Ethyl alcohol of agricultural origin: Definition and requirements

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European Commission updates definition and requirements for ethyl alcohol of agricultural origin

Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2022/1303 of 25 April 2022 amending Regulation (EU) 2019/787 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the definition of and requirements for ethyl alcohol of agricultural origin

Update

The European Commission has updated the requirements for ethyl alcohol, amending maximum levels of certain residues; updating reference methods for the measurement of ethyl acetate, higher alcohols and furfural; and aligning definitions.

Impacted products

Ethyl alcohol

What is changing?

The Commission has amended the requirements of ethyl alcohol which must now comply with the following requirements to be placed on the EU market (changes in bold):

(a) it has been obtained **through alcoholic fermentation, followed by distillation** exclusively of agricultural products listed in Annex I to the Treaty

(b) it has no detectable taste other than that of the raw materials used in its production

(c) its minimum alcoholic strength by volume is 96.0%

(d) its maximum levels of residues do not exceed the following:

(i) **ethyl acetate**: 1.3 g per hectolitre of 100% vol. alcohol; *[*previously *"esters (expressed in ethyl acetate)"]*

(ii) **acetaldehyde (sum of ethanal and 1,1-diethoxyethane)**: 0.5 g per hectolitre of 100% vol. alcohol; [previously *"aldehydes (expressed in acetaldehyde)"]*

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(iii) **higher alcohols (sum of: propan-1-ol, butan-1-ol, butan-2-ol, 2- methylpropan1-ol, 2-methylbutan- 1-ol and 3-methylbutan-1-ol)**: 0.5 g per hectolitre of 100% vol. alcohol; *[*previously *"higher alcohols (expressed in 2-methyl-1-propanol)"]*

(iv) methanol: 30 g per hectolitre of 100% vol. alcohol

(v) furfural: **0.5 g per hectolitre of 100% vol. alcohol** *[previously "not detectable"].*

The following requirements have been deleted in the proposal:

- total acidity (expressed in acetic acid): 1.5 g per hectolitre of 100% vol. alcohol
- dry extract: 1.5 g per hectolitre of 100% vol. alcohol
- volatile bases containing nitrogen (expressed in nitrogen): 0.1 g per hectolitre of 100% vol. alcohol.

Why?

The previous requirements were considered outdated from a technical and scientific point of view, no longer corresponding to the technical parameters generally used by industry and laboratories.

Timeline

The Regulation entered into force on 15 August 2022.

Background

The requirements for ethyl alcohol are set out in the framework legislation Regulation 2019/787 which is amended by this Regulation.

Sources

Delegated Regulation (EU) 2022/1303

Regulation (EU) 2019/787

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