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**EVALUATION OF THE ANALYSIS OF AFLATOXINS IN RED PEPPER  
SAMPLES COLLECTED FROM KAHRAMANMARAS PROVINCE DURING  
2006 AND 2007 IN KAHRAMANMARAS COMMODITY EXCHANGE OF  
PRIVATE FOOD LABORATORY**

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Approximately 9000 hectares of red pepper is grown in Turkey, annually. Kahramanmaraş is the big part of this acreage and is one of the leading red pepper producer provinces in the nation. In 2006, Kahramanmaraş had a 940 hectare growing area corresponding to a production of 2763 tons of red pepper. Although it is ranked the third among the red pepper growing countries, Turkey is not one of the big exporters of this commodity. The main reason of this is the Aflatoxin problem that the country and consequently Kahramanmaraş is facing. Aflatoxins are produced by mainly a fungus called *Aspergillus flavus*. Aflatoxins can cause disease throughout the body, but are most commonly known for causing acute or chronic liver disease and liver cancer. The detection of the Aflatoxins in red pepper is very critical in relation to human health. In this study, Kahramanmaraş Commodity Exchange of Private Food Laboratory processed 274 samples collected from various areas of Kahramanmaraş during 2006 and 2007 to detect Aflatoxin levels. Results showed that 80 out of 274 samples had exceeded the limit for quantity of Aflatoxins, which were Aflatoxin B1 (exceeding the 5 ppm level) and 59 of which had total aflatoxins exceeding the 10 ppm level.

**Key words:** Spice, Kahramanmaraş, aflatoxin, *Aspergillus flavus*