

CONSULTATION ON THE DELETION OF PROVISIONS FOR PROPYL PARA-HYDROXYBENZOATE AND ITS SODIUM SALT FROM THE FOOD REGULATIONS

Aim

The Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA) is seeking feedback from the food industry (local food manufacturers and importers), on the proposed amendments to the Food Regulations concerning the deletion of provisions for propyl para-hydroxybenzoate (INS 216) and its sodium salt, sodium propyl para-hydroxybenzoate (INS 217).

Background

Propyl para-hydroxybenzoate (INS 216) and sodium propyl para-hydroxybenzoate (INS 217) are permitted Class II chemical preservatives under Regulation 19(2)(b) of the Food Regulations. They may be added to the following food categories specified under the Fourth Schedule up to the corresponding maximum levels:

Food Category	Maximum level (ppm of propyl para-hydroxybenzoate)
Beer	70
Coffee (or coffee mixture or liquid extract)	450
Colouring matter, if in the form of a solution of a permitted colouring matter	2000
Drinking chocolate concentrate	700
Fillings and toppings (fruit or vegetable based)	800
Flavouring emulsions or flavouring syrup	800
Fruits, crystallised, glaze or drained	1000
Fruit (other than fresh fruit or fruit pulp not otherwise specified in this Table)	800
Fruit drink or fruit crush	400
Fruit juices	400
Fruit juices, concentrate	800
Glucose drink containing solid contents not less than 23.5% (w/v) of glucose	400
Jam, including preserves sold for dietetic purposes	500
Pickles other than pickled vegetables that require washing before consumption	250
Pickled vegetables that require washing before consumption	1000
Salad dressing	250
Sauces	250
Silicon anti-foam emulsion	2000
Soft drinks for consumption before dilution	800
Soft drinks for consumption without dilution (other than fruit drink or fruit crush)	160
Tomato pulp, paste or puree	800
Yoghurt, fruits	120

Following a review on the safety of propyl para-hydroxybenzoates by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), both INS 216 and INS 217 were no longer permitted for use in the European Union. This was due to their negative effects on sex hormones and the male reproductive organs of juvenile rats.

The Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA) similarly identified significant toxicological concerns with INS 216, and concluded that the safety of INS 216 could not be established. Arising from JECFA's assessment, the Codex Alimentarius Commission¹ (CAC) had discontinued work on draft provisions for the use of INS 216 in the Codex General Standard for Food Additives, and also revoked provisions for the use of INS 216 in relevant Codex commodity standards. JECFA has never evaluated the safety of INS 217 and Codex has not adopted any provisions for the use of INS 217.

Internationally, INS 216 and INS 217 are not permitted for use in food in a number of countries, such as Australia, New Zealand, the European Union, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Indonesia.

Proposed amendment

AVA has conducted a review on the use of INS 216 and INS 217. In view of the potential for adverse effects on human health and the availability of alternative preservatives, these two preservatives will no longer be allowed for use in food. Consequently, all existing provisions for the use of INS 216 and INS 217 will be removed from the Food Regulations.

Industry members can continue to use other Class II chemical preservatives permitted under the Food Regulations.

Request for comments

AVA invites views and comments from the food industry on:

- Whether propyl para-hydroxybenzoate (INS 216) and sodium propyl para-hydroxybenzoate (INS 217) are used in food products imported/ manufactured and sold by your company; and
- In the event that INS 216 or INS 217 is used in food products imported/manufactured by your company,
 - For importers: the estimated length of time that your company will need in order to source for similar food products that do not contain INS 216 or INS 217.
 - For local manufacturers: the estimated length of time that your company will need to reformulate your products to exclude the use of these preservatives.

¹ The Codex Alimentarius Commission is the international food standards setting body formed by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the World Health Organisation (WHO).

All submissions should be clearly and concisely written, and should provide a reasoned explanation for any proposed revisions.

Submissions should reach AVA no later than 12:00 p.m., 20 June 2016, through mail or email, to the following addresses:

Mail:

Regulatory Programmes Department
Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority of Singapore
52 Jurong Gateway Road #14-01
Singapore 608550
Tel: +(65) 6805 2910

(Attention: Mr Cheng Chee Seng)

Email:

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