

## SUBSTANTIAL EQUIVALENCE OPINION

### Chia Seed (*Salvia hispanica*)

The Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) received an application in July of 2014 from Nutrisure Ltd. in the UK for an opinion on the substantial equivalence of its Chia seed (*Salvia hispanica*) originating in South America to Chia seed already on the EU market as a novel food. The comparator Chia seed on the EU market was authorised to the Chia Company in Australia by Commission Implementing Decision 2013/50/EU.

The novel Chia seed will be grown in South America (Argentina, Bolivia, Uruguay and Paraguay) and will generally conform to the compositional parameters set out in Annex I of Commission Implementing Decision 2013/50/EU. The intended uses of the novel Chia seed will be the same as for the authorised comparator as set out in Annex II of Commission Implementing Decision 2013/50/EU.

#### Composition

The applicant states that Chia seed grown in different geographical locations can vary compositionally depending on soil type, agricultural practices, elevation, rainfall etc. However, the applicant demonstrates with three batch test results (two from Paraguay and one from Argentina) that any differences in the levels of macro and micro elements are relatively minor and within natural variation levels. The applicant provides data on the composition of their Chia seed which includes data on dry matter, protein, fat, carbohydrate dietary fibre and ash, all of which are broadly similar to the ranges for those parameters set out in Commission Implementing Decision 2013/50/EU.

#### Nutritional Value and Metabolism

The novel Chia seed and the authorised comparator contain similar levels of the major nutritional components including protein, fat (including different types of fat), carbohydrate and dietary fibre. The metabolism of both products would not therefore be expected to differ considering the close similarities in composition and nutritional content.

## **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 which includes baked products, breakfast cereals, fruit/nut/seed mixes and pre-packaged seed.

## **Level of Undesirable Substances**

The applicant states that herbicides or other chemicals are not used on the growing or harvesting of the novel Chia seed and therefore analysis for such chemicals is not required. For pest control the seeds are subjected to fumigation, with subsequent batch analysis demonstrating the absence of any residual fumigant.

Data relating to microbial (mycotoxins, yeasts/moulds, *Salmonella*, *E. Coli* and *Listeria*) contaminants as well as heavy metals (arsenic, cadmium, lead and mercury) are provided, and the applicant is satisfied that the seed suppliers have a suitable quality control system in place.

## **Conclusions**

The FSAI is satisfied from the information provided that Chia seed marketed by Nutrisure Ltd. in the UK is substantially equivalent to Chia seed authorised to the Chia Company in Australia 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.