

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON NOVEL FOODS AND PROCESSES

PAPER FOR INFORMATION

EU UPDATE

This paper provides Members with an update on novel food applications under regulation (EC) No 258/97 and other EU issues that are relevant to the work of the Committee.

Novel Food applications

1. The Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health met on 11 February 2004 when it considered the following issues concerning authorisation of novel foods:

Phytosterols and phytostanols

- The Standing Committee considered the handling of two outstanding applications for the use phytosterol preparations in meat and bakery products. At a previous meeting, Member States accepted the addition of sterols to three food categories: vegetable oil and yellow fat spreads; salad dressing and spicy sauces; and milk-based products. Two companies who had requested their use in other categories had refined their requests, which were now limited to more specific products. These were acceptable to some member states, but not all. A final decision will be taken at a future meeting.
- A further application, from Forbes Medi-Tech was also discussed in the light of a positive opinion published in December by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). No decision was taken as Member States needed time to review the new information which had been provided to EFSA by the applicant, particularly in relation to a revised manufacturing method.

Bt11 sweet maize

The authorisation of fresh and processed products derived from this line of insect-resistant and herbicide tolerant sweet maize is currently awaiting discussion by the European Council. If the Council does not reach a decision within three months, the authorisation will be adopted by default.

2. Progress on other novel food applications that have been recently reviewed by the Committee is as follows:

Diacylglycerol-rich oil (DAG-oil; Enova®)

- This application has been referred to EFSA for an opinion on objections that were raised by some member states.

Genetically modified maize line 1507

- Reasoned objections and requests for further assessment have been raised by some member states, including the UK. The application has not been referred to EFSA as there is insufficient time for completion of a further assessment before the new GM food and feed regulation comes into effect in April. The applicant must therefore re-present the dossier under the new regulation.
3. A meeting of the Novel Foods Working Group, comprising representatives of the Competent Authorities dealing with novel foods in each Member State, took place on 1 March. The items discussed included substantial equivalence of noni juice products (see paper ACNFP/65/5) and the conversion of outstanding applications for GM products. There are two applications for GM maize (the lines GA21 and NK603) that are sufficiently advanced to be completed under the novel foods procedures. One further application (MON863 maize) may be completed if the EFSA opinion is available by 18 April. Other outstanding applications for GM foods will need to be re-presented under the GM food and feed regulation.

Implementation of EC Regulations 1829/2003 (on GM food and feed) and 1830/2003 (on traceability and labelling)

4. This regulation comes into effect in all EU member states on 18 April 2004. The Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health has agreed a secondary regulation setting out technical details of the implementation of the new regulation, covering the presentation of dossiers for new products and the notification of existing products. Guidance for the sampling and testing of consignments of potentially GM produce is also being developed.

European Food Safety Authority

5. EFSA has continued to hold further meetings of its scientific panels. The published minutes of the GMO Panel Meetings (meetings 5, 6 and 7) are attached. The GMO Panel has also published its opinion on the oil seed rape GT73 (deliberate release). A copy is attached.
6. Although the Scientific Panel on Dietetic Products, Nutrition and Allergies, the panel that will look at all non-GM novel food issues, met on the 18-19th February the minutes have not yet been published. There were no Novel Food Agenda Items although the Panel has been asked to prepare an opinion on 'Vegetable Oils High in Unsaponifiable Matter'.

**Secretariat
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