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Transmission of Pathogens from Farm and Abattoir Waste to the Food Supply Chain and its Impact on the Microbiological Safety of Food

This research confirmed in that use of wastes for the purposes of soil improvement provides a mechanism for contamination of food with live microbiological pathogens. Guidance on the management of wastes for application to farm land is expected soon.

Microbial pathogens are frequently found in manures and slurries. These materials are used for soil improvement and may present a risk of contamination of food, especially food that is usually eaten raw.

Research on farm wastes has found that although pathogens are generally no longer detected on fields spread with biological farm waste after four months, there is persistence of pathogens such as *Cryptosporidium* in stored liquid manures for over six months. Storage for several months will eventually lead to decontamination. FSA will be issuing guidance on storage requirements. Research on abattoir wastes is not yet sufficiently advanced for the purposes of risk assessment/management.

Direct application of wastes onto land is not the only foreseeable problem: run-off water from waste storage and insect vectors may carry disease directly to food crops.

Comment

Recycling of animal wastes is becoming more sophisticated but as yet there is no definitive guidance of risk management. Some viruses are very much more persistent in wastes than are E coli. E coli is the usual reference species for risk assessment.

Food washing would seem to be a priority, but also presents a risk of contamination.
