

SUBSTANTIAL EQUIVALENCE OPINION

Fruit Juice and Fruit Juice Blends with added chia seed

The Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) received an application in March of 2016 from Energanic Ltd. in Ireland for an opinion on the substantial equivalence of fruit juice and fruit juice blends with added chia seed. The applicant compares their products to similar products that were authorised to Wow Food and Drinks Ltd. in September of 2015. Only EU-authorised chia will be used by Energanic Ltd. and therefore this opinion mainly deals with the addition of that chia seed to fruit juice and fruit juice blends.

Composition

The chia seed to be used by the applicant has already been authorised for the EU market and therefore the composition has been satisfactorily addressed. Fruit juice and fruit juice blends are not within the scope of the novel food Regulation and the addition of chia seed will not otherwise alter the composition of those products. The amount of chia seed to be added to the fruit juice and fruit juice blends will be the same as that for the authorised comparator.

Nutritional Value and Metabolism

There are no effects on nutritional value or metabolism anticipated due to the addition of authorised chia seed to fruit juice and fruit juice blends.

Intended Uses

The applicant wishes to extend the use of an already authorised chia seed so that whole, ground or mashed chia seed can be added to fruit juice and fruit juice blends in accordance with the conditions set out in the authorisation letter of 2015 to Wow Food and Drinks Ltd.

Level of Undesirable Substances

The applicant has outlined the production process which includes preparing whole, mashed or ground chia seed which is pre-hydrated in water before addition, at specified levels, to fruit juice or fruit juice blends. The fruit juice or fruit juice blends with added chia seed are then pasteurised before packaging in transparent containers,

resulting in microbiological parameters equivalent to the authorised comparator. To ensure quality control throughout the process, microbiological checks are carried on the starting chia seed, fruit juice and fruit juice blends and also on the final product.

Conclusions

The FSAI is satisfied from the information provided by Energanic Ltd. that the proposed fruit juice and fruit juice blends with added chia seed are substantially equivalent to those authorised to Wow Food and Drinks Ltd. Only chia seed that is already authorised for marketing in the EU will be used and so the composition, nutritional value and metabolism of the chia seed are not specifically addressed in this opinion. The addition of an agricultural product to a source of potential microbial nutrition requires that controls are in place to ensure the final product is safe. The applicant has demonstrated that the pasteurisation process is adequate to ensure a safe and stable end product. The applicant will monitor the potential for allergic reactions to chia seed and, where possible, provide the contact details of local food allergy organisations. The chia seed added to fruit juices and fruit juice blends shall be designated as “Chia (*Salvia hispanica*) seeds” on the labelling of products containing them.