

Food hygiene: UV-C treatment is an effective method for microbial reduction on shell eggs

BfR opinion 019/2014, 16 November 2012

UV rays have a germ-killing effect and are used – for example in dairy factories, meat processing plants and refrigerated warehouses – to disinfect surfaces and for microbial reduction in the ambient air. The term UV-C rays denotes electromagnetic waves in the wavelength range of between 100 and 250 nanometres.

In the opinion of the Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR), UV-C rays can be used for microbial reduction on egg shells. There is no evidence to suggest that food irradiated with UV-C poses a health risk to consumers.

Against this background, UVC treatment could be used to improve the microbiological status of shell eggs. However, the use of this type of treatment should be made contingent upon certain conditions being met by food business operators. These include, among others, the requirement to provide proof of the effectiveness of the radiation used and documentation of the chosen procedure.

The full version of this BfR Information is available in German on <http://www.bfr.bund.de/cm/343/lebensmittelhygiene-uv-c-behandlung-ist-zur-keimreduzierung-auf-schaleneiern-geeignet.pdf>