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## FOOD IRRADIATION AS A KEY TO REDUCE FOOD WASTE AND GUARANTEE FOOD SAFETY

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## **Abstract**

Food waste is being in the focus of recent global policies, to tackle food scarcity and to overcome "nutritional poverty" in several countries. Otherwise, a global food market is being the key to make available several products to different populations. These vectors for food policy must be supported by several orientations, to attain their final objective: better and enough food for the world population. For that, different post-harvest processing technologies are making their fundamental contribute. Among that, the preservation of food by irradiation, a physical process that does not use chemicals, is making its way in several countries, to accept imported or exported products without pests (insects), without foodborne pathogens, and also to extend the shelf life of processed products, stopping enzymatic degradation and reducing microorganisms that contribute for food spoilage. We have been studying the effects of gamma and e-beam radiation for food preservation of several Mediterranean products, including chestnuts, mushrooms and aromatic plants, berries and tomatoes, using an experimental gamma chamber with <sup>60</sup>Co sources and an electron accelerator with the maximum energy of 10 MeV. And here we present these technologies, their limitations and advantages, the effects on relevant properties of food (e.g. color, texture, nutritional parameters), and question why food preservation by irradiation is underused, since its first use has more than 100 years and its first industrial application has more than 50 years.

**Keywords**: Food technology; Food safety; Post-harvest technologies; Food irradiation.

## Reference

"Food Irradiation Technologies: Concepts, Applications and Outcomes". I.C.F.R. Ferreira, A.L. Antonio, and S. Cabo Verde (Editors), RSC, UK, 2018

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