EU withdraws eight flavourings

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EU withdraws eight flavouring substances from its list of permitted substances

Commission Regulation (EU) 2024/234 of 15 January 2024 amending Annex I to Regulation (EC) No 1334/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the removal of certain flavouring substances from the Union list

Update

The EU has withdrawn eight flavouring substances from the list of substances that may be used in the EU to flavour foods. The substances are 2-phenylpent-2-enal, 2-phenyl-4-methyl-2-hexenal, 2-(sec-butyl)-4,5-dimethyl-3-thiazoline, 4,5-dimethyl-2-ethyl-3-thiazoline, 2,4-dimethyl-3-thiazoline, 2-isobutyl-3-thiazoline, 5-ethyl-4-methyl-2-(2-methylpropyl)-thiazoline, and 5-ethyl-4-methyl-2-(2-butyl)-thiazoline. They have been removed from the list because the manufacturers have not provided sufficient data to rule out risks to consumer health.

What is changing?

Regulation 1334/2008 (Annex I) lists flavouring substances that are authorised to be used in foods in the European Union. The EU has removed the following substances from that list:

- 2-phenylpent-2-enal (FL-No. 05.175)
- 2-phenyl-4-methyl-2-hexenal (FL-No. 05.222)
- 2-(sec-butyl)-4,5-dimethyl-3-thiazoline (FL-No. 15.029)
- 4,5-dimethyl-2-ethyl-3-thiazoline (FL-No. 15.030)
- 2,4-dimethyl-3-thiazoline (FL-No. 15.060)
- 2-isobutyl-3-thiazoline (FL-No. 15.119)
- 5-ethyl-4-methyl-2-(2-methylpropyl)-thiazoline (FL-No. 15.130)
- 5-ethyl-4-methyl-2-(2-butyl)-thiazoline (FL-No. 15.131).

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Why?

When the list of flavouring substances was established in 2012, certain substances were included on the condition that additional data would be provided to allow the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) to rule out any risk to consumer health. For these eight substances, further data has not been provided by the manufacturers, so risks to consumer health could not be excluded.

Timeline

From **5 February 2025**, foods containing the flavouring substances listed above may not be put on the EU market. Foods containing those substances imported into the EU before that date can remain on the market.

Recommended Actions

Exporting companies should seek to replace these flavourings in food products with substances that are authorised in the EU. The European Commission's Food Flavourings Database provides an easy way to check which flavourings are permitted.

Background

Regulation 1334/2008 prohibits the addition of certain natural undesirable substances to food. It also lays down maximum levels for certain substances that are naturally present in flavourings, and in food ingredients with flavouring properties, but which may raise concern for human health. The Regulation defines different types of flavourings, and lists the substances for which evaluation and approval is required.

The Union list of flavouring substances approved for use in and on foods (Regulation 872/2012) was adopted in 2012. The eight substances listed here were included in the Union list of flavouring substances on the condition that safety data addressing EFSA's concerns would be submitted.

When EFSA evaluates flavouring substances, it allocates them a unique identification number called an FL-number. FL comes from "FLAVIS", the EU's flavouring information system. The FL-number is not used for labelling purposes (European Commission 2012).

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Resources

Regulation (EC) No 1334/2008

Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 872/2012

European Commission: The Food Flavourings Database

European Commission (2012) FAQ – Food – EU adopts list of approved flavouring substances

Sources

Commission Regulation (EU) 2024/234 as regards the removal of certain flavouring substances from the Union list

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