

SUBSTANTIAL EQUIVALENCE OPINION

Chia Seed (*Salvia hispanica*)

The Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) received an application in September 2016 from the De Care Group in Poland for an opinion on the substantial equivalence of chia seed (*Salvia hispanica* L) to chia seed already authorised as a novel food on the EU market. The novel chia seed is compared to chia seed authorised for the EU market by Commission Decision 2009/827/EC and Commission Implementing Decision 2013/50/EU, as well as the extension of use (added to fruit juice and fruit juice blends) as authorised in 2015.

The novel chia is grown in South America (Peru) and no chemicals are used during the growing process. The chia seeds are mechanically cleaned and processed prior to packaging.

Composition

The applicant provides data demonstrating the compositional similarity of their chia seed with the EU-authorized chia seed in terms of dry matter, protein, fat, carbohydrate, dietary fibre and ash.

Nutrient	De Care Group chia seed	Commission Implementing Decision 2013/50/EU
Dry matter %	91.7	91-96
Protein %	25.0	20-22
Fat %	30.1	30-35
Carbohydrate %	31.4	25-41
Dietary fibre %	28.8	18-30
Ash %	5.21	4-6

Nutritional Value and Metabolism

The novel chia seed and the authorised comparator contain similar amounts of the major and minor nutritional components and therefore the nutritional value and metabolism would not be expected to differ. The addition of chia seed to fruit juice and juice blends is not expected to have any unanticipated impact on either the nutritional value or the metabolism of the beverages.

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 Commission Decision 2009/827/EC and Annex II of Commission Implementing Decision 2013/50/EU as well as fruit juice and fruit juice blends with added chia seed.

Level of Undesirable Substances

The applicant has provided data relating to microbial contaminants (mycotoxins, moulds, *Bacillus cereus*, *E. coli*, *Salmonella*, and Coliforms) as well as heavy metals (arsenic, cadmium, mercury and lead) with no concerns identified. Pasteurisation steps along with microbiological monitoring form part of the process where pre-hydrated chia seed is added to fruit juices and fruit juice blends.

Conclusions

The FSAI is satisfied from the information provided by the applicant that chia seed to be marketed by the De Care Group of Poland is substantially equivalent to chia seed authorised for the EU market by Commission Decision 2009/827/EC, Commission Implementing Decision 2013/50/EU and the authorisation letter as issued by the FSAI on the extension of use to fruit juices and fruit juice blends. 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. The applicant has stated that, when sold in pre-packaged form, the consumer will be informed that the daily intake of chia seed should not exceed 15 g per day. Fruit juices and fruit juice blends with added chia will be marketed in transparent packaging.