

SUBSTANTIAL EQUIVALENCE OPINION

Baobab dried fruit pulp powder (*Adansonia digitata* L.)

The Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) received an application in April of 2016 from Starlight Products of France for an opinion on the substantial equivalence of its Baobab fruit pulp to Baobab dried fruit pulp authorised as a novel food for the EU market to PhytoTrade Africa through Commission Decision 2008/575/EC.

Baobab fruit pulp is derived from the fruit of the native African Baobab tree (*Adansonia digitata* L.). Similar to the EU-authorised Baobab fruit pulp, the novel ingredient is produced by mechanical means in which the Baobab fruits are harvested, the shells cracked and the pulp separated from extraneous material. The pulp is then milled into a powder and packaged. The novel Baobab fruit pulp originates in East Africa and West Africa, with products from the different sources processed separately.

Baobab fruit pulp falls within the scope of the novel food Regulation (EC) No 258/97, specifically under *Article 1.2(e)* “Foods and food ingredients consisting of or isolated from plants and food ingredients isolated from animals, except for foods and food ingredients obtained by traditional propagating and breeding practices and which have a history of safe food use”.

Composition

In line with the typical nutritional components of Baobab fruit pulp set out in the Annex to Commission Decision 2008/575/EC, compositional data shows that carbohydrate accounts for approximately 80% of the novel ingredient content, with the remainder being primarily moisture, protein, fat and ash. Some compositional differences are evident in the novel ingredient from West Africa compared to that from East Africa, and also when those products are compared to the authorised ingredient. However, these differences are relatively minor and are likely due to natural variations in plants which can be related to local weather patterns, soil content, geology etc.

Nutritional Value and Metabolism

The nutritional value of the novel ingredient is very similar to EU authorised Baobab fruit pulp in terms of macro- and micro-nutrients and therefore its metabolism would not be expected to differ from Baobab fruit pulp already authorised in the EU.

Intended Uses

Starlight Baobab fruit pulp is intended especially for use in beverages by the applicant, though it is important to note that the potential food uses or use levels of Baobab fruit pulp are not specified in Commission Decision 2008/575/EC.

Level of Undesirable Substances

Microbiological specifications for Baobab dried fruit pulp from West and East Africa are in line with those for the authorised comparator and include total viable counts (TVC), *Salmonella*, *Staphylococcus*, *Escherichia coli*, coliforms, yeasts, moulds and faecal *Streptococcus*. Analysis for mycotoxins including ochratoxin A and aflatoxins are in line with those for the authorised comparator and within regulatory limits. Analysis of the novel ingredient for the presence of heavy metals including lead, cadmium, mercury and arsenic demonstrates satisfactory results. Satisfactory results were also reported on multi-residue pesticide analysis, even though the novel Baobab fruit is collected from the wild where pesticides are not applied.

Conclusions

The FSAI is satisfied from the information provided by the applicant that Baobab dried fruit pulp produced by Starlight Products is substantially equivalent to Baobab dried fruit pulp authorised for the EU market to PhytoTrade Africa by Commission Decision 2008/575/EC. In accordance with Commission Decision 2008/575/EC, the designation of the novel ingredient will be “Baobab fruit pulp”.