Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes (ACNFP)

Open Workshop
22 February 2018
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Discussion Group 2: INSECTS

“Assessing risks when consumed as food, including microbiological issues”
Background

- Insects are seen as a **food source** for many people in Central and South America, Africa, and Asia.
- Insect eating is **rare** in the **western world**, but insects remain a popular food in many other regions.
- There are an estimated **1,462 species** of recorded **edible insects** according to FAO.
- Seen a **good nutritional source** of protein however recent research has suggested this would be very much dependent on the diet of insects
Increasing Interest in Europe as new (novel) source of food.
One Reason is the Perceived Positive Environmental Impact

For example, reduction in water usage, land usage, less greenhouse gases, feed conversion rates.
Insect food products

- Whole insects
- Insect Flour
- Insect biscuits
- Insect pasta
- Insect crisps
- Insect protein bars
- Insect burgers
- Insect sweets
- Insect pâté
Insects in the pre-2018 Novel Food Regulations

❖ Prior to this year the UK view was that whole Insects lay outside the scope of the Novel Food Regulation.
❖ Different views amongst different Member States.
❖ All insects clarified as in the scope of Regulation (EU) 2015/2283 which came into force on 1 January 2018.
❖ Businesses have been advised they also need to comply with General Food Law & General Hygiene Regulations.
❖ Emerging industry sector which requires regulatory information and assistance.
Transition measures and insects

- In the UK the species of whole insect that were marketed in the EU before the end of 2017 can be continue to be sold until 2020 subject to an application for these foods being submitted by the 1 January 2019.

- Other Member states may not allow insects to be marketed under the transition measures as they were not legally on their market previously.

- Once authorised the species, the food categories in which they can be used and other conditions of use will be included in the EU list. The authorisation will be generic unless data protection is triggered.
There have been a number of risk assessment reports on Insects as food.

- European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)
- French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety (ANSES)
- Netherlands Food and Consumer Safety Authority (NVWA)
- Belgian Federal Agency for Safety of the Food Chain (FASFC) & The Superior Health Council (SHC)
The potential food safety issues considered in these reports fell into the following categories:

- Physical hazards
- Chemical substances
- Allergenicity
- Nutrition
- Parasites, viruses, bacteria & fungi
- Production process
- Contaminants and non-conventional transmissible agents
- Environmental factors
Points for Discussion

1) Will novelty, and the publicity attached to the environmental benefits of insect farming, be sufficient to offset consumer resistance in this country to eating insect products?

2) What are the main safety issues associated with insects as a source of human food?
Points for Discussion

3) The producers of insect products may choose to seek authorisation under the new regulations as “a traditional food from third countries” What will the key aspects be for the assessment to ensure these traditional foods can be safely consumed by an EU population not familiar with them?

4) The farmed insect industry mainly consists of small innovation businesses; will the requirement to seek authorisation under the new Novel Foods Regulations act as a barrier to the development of this entrepreneurial activity.