SUMMARY PAPER

SUMMARY OF THE ACNFP'S CONCLUSION ON THE TRADITIONAL FOOD NOTIFICATION FOR HASKAP BERRIES (*Lonicera caerulea*)

At the 133rd meeting of the Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes (ACNFP) the traditional food from a third country notification dossier for haskaps or honeyberries (*Lonicera caerulea*) was considered.

These are small blue fruits, traditionally consumed in Japan. The applicant intends to sell the berries as whole fresh fruit or as whole fruit frozen. The summary of the application can be viewed on the Commission website.

The advice of the Committee to the Food Standards Agency is summarised below. Please note the Committee did not consider any potential health benefits from consuming the food as the focus of the novel food assessment ensuring the food is safe, not misleading and not putting consumers at a nutritional disadvantage.

The Committee assessed the information supplied and considered that this was enough to demonstrate the 25 years traditional use of the food in Japan. They evaluated the product on the basis that it would be used in a similar way to blueberries and therefore the risks identified were like those that could be expected from other similar fruits. It was noted that this approach had been used in the EU when identifying the potential for pesticides residues a potential risk with the product where a maximum residue limit is in place.

The information supplied around nutritional composition had explained how haskaps could contribute to the diet and had been developed by researchers actively considering Haskap berries use in western diets. Evidence was presented on the movement of this fruit into the Canadian diet where no significant issues had been raised to date.

An overarching concern was raised by the Committee that the dossier had not provided full information in line with the EFSA guidance for traditional food notifications, which made a full assessment of the potential risks difficult. A specific example highlighted was the lack of a literature review or explanation of how the data presented was identified, which made it challenging to have confidence that the risks associated with the product had been identified and managed by the applicant. A fuller literature search could have provided further information to support the assessment and provide reassurance that the product would be unlikely to have unintended effects in a European population.

Further information on the composition for multiple batches of the fruit should have been supplied. This could have been used to support a robust specification and to understand the potential variation in contamination from the soil entering the plant as it grows. This was felt to be important to consider variation in composition of the fruit when grown in different geographical locations such as Europe, Hokkaido or in North America.

The Committee noted that a shelf life for the product has been proposed but there is no explanation on how this was estimated. It was unclear which form of the product had been evaluated. An18-month shelf life would be consistent with a frozen product but the shelf life and potential hazards for other forms of the product stored over time had not been considered.

The Committee considered in detail the potential allergenicity risk associated with the fruit. Members suggested that allergies to the fruit or its close relatives were not identified from literature, suggesting the potential for cross reactivity in people with other fruit allergies was low. The potential for allergic reactions could not be ruled out but further premarket evaluation was not required.

Conclusion the Committee advised the FSA that they had significant concerns that the information provided in the dossier was incomplete and was not of a suitable quality to support a robust assessment of the traditional food and its safety when transferred into the European diet. A few areas were identified for further exploration. The evidence provided did not support the committee reaching a conclusion on whether the product would meet the criteria for authorisation under the Novel Food Regulation.