Making their rounds: Dr Mohd Ashhar (second from right) visiting an exhibition booth with senior agency director Dr Zulkifli Mohamed Hashim (right) during the food safety seminar in Kuala Lumpur.

‘Irradiated food safe to eat’

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KUALA LUMPUR: Consumers should not worry about eating food zapped by radiation as studies have shown there was no radioactive residue in them to cause harm, said Malaysian Nuclear Agency director-general Datuk Dr Muhammad Lebai Juri.

Food that was exposed to gamma rays, electron and X-rays would not cause it to be radioactive because the energy of the rays was low.

In fact, he said they were free of residue, unlike food that had been treated with chemicals.

“Some people think that eating irradiated food could cause cancer.

“This is because they equate irradiated food with radioactive food due to radioisotope contamination from nuclear plant accidents such as the Fukushima incident in 2010,” he said at a food safety seminar yesterday.

The text of his speech was read out by his deputy (technical services programme) Dr Mohd Ashhar Khalid.

The Health Ministry had approved the sale of irradiated food in Malaysia under the Food Irradiation Regulations and was enforced in 2013.

Dr Muhammad cited examples of products found in Malaysia such as herbs, spices, tea, grains and frozen food.

International food experts had proven that food irradiation adhering to the required standards would be safe to eat, he said.