



A Nordic approach to food safety risk management of seaweed for use as food

Grímur Ólafsson

5. November 2020

ALGET 2



Risk management of seaweed for use as food

- The project is supported by the Nordic Council of Ministers
- It is a cooperation between Norway, Denmark, Iceland and the Faroe Islands (with Sweden in the reference group)
- Project manager:
 - Grímur Ólafsson (Matvælastofnun)
- Project group:
 - Solbjørg Hogstad (Mattilsynet),
 - Dorthe Licht Cederberg (Fødevarestyrelsen),
 - Malan Mikkelsen (Heilsufrøðiliga starvsstovan)

Background

- Increased interest in utilizing seaweed (macroalgae) as food
- Seaweed production is considered an important food resource in the world and more sustainable compared to the land-based cultivation that requires use of both water and fertilizer.
- The importance of macroalgae as food can be expected to increase in the future, also in the Nordic countries, where the interest among consumers and producers of both wild harvested and aquaculture of seaweed is increasing

Background

- Limited knowledge on potential risks and benefits for human health
- Many species with big variations in composition is a challenge
- Limited regulations for the use of macroalgae as food
- EFSA has identified seaweed as an emerging risk
- Many alerts from RASFF regarding seaweed - in particularly on high iodine content
- EU Commission has recommended monitoring as a background for future risk management

Purpose of the project

- To create a Nordic approach to risk management of food safety in seaweed for use as food
- Create the basis for Nordic co-operation in this area, form networks and allow exchange of information between regulators
- Create guidance for producers and inspectors to ensure uniform control and food safety
- A report on a Nordic approach will strengthen the influence on future policy processes in the EU and in Codex Alimentarius

Focus

- Main focus of the project on *inorganic arsenic*, *heavy metals* and *iodine* in seaweed for human consumption
- Other aspects as hygiene and microbiology will also be included
- Focus on production of seaweed as food, not on primary production

What will be the main outcome?

- A report on risk management of food safety in seaweed with an included guidance to inspectors and food business operators
- A basis for development of an appropriate legislation
- Consumer protection

What has been done so far?

- The project started in February 2020 and has been delayed because of Covid-19 – with no physical meetings yet
- A draft report including a guidance document
- Work expected finalised February 2022

Thank you!

www.mast.is