

**FEDIOL STATEMENT
REGARDING
SUDAN DYE CONTAMINATION OF PALM OIL**

BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Since 2004, several food alerts on Sudan dye contamination of bottled palm oil have been reported mainly in the UK through the Rapid Alert System. The problem of contamination of palm oil with Sudan dyes has been restricted to imported bottled/canned crude palm oil of West African origin, for direct sale. Indeed, there seems to be some appeal in ethnic cooking for red-coloured palm oil.

It is important to note that **bulk imports have never been associated with Sudan dyes contamination.**

On April 4, 2005 the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health adopted a Commission Decision on emergency measures regarding chilli, chilli products, curcuma and palm oil.

This Decision extends the control measures on Sudan dyes to crude palm oil for direct consumption and will prohibit imports, unless an analytical report accompanying the consignment demonstrates that the products does not contain Sudan dyes (I, II, III, IV).

This Decision will be published in the next two weeks and will apply immediately following notification to Member States.

FEDIOL would like to stress that the scope of the Commission Decision is restricted to palm oil within CN Code 1511 1090 for direct human consumption.

The Commission Decision and national controls do not apply to crude palm oil imported in bulk tankers and intended to be further processed for onward sale to the food industry

FEDIOL POSITION

- FEDIOL members' main activity is the refining of crude oils. For bulk imports of crude vegetable oils there would be no reason or commercial value in adding colour as colour is among the undesirable characteristics in crude oils that the refining process seeks to remove. FEDIOL has developed a sectorial Code of Practice for refining vegetable oil to ensure the removal of several compounds while maintaining the nutritional value and ensuring the quality and stability of the end product. This process consistently yields safe products.
- The vast majority of crude palm oil imported into the EU (more than 99%) is from Asia and South America.

- Additionally, Commission Directive 96/3/EC¹ grants a derogation from certain provisions of Council Directive 93/43/EEC on the hygiene of foodstuffs as regards the transport of bulk liquid oils and fats by sea. Article 2 of this Directive includes provisions to differentiate between oils and fats that are to be further processed and those intended for direct human consumption. Documentary evidence of this is required under Article 3. Hence, any imported crude palm oil intended for direct human consumption will be identified by this legislation and would be subject to the import controls introduced by the latest Commission Decision.
- As further assurance, random monitoring over the last year on imports of crude palm oil in the UK confirmed the absence of Sudan dyes (results below the limit of determination of 1 mg/kg). The oils and fats sector now intends to continue this monitoring by performing random checks on imports of crude palm oil from all origins.

We trust these assurances give the EU Food Industry full confidence in the refined palm oil supplied by FEDIOL members.

¹ Commission Directive 96/3/EC granting a derogation from certain provisions of Council Directive 93/43/EEC on the hygiene of foodstuffs as regards the transport of bulk liquid oils and fats by sea.