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FEDIOL Statement
on EFSA updated Scientific Opinion on 3-MCPD esters in food

Today, EFSA released its updated opinion on 3-MCPD esters[i], updating the tolerable daily intake (TDI) to 2.0 µg/kg body weight per day.

EFSA decided to reassess its 2016 opinion on 3-MCPD esters following an update of EFSA's Scientific Committee guidance on the use of the benchmark dose approach in risk assessment[ii], which was published in January 2017.

3-MCPD esters are contaminants that can be found in refined vegetable oils and fats. They can be formed from chlorinated substances, (which may be present at low levels in crude vegetable oils and fats), when the vegetable oils and fats are refined.

Compared to its 2016 opinion, the 2017 opinion is based on the same research data (Cho et al.), but uses EFSA's most recent modelling guidance (benchmark dose modelling approach). This lead to setting a Tolerable Daily Intake of 2.0 µg/kg body weight per day. EFSA estimated that for adults, there is no exceedance of the TDI. It also found a slight exceedance of the TDI for high consumers of the younger age group.

"*EFSA's updated opinion takes into account the most recent scientific research and methodological developments in applying the benchmark dose approach in order to refine the earlier scientific assessment*", says Henri Rieux, FEDIOL president. *"This opinion is important for the ongoing risk management discussions."*

Since the first EFSA opinion released in May 2016 and considering the sector's strong commitment to food safety, our industry has been working intensively on ways to further reduce levels of MCPD esters in refined vegetable oils and fats. At the same time, the sector has been actively implementing mitigation solutions for the reduction of glycidyl esters (GE) levels across all vegetable oils destined for food use. This was done ahead of the EU law, which is expected to be published in the coming weeks.

"Mitigation of 3-MCPD esters is particularly complex, added Henri Rieux*, it requires an integrated approach including preventive measures in the country of origin and processing changes, whilst at the same time maintaining other safety and quality parameters and meeting customer and consumer demands*."

More detailed assessment of the EFSA opinion is ongoing.

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Background

FEDIOL, the EU vegetable oil and proteinmeal industry association, represents the interests of the European oilseed crushers, vegetable oil refiners and bottlers. FEDIOL members are 12 national associations and associated company members in 5 other EU countries. With about 150 facilities in Europe, the sector provides 20,000 direct employments. Its members process approximately 55 million tonnes of basic products a year, both of EU origin and imported from third country markets. The sector processes notably rapeseed, sunflower seed, soybeans and linseed into oils and meals. EU produced oils and imported tropical oils are delivered for food, feed, technical and energy uses essentially on the European market.

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[i] EFSA CONTAM Panel (EFSA Panel on Contaminants in the Food Chain), Knutsen HK, Alexander J, Barregard L, Bignami M, Bruschweiler B, Ceccatelli S, Cottrill B, Dinovi M, Edler L, Grasl-Kraupp B, Hoogenboom LR, Nebbia CS, Oswald IP, Petersen A, Rose M, Roudot A-C,Schwerdtle T, Vleminckx C, Vollmer G, Wallace H, Lampen A, Morris I, Piersma A, Schrenk D, Binaglia M, Levorato S and Hogstrand C, 2018. Scientific Opinion on the update of the risk assessment on 3-monochloropropane diol and its fatty acid esters. EFSA Journal 2018;16(1):5083, 48 pp. https://doi.org/10.2903/j.efsa.2018.5083

[ii] EFSA Scientific Committee, Hardy A, Benford D, Halldorsson T, Jeger MJ, Knutsen KH, More S, Mortensen A, Naegeli H, Noteborn H, Ockleford C, Ricci A, Rychen G, Silano V, Solecki R, Turck D, Aerts M, Bodin L, Davis A, Edler L, Gundert-Remy U, Sand S, Slob W, Bottex B, Abrahantes JC, Marques DC, Kass G and Schlatter JR, 2017. Update: Guidance on the use of the benchmark dose approach in risk assessment. EFSA Journal 2017;15(1):4658, 41 pp. doi:10.2903/j.efsa.2017.4658