

SUBSTANTIAL EQUIVALENCE OPINION

Fruit juice and fruit juice blends with added chia seed

The Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) received an application in September of 2016 from The Chia Company in the U.K. for an opinion on the substantial equivalence of their fruit juice and fruit juice blends with added chia seed. The applicant has compared their products to similar products already authorised to Wow Food and Drinks Ltd. in September 2015. Only EU-Authorised chia seed (whole, ground or mashed) will be used by the applicant and therefore this opinion deals mainly with the extension of use represented by the addition of chia seed to fruit juice and fruit juice blends.

Composition

The composition, nutritional value, metabolism, intended use and level of undesirable substances of the chia seed used by The Chia Company has already been favourably assessed as part of a positive substantial equivalence opinion and subsequently a full novel food authorisation (Commission Implementing Decision 2013/50/EU). Fruit juice and fruit juice blends are not within the scope of the novel food Regulation and the addition of EU-authorised chia seed should not alter the composition of those products.

Nutritional Value and Metabolism

The addition of EU-authorised chia seed to fruit juice and fruit juice blends is not expected to have any unanticipated impact on the nutritional value or metabolism of either the chia seed or the beverages.

Intended Uses

The applicant wishes to extend the use of an already authorised chia seed by adding whole, mashed or ground chia seed to fruit juice and fruit juice blends at up to 15g/450mL, in accordance with the conditions set out in the authorisation letter of 2015 to Wow Food and Drinks Ltd.

Level of Undesirable Substances

Satisfactory results are provided for the chia seed and finished beverages with added chia seed in terms of the heavy metals; arsenic, cadmium, mercury and lead. Analytical results for chia seed and finished product samples are provided in relation to microbial contaminants

(mycotoxins, yeasts/moulds, *Staphylococci*, *Bacillus cereus*, *Salmonella*, *E. coli*, *Listeria* and *Clostridium perfringens*). The applicant has declared that a microbiological monitoring system will be in place to ensure that products are safe for consumption throughout their shelf life.

Conclusions

The FSAI is satisfied from the information provided that the fruit juice and fruit juice blends with added chia seed marketed by The Chia Company are substantially equivalent to those of Wow Food and Drinks Ltd already authorised for the EU market. The applicant will comply with the conditions set out for the authorised comparator. In particular, the applicant will monitor potential allergic reactions to chia seed and provide contact details of a local food allergy organisation on the labels. Chia seed added to fruit juice and fruit juice blends will be designated “Chia (*Salvia hispanica*) seeds”.