

TRANS FATTY ACIDS (TFA) AND HYDROGENATION

The members of the European Oil and Proteinmeal Industry (FEDIOL) are facing an unjustified discrimination towards some of their products.

Indeed today, hydrogenated vegetable oil is widely pointed out by the media in Europe as being the main source of TFA in the diet. Consequently, there is a real confusion created among consumers by the word "hydrogenated" (labelled on commercial products as required by Directive 2000/13/EC) which is commonly associated with a high TFA content.

Professor Dr. Ernst H. Reimerdes, Food-Info-Tec-Office Villette (CH) and Director of the German Institute of Food Technology, Quakenbrück, a well-recognised Food Scientist and expert on TFA explains:

"Labelling commercial food products by the word hydrogenated (as required by Directive 2000/13/EC) is for many reasons misleading, scientifically not justified and hence increases consumer confusion.

Consumer protection should and is concerned with reduced intake of TFA and saturated fatty acids (SAFA).

While products obtained by full hydrogenation of oils and fats contain hardly any TFA, partial hydrogenation can lead to TFA.

On the other hand, the consumer should also be informed that the replacement of partially hydrogenated fats means in many cases an increased content of saturated fats to achieve comparable good product quality.

The term hydrogenated in the ingredient list of commercial products is misleading because it does not specify the degree of hydrogenation of the oil or fat used and cannot in any way indicate the level of TFA or SAFA present in the product.

An indication of the TFA and SAFA content as part of the nutrition labelling requirements would be the solution to provide consumers with pertinent information and dissipate the confusion created."

FEDIOL member companies fully support the idea of nutritional labelling of TFA and SAFA and are therefore prepared to provide to their customers all necessary information to make this possible.

For further information on the FEDIOL position on trans fatty acids, please refer to www.fediol.be