

Fluor and Iodine Commission

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 and concerns itself with political issues in this field.

Activities 2008

At the 12th of March, a subcommittee of the Bundesamt für Gesundheit BAG, Direktionsbereich Verbraucherschutz, Liebefeld, met to discuss the importance of the use of iodized salt in the Swiss Food Industry («Salzreduktion in verarbeiteten Lebensmitteln»). One important issue was that the Swiss cheese-making industry is using less iodized salt and more non-iodized, presumably because of the new regulations from the BAG to specify on the label foods containing iodized salt. It is uncertain if this trend will spread to other food industries, but does not appear to have, at this point. An informal, personal discussion of the commission with the head of the cheese industry-‘Verband’ on the importance of including iodized salt in their products for the health of Swiss pregnant women and children is planned.

The annual Meeting of the Iodine-Fluoride Committee took place on the 13th of March at the ETH Zürich. M. Zimmermann chaired the meeting, H. Bürgi, T. Marthaler, K. Quack Loetscher, and C. Meier attended the meeting. Prof. Christoph Meier and Dr. med. Katharina Quack Loetscher were introduced as new committee members.

At the 21st of November, a meeting of a subcommittee took place at the ETH Zürich to discuss the current situation of the declining use of iodized salt by the Swiss Food Industry.

At the 10th of December, the commission met at the Bundesamt für Gesundheit BAG, Direktionsbereich Verbraucherschutz, Liebefeld to discuss the new flyer being prepared on the importance of the use of iodized salt by Swiss consumers.

Outlook 2009

The Swiss National Iodine Nutrition Survey 2009 will take place from February to June 2009. Coordinated by Prof. Zimmermann at the ETHZ, the study team will collect urine and salt samples from a representative national sample of Swiss schoolchildren and pregnant women. The TSH data from the Swiss newborn screening program from the last 5 years will also be analyzed.

This study is sponsored by the BAG, and will provide important information on whether the recent changes in iodized salt use by the Swiss Food Industry has changed iodine intakes in the Swiss population.

Moreover, the commission will elaborate a statement on the importance of iodized salt and its safety.

Michael Zimmermann

Members of the Fluor and Iodine Commission

Prof. Michael Bruce Zimmermann, Zürich
President

Prof. Ursula Ackermann-Lieblich, Basel

Prof. Hans Bürgi, Solothurn

dipl. oec. Esther Camenzind-Frey, Bern

Direktor Dr. Jürg Lieberherr, Schweizerhalle

Prof. Thomas M. Marthaler, Zürich

Prof. Christoph A. Meier, Zürich

Dr. Giorgio Menghini, Zürich

Prof. Jürg Meyer, Riehen

Dr. Katharina Quack Lötscher, Zürich

Dr. Anne Witschi, Basel

Prof. Thomas Zeltner, Bern

ex officio