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Advisory Committee on Novel Foods Recommendation to General Manager, Food Standards (Wellington)

February 2015

Diatomaceous Earth

PURPOSE

That the General Manager, Food Standards (Wellington) consider the recommendation formed by the Advisory Committee on Novel Foods (the Committee) concerning whether an application should be made to FSANZ to consider whether Diatomaceous Earth used as an ingredient at up to 6gm per day added to water as a beverage and in a spelt bread at 12g (2 heaped teaspoons) per 620g loaf is a novel food for the purposes of Standard 1.5.1 and respond to the enquirer on the basis of this recommendation.

BACKGROUND

The Committee considered Diatomaceous Earth used as an ingredient in a beverage and spelt bread at its meeting on 26 November 2014 (ACNF52). The Committee noted that Diatomaceous Earth is permitted to be used in food as a processing aid (Standard 1.3.3 - Processing Aids of the Code); however it is generally not considered to be present in the final food or beverage product when used in this context. Members considered that if Diatomaceous Earth was to be used as an ingredient in food, the product should at least meet the specifications for use as a processing aid, as per the reference sources listed in Standard 1.3.3 of the Code (JECFA and FCC specifications in particular) and should be generally safe and suitable (as per overarching Food Act requirements). The recommendation of the Committee is provided below and additional information on this enquiry is available at Attachment 1. The recommendation is the consensus view of the Committee.

Members of the Implementation Sub-committee for Food Regulation (ISFR) have been made aware of the Committee's recommendation. No comments were received from ISFR members.

A letter in response to the enquiry, based on the recommendation of the Committee, has been drafted for the signature of the FSANZ General Manager – Food Standards (Wellington). The letter is at Attachment 2.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee discussed this enquiry in accordance with Part 1 (Traditional / Non-traditional) of the Guidance Tool and makes the following recommendations:

- a) That Diatomaceous Earth **is considered a 'non-traditional food'** in accordance with the definition in Standard 1.5.1. In particular, that fermented Diatomaceous Earth does not have a history of human consumption as a food in Australia or New Zealand; and
- b) A preliminary hazard identification of Diatomaceous Earth indicated that the food does not require an assessment of public health and safety considerations having regard to matters (a) to (f) in the definition of novel food; and

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- c) Diatomaceous Earth is not a food that is within the scope of the definition of novel food for the purposes of standard 1.5.1 and therefore not subject to the requirements of standard 1.5.1.

Attachments:

- 1. Guidance Tool considerations
- 2. Letter to enquirer for signature

Prepared by: [REDACTED] s 22

RECOMMENDED

[REDACTED] s 22

DATE

CHAIR

On behalf of the Committee

AGREED / NOT AGREED

DEAN STOCKWELL
GENERAL MANAGER / FOOD STANDARDS (WELLINGTON)

DATE