

1 November 2007

Dear Sir / Madam

Food and drink industry use of food colours and sodium benzoate

Following publication of the Southampton study concerning the effect of certain artificial food colours and the preservative sodium benzoate on children's behaviour, the Food Standards Agency has met with industry and public interest group representatives to discuss the actions being taken regarding the use of these additives by industry, and to consider what further action could be taken to provide practical help to parents who wish to avoid the colours used in the study.

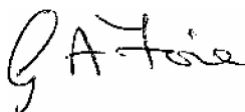
Industry representatives present at those meetings agreed to provide further information and I am now writing to clarify the information that we would like to receive. This is listed in Annex 1 to this letter. Please send your reply to clifford.gedling@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk by Friday 14 December 2007.

This information will inform the discussion by the Board of the Food Standards Agency regarding what further action should be taken following publication of the EFSA opinion on the Southampton study in early 2008.

We are keen to receive information from all parts of the food industry and I have listed the people to whom I have sent this letter at Annex 2.

If you have any questions about the information sought please, in the first instance, contact glynis.griffiths@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk, telephone no. 020 7276 8556. I should be grateful if you could also let Glynis know the contact details of any other people who you think may also wish to provide information to the Agency.

Yours sincerely



Gill Fine
Director
Consumer Choice and Dietary Health



Annex 1: Information sought.

A Artificial colours used in the Southampton study¹

[The artificial colours used in the study were sunset yellow (E110), carmoisine (E122), tartrazine (E102), ponceau 4R (E124), quinoline yellow (E104), allura red (E 129)]

A1: What actions have you/your members already taken concerning the food colours used in the Southampton study?

A2: Are you/your members planning any further action? What is the planned timescale for those further actions?

B Sodium benzoate (E211).

B1: What actions have you/your members already taken concerning sodium benzoate?

B2: Are you/your members planning any further action? What is the planned timescale for those further actions?

C Other permitted colours.

The European Food Safety Authority has commenced a review of all permitted food colours it will be helpful to have information on any action you/your members are taking concerning food colours permitted under EU legislation other than those used in the Southampton study.

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<http://www.food.gov.uk/science/research/researchinfo/foodcomponentsresearch/allergyresearch/t07programme/t07projectlist/t07040/t07040>

Annex 2: People to whom this letter has been sent.

Food and Drink Federation
British Retail Consortium
Somerfield Stores Ltd
Morrison Supermarkets plc
British Soft Drinks Association
British Hospitality Association
Federation of Small Businesses
Association of Convenience Stores.
British Soft Drinks Association
Dairy UK

Food Additives and Ingredients Association
The Guild of Bangladeshi Restaurateurs

(This letter has also been sent directly to a number of major retailers and food manufacturers.)

letter to FDF copied for information to:

Organic Trade Group
Netmums
Prince's Foundation for Integrated Health (PFIH)
Hyperactive Children's Support Group (HCSG)
University of Sussex
Which?
International Association for the Study of Obesity
Vega
British Nutrition Foundation (BNF)
Soil Association (SA)
The Food Commission (FC)
Sustain - The Alliance for Better Food and Farming