

*Myth:
“Food Irradiation”*

Reality:

The term “Food Irradiation” has no practical meaning. “Food” is not irradiated. However, specific products, which are consumed as food, are irradiated for specific purposes.

A company that produces ground beef purchases an irradiator. Their plan is to irradiate their final packaged product to minimize the health threat of food borne pathogens for their customers. Do they become a Food Irradiation company? No, they are still a Meat Processing company.

A foreign company installs an irradiator to irradiate fruit for export to the United States. The purpose of the irradiator is to disinfest mangoes to assure that there are no viable insect pests that may potentially harm US crops. Are they a Food Irradiation company? No, they are a Fruit Exporter.

I want to have hamburgers tonight. I am going to go to my favorite market. There I am going to look for hamburger patties. Personally, I prefer the added safety assurance of purchasing irradiated patties, so if they have both irradiated and non-irradiated hamburgers in stock, I will purchase the irradiated burgers.

If they only have non-irradiated hamburgers for sale, I will still purchase them even if they do have irradiated mangoes on their shelves. I am not going to the store to buy “irradiated food”. I am going to the store to buy hamburgers...and perhaps a can of creamed succotash.

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