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COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION (EU) 2026/1243

of 11 June 2026

on monitoring the presence of ergot alkaloids in feed

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 292 thereof,

Whereas:

(1) Directive 2002/32/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council ([1]) sets maximum level for certain undesirable substances, including rye ergot (*Claviceps purpurea*) in feed.

(2) Commission Recommendation 2012/154/EU ([2]) recommended the monitoring on the presence of ergot alkaloids in cereals and cereal products intended for animal feeding, in pasture/forage grasses for animal feeding and in compound feed.

(3) On 28 June 2012, the European Food Safety Authority ('the Authority') adopted an opinion on ergot alkaloids in food and feed ([3]). The Authority based its risk assessment on the main *Claviceps purpurea* ergot alkaloids, namely ergometrine, ergotamine, ergosine, ergocristine, ergocryptine, ergocornine, as well as the corresponding –inine epimers. As *Claviceps africana* and *Claviceps fusiformis* may be relevant for imported feed into the Union, the occurrence of their predominant ergot alkaloids, in particular dihydroergosine and agroclavine respectively, should be monitored. Ergovaline is one of the ergot alkaloids usually found in endophyte-infected species of grass such as tall fescue or perennial ryegrass.

(4) On 6 July 2017, the Authority published a scientific report on human and animal dietary exposure to ergot alkaloids ([4]). In the report it is recommended that the collection of analytical data on ergot alkaloids in relevant feed commodities should continue. Furthermore, simultaneous collection of data on the presence of ergot sclerotia and on the ergot alkaloid content in different feed commodities should continue, in order to help to better understand the relationship between these two variables. For the monitoring, available analytical methods with sufficient sensitivity should be used.

(5) On 30 November 2023, the Authority adopted an opinion on the risk for animal health related to the presence of ergot alkaloids in feed ([5]). The Authority considered that the presence of ergot alkaloids in feed raises a health concern in bovines and in pigs (piglets, pigs for fattening and sows). The Authority highlighted that there is a need for more occurrence data on ergot alkaloids, in particular in forage and sorghum and on ergovaline/–inine in forage. The occurrence data submitted to the Authority should contain adequate information on the feed samples analysed, including the moisture content, the target animals and the type of compound feed (complete/complementary) and sensitive methods for the analysis should be used.

(6) It is therefore appropriate to recommend monitoring the presence of ergot alkaloids in feed across the Union,

([1]) Directive 2002/32/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 May 2002 on undesirable substances in animal feed (OJ L 140, 30.5.2002, p. 10), ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2002/32/oj.

([2]) Commission Recommendation 2012/154/EU of 15 March 2012 on the monitoring of the presence of ergot alkaloids in feed and food (OJ L 77, 16.3.2012, p. 20), ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reco/2012/154/oj.

([3]) Scientific Opinion on Ergot alkaloids in food and feed, *EFSA Journal* 2012;10(7):2798, https://doi.org/10.2903/j.efsa.2012.2798.

([4]) Arcella, D., Gomez Ruiz, J-A., Innocenti, M.L. and Roldán, R., 2017, Scientific report on human and animal dietary exposure to ergot alkaloids, *EFSA Journal* 2017;15(7):4902, 53 pp., https://doi.org/10.2903/j.efsa.2017.4902.

([5]) Scientific Opinion on the risk for animal health related to the presence of ergot alkaloids in feed, *EFSA Journal* 2024;22(1):e8496, https://doi.org/10.2903/j.efsa.2024.8496.

HAS ADOPTED THIS RECOMMENDATION:

1. Member States are recommended, with the active involvement of feed business operators, to perform monitoring for the presence of ergot alkaloids in feed.

2. At least the following ergot alkaloids should be analysed:

   — ergocristine/ergocristinine,

   — ergotamine/ergotaminine,

   — ergocryptine/ergocryptinine (α- and β-isomers),

   — ergometrine/ergometrinine,

   — ergosine/ergosinine,

   — ergocornine/ergocorninine.

   The analysis of ergovaline/ergovalinine, agroclavine, dihydro-ergosine and lolitrem B is also recommended.

3. Whenever possible, the sclerotia content in the sample should be determined in order to be able to improve the knowledge on the relation between the content of sclerotia and the level of individual ergot alkaloids.

4. The recommended method of analysis is Liquid chromatography / tandem mass spectrometry (LC-MS/MS). Other methods of analysis may be applied provided that evidence is available showing that they generate reliable results for individual (or pair of epimers of) ergot alkaloids. The limit of quantification (LOQ) for the determination of each ergot alkaloid to be achieved should be 5 μg/kg or lower.

5. In particular, it is recommended to take samples of the following:

   — cereals and products derived thereof;

   — grasses and products derived thereof, including forage;

   — compound feed.

6. In order to ensure that the samples are representative of the sampled lot, Member States should follow the sampling procedure laid down in Commission Regulation (EC) No 152/2009 ([6]).

7. Member States are recommended to ensure that the analytical results are provided on a regular basis and by 30 June 2028 to the Authority in the EFSA data submission format in line with the requirements of EFSA's Guidance on Standard Sample Description (SSD2) for Food and Feed ([7]) and the additional EFSA's specific reporting requirements.

([6]) Commission Regulation (EC) No 152/2009 of 27 January 2009 laying down the methods of sampling and analysis for the official control of feed (OJ L 54, 26.2.2009, p. 1), ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2009/152/oj.

([7]) https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/call/call-continuous-collection-chemical-contaminants-occurrence-data-0.

8. This Recommendation replaces Commission Recommendation 2012/154/EU.

Done at Brussels, 11 June 2026.

For the Commission
Olivér VÁRHELYI
Member of the Commission