

Fluor and Iodine Commission: Annual Report 2010

Mission

Initially founded to accompany the developments in connection with the usage of iodized salt in Switzerland, the commission nowadays engages in scientific and technical questions concerning iodine and fluoride intake, monitors intake of these nutrients and concerns itself with political issues in this field.

Members

Prof. Michael Bruce Zimmermann, Zürich, Präsident
Prof. Ursula Ackermann-Lieblich, Basel
Prof. Hans Bürgi, Solothurn
Prof. Hans Gerber, Bern, ab 2008
Dr. Michael Beer, BAG representative, Bern
Dr. Jürg Lieberherr, Pratteln
Prof. Thomas M. Marthaler, Zürich
Prof. Christoph A. Meier, Zürich
Dr. Giorgio Menghini, Zürich
Prof. Jürg Meyer, Riehen
Dr. Katharina Quack Lötscher, Oberrieden

Activities 2010

In Fall 2009-Spring 2010, the commission collaborated with the Bundesamt für Gesundheit (BAG), Direktionsbereich Verbraucherschutz (Mr. Urs Stalder) to develop a flyer on the importance of iodine. Over 50,000 copies will be produced for distribution throughout Switzerland. *A German copy is attached.*

The 2010 annual meeting of the commission took place on March 2, Tuesday, from 14.00-16.00 at the ETH Zürich. Present were: M. Zimmermann (presiding and minutes), H. Bürgi; G. Menghini, Th. Marthaler, J. Lieberherr, J. Meyer, C. Meier, H. Gerber, B. Rose (BAG), H. Amstad (SAMW). *The minutes of this meeting are attached.*

April 29, 2010. M Zimmermann presented the results of the 2009 Swiss iodine study to the Swiss Eidgenössischen Ernährungskommission in Bern.

June 1, 2010. Meeting of the subcommittee 'Arbeitsgruppe Abnehmende Jodurie' (M. Zimmermann, Th. Marthaler, H. Bürgi, Chr. Meier) in Zürich to discuss how to respond to falling intakes of iodine in the Swiss population. It was decided that it should be proposed to the Swiss Salt Works and the BAG to increase the iodine content of salt from 20 to 25 ppm. Support for this proposal was confirmed among the entire commission.

Dec 1, 2010. Publication in the premier international of endocrinology, the Journal of Endocrinology and Metabolism, of the results of the Swiss 2009 iodine survey. *This paper is at-*

tached. The paper and its findings had been previously presented and discussed at the International Thyroid Association Meeting in Paris, France in September 2010 (M Zimmermann and H Bürgi participated in this meeting).

Dec 21, 2010. Meeting of M.Zimmermann and H. Bürgi with Dr. Michael Beer at the BAG. The procedure for the planned increase in the Swiss salt iodine content from 20 to 25 ppm in 2011 was discussed, as well as how to maintain and increase iodized salt usage among Swiss food industries.

Outlook

2011 will be an important year for the commission as it faces the challenge of maintaining adequate iodine intakes in the Swiss population.

Although the latest national data show that the Swiss population remains just iodine sufficient, the median urinary iodine concentrations in Swiss pregnant women and school children have fallen 32 and 14%, respectively, since 2005. Of concern is the that since mid-2007, there has been a large decrease in the ratio of iodized to noniodized salt being delivered by the Swiss Salt Works to the food industry. At the same time, the ratio in boxed packages (retail to the consumer) has not changed significantly.

Because of new trade restrictions on import of processed foods containing iodized salt into France, Swiss food industries that export to these markets are reluctant to use iodized salt in their products. This particularly affects processed dairy products such as cheese, but also many other processed foods.

Working together with the BAG and the Eidgenössischen Ernährungskommission (EEK), the commission plans to produce a EEK-commissioned 'Federal Report on Iodine Nutrition' that will set the stage for an increase in the iodine content of Swiss salt from 20 to 25 ppm later in the year.

Also, early in 2011, coordinated by the BAG, commission members (H. Bürgi, M. Zimmermann, Th. Marthaler) will meet with representatives of the Swiss Food Industry Association (VIAL) as well as the associations of bakers and cheese makers, to encourage use of iodized salt in their products.

Michael Bruce Zimmermann