

SUBSTANTIAL EQUIVALENCE OPINION

Chia Seed (*Salvia hispanica*)

The Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) received an application in February of 2015 from Health Seeds AG of Switzerland for an opinion on the substantial equivalence of its Chia seed (*Salvia hispanica*) to Chia seed already authorised as a novel food on the EU market. The comparator Chia seed on the EU market was authorised by Commission Implementing Decision 2013/50/EU.

The novel Chia seed will be grown in Argentina and will conform to the compositional parameters set out in Annex I of Commission Implementing Decision 2013/50/EU. The seeds are grown and harvested without the use of chemicals while processing of the harvested seed is carried out mechanically to GMP standards and incorporates HACCP principles. The intended uses and labelling of the novel Chia seed will be the same as for the authorised comparator.

Composition

The applicant provides data demonstrating the compositional similarity of their Chia seed with the comparator in terms of dry matter, protein, fats, carbohydrate, dietary fibre and ash. Data on the levels of certain vitamins and minerals are also favourably comparable while any minor differences identified are in line with natural variation and not of concern.

Nutritional Value and Metabolism

The novel Chia seed and the authorised comparator contain similar amounts of macro- and micro-nutrients and therefore the nutritional value and metabolism of both products would not be expected to differ.

Intended Uses

The novel Chia seed is to be used in the EU at similar levels and in the same food categories set out in Annex II of Commission Implementing Decision 2013/50/EU. This includes baked products, breakfast cereals, fruit/nut/seed mixes and pre-packaged seed.

Level of Undesirable Substances

Pesticides or herbicides are not applied during crop production and so pesticide analysis has not been carried out on the final product. In any case, all food placed on the EU market must adhere to Community limits on pesticide residues. Harvesting and processing are all carried out mechanically. Batch analysis data relating to microbial contaminants (mycotoxins, yeasts/moulds, *Bacillus cereus*, *Salmonella*, *E. Coli*, *Staphylococci*, *Listeria* and *Clostridia*) as well as heavy metals (arsenic, cadmium, lead and mercury) are provided and do not identify any cause for concern.

Conclusions

The FSAI is satisfied from the information provided by the applicant that Chia seed marketed by Health Seeds AG of Switzerland is substantially equivalent to Chia seed authorised for the EU market by Commission Implementing Decision 2013/50/EU. The designation of this novel ingredient in foodstuffs will be “Chia (*Salvia hispanica*) seeds” in accordance with *Article 2* of Commission Implementing Decision 2013/50/EU. When sold in pre-packaged form, the consumer will be informed through the label that the daily intake of Chia seed should not exceed 15 g per day.