Flavouring substance benzene-1,2-diol

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EU bans the flavouring benzene-1,2-diol

Commission Regulation (EU) 2024/2856 of 12 November 2024 amending Annex I to Regulation (EC) No 1334/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the removal of the flavouring substance Benzene-1,2-diol (FL No. 04.029) from the Union list

Update

The European Commission has removed benzene-1,2-diol from the list of substances that may be used in the EU to flavour foods, due to safety concerns.

What is changing?

Regulation 1334/2008 (Annex I) lists flavouring substances that are authorised to be used in foods in the European Union. The European Commission has removed benzene-1,2-diol (FL No. 04.029) from that list.

Why?

The European Food Safety Authority has reviewed a number of smoke flavouring products (EFSA 2023a–d) and concluded that benzene-1,2-diol raises safety concerns regarding its genotoxicity.

Timeline

Applies from **3 December 2024**. Foods containing this substance exported before the Regulation applies may stay on the EU market until their use-by date.

Recommended Actions

Companies that export food products containing these flavourings can look for alternative substances in the Food Flavourings Database.

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Background

Regulation 1334/2008 prohibits adding certain undesirable natural substances to food. It also lays down maximum levels for some substances that are naturally present in flavourings, but which may raise concerns 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.

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.

Resources

EFSA (2023a) Scientific opinion on the renewal of the authorisation of Zesti Smoke Code 10 (SF■002) as a smoke flavouring Primary Product. EFSA Journal, 21(11): 8364.

EFSA (2023b) Scientific opinion on the renewal of the authorisation of Smoke Concentrate 809045 (SF-003) as a smoke flavouring Primary Product. EFSA Journal, 21(11): 8365.

EFSA (2023c) Scientific opinion on the renewal of the authorisation of SmokEz C■10 (SF■005) as a smoke flavouring Primary Product. EFSA Journal, 21(11): 8367.

EFSA (2023d) Scientific opinion on the renewal of the authorisation of SmokEz Enviro■23 (SF■006) as a smoke flavouring Primary Product. EFSA Journal, 21(11): 8368.

Regulation 1334/2008 on flavourings and certain food ingredients with flavouring properties for use in and on foods

Regulation 872/2012 adopting the list of flavouring substances provided for by Regulation 2232/96

Sources

Regulation (EU) 2024/2856 on the removal of the flavouring substance benzene-1,2-diol (FL No. 04.029) from the Union list

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