

## SUBSTANTIAL EQUIVALENCE OPINION

### Chia Seed (*Salvia hispanica*)

The Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) received an application in July of 2014 from A Poortman Ltd. in the UK for an opinion on the substantial equivalence of its Chia seed (*Salvia hispanica*) originating in Central and 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 Central and South American countries (Peru, Argentina, Mexico and Bolivia) 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 that any differences in the levels of macro and micro nutrients are relatively minor and reflect natural variation. The applicant provides data demonstrating the compositional similarity of their Chia seed to the comparator Chia seed in relation to dry matter, protein, fat (saturated and unsaturated), carbohydrate, fibre and ash, as well as a number of vitamins and minerals.

#### **Nutritional Value and Metabolism**

The novel Chia seed and the authorised comparator contain similar levels of the major nutritional components and therefore the nutritional value and metabolism of both products would not therefore 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 which includes baked products, breakfast cereals, fruit/nut/seed mixes and pre-packaged seed.

## **Level of Undesirable Substances**

The applicant provides a statement to the effect that pesticide levels are monitored and are within EU legal limits. Analytical data relating to microbial contaminants (mycotoxins, yeasts/moulds, *Salmonella*, *E. Coli*, *Listeria* spp., *Bacillus cereus*, *Pseudomonas* spp., and *Clostridium perfringens*) as well as heavy metals (arsenic, cadmium, lead and mercury) are provided and compares favourably to the comparator Chia seed. The applicant states that levels of undesirable substances are maintained to satisfactory levels through product specifications as part of supplier agreements, with routine testing to monitor compliance.

## **Conclusions**

The FSAI is satisfied from the information provided by the applicant that Chia seed marketed by A Poortman (London) Ltd. is substantially equivalent to Chia seed already on the EU market and 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.