Incidence and Levels of Mycotoxins in Canadian Retail Infant Foods

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During 1997 and 1998, laboratories of the Health Protection Branch analyzed approximately 300 samples of infant foods purchased from retail outlets across Canada in those years. The samples included oat-, barley-, soy-, and rice-based infant cereals, mixed grain infant cereals, wheat-based baked products, creamed corn and soy-based formulas and concentrates. They were analyzed for a variety of mycotoxins - zearalenone, vomitoxin, HT-2 toxin, nivalenol, ochratoxin A, fumonisins B1 and B2, and five individual ergot alkaloids. Vomitoxin had the highest incidence of occurrence (70%) in selected samples, although the related trichothecenes - HT-2 toxin and nivalenol - were not detected. Zearalenone was present in 32% of selected samples. Ochratoxin A and fumonisin B1 were detected in 25% and 29% of the samples analyzed, while some or all of the ergot alkaloids were found in 24% of selected samples.