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EFSA: Update on Flavouring Evaluations - 11 August 2008

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Following a request from the European Commission, EFSA has been working since 2007 on a comprehensive evaluation of flavouring substances currently in use in the European Union.

Flavourings are divided into 48 chemical groups and EFSA is evaluating each group separately,

focusing on the implications of individual flavourings for human health. Since EFSA's update in January, the former AFC [1] Panel looked at a further 15 flavouring groups. The Panel identified data gaps for some of the flavourings including carvone-5, 6 oxide (FL-no: 16.042), butyramide (FL-no: 16.049), aminoacetophenone (FL-no: 11.008), 5-methylfurfural (FL-no: 13.001), 2-benzofurancarboxaldehyde (FL-no: 13.031). These flavourings are currently used in different types of foods, including dairy products, confectionary, meat and fish products and alcoholic beverages

The Panel concluded that data currently available were insufficient to exclude genotoxic potential of these substances and is requesting that applicants provide information that will confirm that these flavourings are safe to use in foods.

Since the beginning of the evaluation, the Panel has discussed and adopted some 70 opinions on food flavourings. Some of these 70 opinions have been published and some are now undergoing final editorial changes and will be shortly published on the EFSA website. EFSA intends to complete the evaluation of all flavourings by mid-2009. Informed by EFSA's evaluations, the European Commission will establish a positive list of flavouring substances that will be authorised for use in the EU.

[1] The AFC Panel has been now replaced by two new Panels: Panel on food additives and nutrient sources added to food (ANS) and Panel on food contact materials enzymes, flavourings and processing aids (CEF). The evaluation of flavouring substances has been now taken over by the CEF Panel.

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