

**Question for written answer E-000220/2020
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Gianna Gancia (ID)

Subject: Amendment to Regulation (EC) No 488/2014 as regards maximum levels of cadmium in foodstuffs

The proposal made by the Working Group on Industrial and Environmental Contaminants in its assessment on amending Regulation No 488/2014 would halve the current limit of 0.20 mg/kg for cadmium in rice.

Flooding the rice-fields is one of the main methods employed to reduce the presence of cadmium in rice, as cadmium is insoluble and cannot be absorbed by the roots when the soil is deprived of oxygen.

Even on uncontaminated land, rice might store inorganic arsenic as a consequence of the rice-fields are constantly being flooded. Unlike cadmium, inorganic arsenic is much more bioaccessible when the rice-fields are deprived of oxygen through flooding. Optimum management of water in the rice-fields should ensure that some of the crop cycle stages include drying time to ensure arsenic in the soil is immobilised.

The International Agency for Research on Cancer has classified inorganic arsenic as carcinogenic to humans.

In view of this, does the Commission not agree it would be more appropriate to keep the limit for cadmium in rice at current levels, in order to avert a possible rise in the concentration of inorganic arsenic and thereby better safeguard and protect the health of EU citizens?