COMMITTEE PAPER FOR DISCUSSION **ACNFP/133/03**

ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR NOVEL FOODS AND PROCESSES
LONICERA CAERULEA – TRADITIONAL FOOD NOTIFICATION NF 2018/197

ISSUE

1. A notification has been received under the traditional foods authorisation process for *Lonicera caerulea* under the Novel Foods Regulation (EU) No 2015/2283.

2. The Committee is asked whether there are safety concerns with the proposed use of this traditional food in the EU market. The information from the Committee will provide the basis for any safety objections raised at EU level.

Background

3. On 28 February the European Commission forwarded the notification from Soloberry Ltd for *Lonicera caerulea* a fruit traditionally consumed in Japan. The applicant intends to sell the berries as whole fresh fruit or as whole fruit frozen.

4. Member States have four months until 28 June to submit reasoned objections to the notification. If authorised, the authorisation will be open to any company subject to the specification and conditions of use detailed in the dossier.

5. The notification dossier is attached as **Annex A** with its associated appendices. **Annex A** contains protected information.

This application

Composition and specification

6. The applicant is seeking to market whole berries of *Lonicera caerulea* also known as haskap, blue honeysuckle berry, honeyberry, sweetberry honeysuckle and Jagoda kanczacka, either fresh or frozen in the EU. The applicant characterises the berries as 2cm long and weighing 0.3-2.0g depending on the variety. The berries have a slightly waxy outer skin which is an intense blue colour and a soft fruit flesh with very small seeds.

7. The applicant outlines the proximate analysis for the berry as:

Nutrient	Reported values
Energy	330kcal/kg, 1380kJ/kg
Carbohydrate	7.2%
Of which glucose	3.2%
Of which fructose	2.9%
Of which Bound saccharides	1.1%
Lipids	1.5%
Proteins	1.6%
Dietary fibre	6.7%
In organic material	0.5%
Water	82.5%

8. The specification of the novel details the includes information on microorganisms, contaminants and wider quality acceptance criteria such as Brix level. Further information on the amino acid composition is provided in Annex 7 to the notification dossier.

Nutritional aspects

9. The applicant has also provided information on the nutritional content of the berries. The applicant suggests that Haskap berries are not intended to replace other fruit and berries in the diet. If they did replace other fruits the applicant argues consumers would not be at a nutritional disadvantage as the nutritional content is comparable to other fruits. Information comparing mineral content of Haskap berries to a range of fruits including, blueberries, orange and apple is provided. Analysis is also provided for the content of vitamins A, C and E compared to other fruits and for the Vitamin E and C content of both fresh and frozen Haskap berries.

10. The applicant suggests that the berries are a good source of dietary fibre and contain antioxidants particularly polyphenols and antioxidants. They suggest the products has high concentrations of anthocyanins 13 times more than found in blueberries.

11. A list of secondary metabolites contained in the berries has been provided but there is no indication of the amount of these that are present. The exception to this is cyanidin-3-glucoside (C3G) which makes up 92% of the anthocyanins in Haskap berries as compared to 5.6% of the anthocyanins in blueberries.

Production process

12. The berries are currently grown in Japan, China, Russia, Canada and Poland and are native to boreal forests and alpine areas. Information is provided on the production in Japan. This consists of traditional fruit propagation techniques with a summary of the variation in fungicide and pesticide practice that growers employed. It is suggested that the new orchards in Europe are using similar growing techniques to those used for Blueberries and this reflects the MRL for pesticides for these two fruits are the same at EU level.

13. Berries are harvested using a combination of machine and hand harvest. Quickly being delivered to temperature controlled processing plants after harvest.

14. The source material for the Haskap orchards in Japan were thought to be sourced from the wild. The material used in the European and North American orchards has been produced using cutting and invitro plant production methods.

15. The applicant indicates that in addition to ensuring their products are within the EU MRL's, they are involved in the BRC Gap scheme. They suggest that this ensures appropriate controls are in place and that these are audited once a year. The audit includes annual testing at certified laboratories for chemical residues.

Evidence of traditional use

16. The applicant explains that Haskaps have been consumed by indigenous inhabitants of the Hokkaido region of Japan since the 1920's. This gradually expanded to wider populations with the berries now consumed fresh, frozen in and in a range of products several examples of which are provided in the dossier. They are sold in supermarkets in the Hokkaido region as well as at the farm gate.

17. The applicant reports there are 150 growers and 3 major processors in Japan who have been supplying the market for approximately 30 years. The industry is non-integrated and consists of co-operatives. The market size is reported as 70-100 tons per year since 1999. It is explained that the market has been larger in the early 1980s, 150 tonnes per year but has stabilised at the current size of 167 hectares being grown per year since the mid-1990s. Fresh fruit is part of this market at 30 tonnes a year and a significant part of the market being in the processed products.

18. With fruit sold in 200-400g punnets consumption per capita is estimated at 0.5g per person in Japan. Consumption is concentrated in the Hokkaido region with a population of 5.5million inhabits consuming 100 tons of berries annually for the last 30 years. Regular consumers thought to be consuming approximately 18g per person per year.

19. As supporting evidence of safe use of these berries information is provided on a market that has been active since 2010 in Canada. 500 hectares of the fruit is grown in Canada producing 200 tonnes annually. It is suggested that this will increase when the orchards are mature. Consumption per capita is suggested to be 0.1g person at present.

Safety concerns identified by the applicant

20. The applicant indicates that no safety risks were identified in their literature review. Further information on this review and how it was conducted has not been provided.

21. Through the document core food safety risks of pesticides residues and the potential for microbial growth have been identified and are controlled as part of the relevant EU legislation and the specification of the product. No information was provided on the potential for allergenicity in those with other fruit allergies.

COMMITTEE ACTION REQUIRED

- Members are asked whether there are safety concerns that need to be managed with this traditional food from third countries.
- The Committee's advice will form the basis for the UK's formal response to the Commission and whether reasoned safety objections are submitted.

Secretariat
April 2018

Annexes attached:

Annex A Notification dossier for *Lonicera caerulea* as a traditional food from third countries.