

SUBSTANTIAL EQUIVALENCE OPINION

Fruit Juice and Fruit Juice Blends with added chia seed

The Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) received an application in February of 2016 from Chias Brothers Europe Sp. z o. o. of Poland, 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 Chias Brothers Europe Sp. z o. o. 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 and therefore the composition has already 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 should not alter the composition.

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 it 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 is carried out to GMP standards and in accordance with HACCP principles. This includes preparing whole, mashed or ground chia seed and pre-hydrating them in water, before adding them 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. Microbiological analysis is carried out on the starting chia seed and also on the final pasteurised product to ensure quality control throughout the production process.

Conclusions

The FSAI is satisfied from the information provided by Chias Brothers Europe Sp. z o. o. 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. in the UK. The chia seed to be used is already authorised for marketing in the EU and so the composition, nutritional value and metabolism are not specifically addressed in this opinion. The addition of an agricultural product to a rich source of potential microbial nutrition requires that controls are in place to ensure a safe product. 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*)” on the labelling of products containing it.