

PRESS RELEASE

A step in the right direction

CSE welcomes the government's draft notification on norms for poisonous metal and pesticide residues in beverages, including soft drinks

New Delhi, August 29, 2003: The Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) welcomes the draft notification on standards to regulate the presence of poisonous metal and pesticide residues in beverages. The notification was issued on August 26, 2003 by the Union ministry of health and family welfare. CSE also congratulates the Union minister of health, Sushma Swaraj, for moving forward to effect this much-needed amendment in the existing Prevention of Food Adulteration Rules, 1955.

The notification rightly proposes **more stringent limits** to the presence of pesticides, insecticides and poisonous metals in *all* kinds of beverages (*see table*). The standards for lead, for instance, have been tightened from 0.5 ppm (or mg/l) to 0.01 ppm. Those for copper have been fixed at 0.05 ppm (it is 7.0 ppm in the existing standards). For arsenic, the standards for both soft drinks and carbonated water have been fixed at a common 0.05 ppm; currently, there are two sets of standards for arsenic presence -- 0.5 ppm for soft drinks and 0.25 ppm for carbonated water. The notification also proposes standards for the presence of cadmium, mercury, chromium and nickel in all beverages (including soft drinks); these metals have remained totally neglected – particularly in the case of soft drinks -- by existing standards.

Further, the notification proposes to extend the norms for pesticide residues that have been notified (and will come into force from January 1, 2004) for bottled water, to beverages. It says that the amount of insecticide residues in the various kinds of beverages shall be as follows:

- **Pesticide residues considered individually:** Not more than 0.0001 mg/l (The analysis shall be conducted by using internationally established test methods meeting the specified residue limits.)
- **Total pesticide residues:** Not more than 0.0005 mg/l (The analysis shall be conducted by using internationally established test methods meeting the specified residue limits.)

CSE also commends the ministry's foresight in proposing to do away with the practice of segregating various kinds of beverages and specifying standards for each one separately. Instead, the notification has proposed common standards for all beverages – including soft drinks concentrates.

Copies of the draft notification are available with CSE on request. If you have questions, e-mail us at media@cseindia.org or contact Souparno Banerjee on 9810098142.