Stricter specifications for mono- and diglycerides of fatty acids (E 471)

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EU introduces stricter specifications for mono- and diglycerides of fatty acids (E 471)

Commission Regulation (EU) 2023/1428 of 7 July 2023 amending the Annex to Regulation (EU) No 231/2012 as regards mono- and diglycerides of fatty acids (E 471)

Update

The EU is introducing stricter specifications for mono- and diglycerides of fatty acids (E 471). It is lowering acceptable levels of toxic elements, establishing maximum limits for certain impurities, and adjusting the production process to decrease glycidyl fatty acid esters.

Impacted products

processed food products that use E 471, usually used as an emulsifier (e.g. in baked goods, dairy products, oils and fats, processed meats, confectionery, prepared meals and snacks)

What is changing?

This Regulation establishes stricter rules on the use of mono- and diglycerides of fatty acids (E 471) as food additives.

These include:

- establishment of a maximum permitted content of erucic acid in the assay
- reduction of maximum limits for arsenic, lead, mercury and cadmium
- establishment of a maximum limit for the sum of 3-monochloropropane diol (3-MCPD) and 3-MCPD fatty acid esters (expressed as 3-MCPD), and glycidyl fatty acids esters (expressed as glycidol), with stricter levels in foods for infants and young children

Details are given in the Annex to the Regulation.

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Why?

The changes reflect concerns about findings of high levels of genotoxic and carcinogenic glycidyl fatty acid esters in E 471 (EFSA 2017, 2021) and recent amendments to legislation on contaminants.

Timeline

The new specifications apply from **30 July 2023**. However, where E 471 has been lawfully placed on the EU market before that date, it may be added to food until 30 January 2024.

For glycidyl fatty acid esters, an intermediate maximum level is set between 30 July 2023 and 30 January 2024. In the case of foods for infants and young children, the new maximum level for glycidyl fatty acid esters applies from 30 July 2023.

What are the major implications for exporting countries?

These changes may have an impact on countries exporting food products containing E 471 to the EU market.

If exporting countries fail to comply with the new EU regulations, their products may be rejected at the EU border and prevented from entering the market. This could result in financial losses for exporters and a disruption of trade relations between the exporting country and the EU.

Recommended Actions

Suppliers of processed foods containing E 471 may need to adjust their manufacturing practices and/or safety and quality controls to meet the new requirements.

Resources

EFSA (2017) Re-evaluation of mono- and di-glycerides of fatty acids (E 471) as food additives. EFSA Journal, 15(11): 5045.

EFSA (2021) Opinion on the re■evaluation of mono■ and diglycerides of fatty acids (E 471) as food additive in foods for infants below 16 weeks of age and follow■up of their re■evaluation as food additives for uses in foods for all population groups. EFSA Journal, 19(11): 6885.

Commission Regulation (EU) 231/2012 laying down specifications for food additives listed in Annexes II and III to Regulation (EC) No 1333/2008.

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Regulation (EC) 1331/2008 establishing a common authorisation procedure for food additives, food enzymes and food flavourings.

Sources

Commission Regulation (EU) 2023/1428 of 7 July 2023 amending the Annex to Regulation (EU) No 231/2012 as regards mono- and diglycerides of fatty acids (E 471)

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