

EFSA Opinion reinforces the safety of Cellulosic Food Additives

We are pleased to announce that on January 16th, 2018, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) officially published their scientific opinion on cellulosic food additives.

<http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/5047>.

The evaluation included microcrystalline cellulose, powdered cellulose and modified celluloses including methyl cellulose, ethyl cellulose, hydroxypropyl cellulose, hydroxypropyl methyl cellulose, ethyl methyl cellulose, sodium carboxy methyl cellulose, cross-linked sodium carboxy methyl cellulose and enzymatically hydrolysed sodium carboxy methyl cellulose. The outcome of the re-evaluation was favorable ... *e.g. the Panel concluded that there was no need for a numerical acceptable daily intake (ADI) and that there would be no safety concern for the reported uses and use levels for cellulose derivatives in foodstuffs*

Further details are below:

EFSA's expert Panel on Food Additives and Nutrient Sources Added to Food (ANS) completed a multi-year evaluation as part of a broad legislative mandate to re-evaluate all permitted food additives and confirm the safety of their intended uses for consumers. All available, relevant scientific data, including information on chemical and biological properties, potential toxicity and estimates of human dietary exposure were reviewed. No additional safety data across the cellulosic food additive family was deemed necessary for the current uses.

As noted above, the Panel concluded that there was no need for a numerical acceptable daily intake (ADI) for cellulose derivatives. The cellulosic food additives can continue to be used at levels equal to "*quantum satis*", which means that they can be used at levels needed to achieve the intended purpose and provided that they do not mislead the consumer. EFSA's Scientific Opinion remains consistent with that of the FAO/WHO Joint Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA).

In common with many other additives, EFSA concluded that the available data did not allow for an adequate assessment of the safety of sodium carboxy methyl cellulose (E 466) in infants and young children consuming dietary foods and formula for special medical purposes. EFSA also recommended a reduction in the permitted levels of heavy metals.

EFSA's opinion reinforces the safety of cellulosic food additives which is of critical importance in an environment where consumer preferences about the food they consume are based on perceptions and not scientific evidence.