situation (2)

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- ❑ For veterinary drugs that are not listed in the schedules, a risk assessment will be conducted if detected in food of animal origin
  
- ❑ Section 54 of the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap 132) applies:
  - All food intended for human consumption for sale in Hong Kong, whether imported or locally produced, must be fit for human consumption
  
- ❑ CFS has established action levels for ractopamine in various animal products making reference to Codex standards

# Key points to note (1)

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- ❑ Ractopamine as a feed additive aids in the efficient production of lean meat in some food animals
- ❑ Inappropriate use of ractopamine may leave residues in edible tissues that are of health concern for consumers
- ❑ Trade should source meat and meat products from reliable suppliers
- ❑ Trade should ensure that imported meat is accompanied by a valid health certificate from an approved source

## Key points to note (2)

- CFS has established action levels for ractopamine in various animal products, making reference to Codex standards:

Cattle Tissue	MRL (µg/kg)	Pig Tissue	MRL (µg/kg)
Muscle/meat	10	Muscle/meat	10
Liver	40	Liver	40
Kidney	90	Kidney	90
Fat	10	Fat (include fat plus skin)	10

- Overseas suppliers and trading partners are reminded of the need to comply with Hong Kong legislation and make reference to CFS action levels when supplying food to the local market



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