

PRESS INFORMATION



European Parliament Study on Trans Fatty Acids (TFA) supports distinction between industrial TFA and natural TFA.

European Dairy Association (EDA) confirms its opinion that naturally occurring TFA should not be considered for any legal actions (labelling).

Brussels, 13 February 2009

In the report of a study, commissioned by the European Parliament's Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) and focusing on the health impact of TFA, it is clearly indicated that legal restrictions should be limited to industrially produced TFA. Naturally occurring TFA, which can be found in dairy products and meat, should not be considered. This is completely in line with the opinion of the European Dairy Association (EDA) which has always been in favour of a clear distinction between industrially produced TFA and naturally occurring TFA.

ENVI Study

The ENVI Study aims at providing background information to Members of the European Parliament on TFA. The report highlights the fact that there are two types of TFA: natural TFA which is naturally present in dairy and meat on the one hand and TFA originating from partially hydrogenated vegetable oils - commonly referred to as industrially produced TFA - on the other. There is considerable scientific evidence that there is causative link between intake of industrially produced TFA and cardiovascular disease. Scientific studies also revealed that consumption of naturally occurring TFA at levels found in regular diets do not contribute to elevated risk of cardiovascular disease. Natural TFA is present in our foodstuffs at much lower levels than industrially produced TFA. The authors therefore mentioned that it is important to make a clear distinction between naturally occurring and industrially produced TFA when developing possible guidelines for action to reduce the intake of TFA. Any legal restrictions should thus be limited to industrially produced TFA.

The report's final recommendation consists in the consideration of a maximum level of 2% TFA in all ingredients intended for human consumption. EDA believes that on the basis of the scientific evidence presented in this report, a limitation in the TFA content is only necessary for industrially produced TFA. This is also the case in the Danish legislation which excludes naturally occurring from the prohibition to use fats and oils containing more than 2% of industrially produced TFA in foods destined for human consumption.

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TFA and mandatory labelling

The EDA, representing the interests of the European dairy industry, is pleased that the ENVI Study confirms the need to differentiate between TFA sources. EDA underlines that, within the context of the EU debate on labelling, naturally occurring TFA in dairy products should not be considered for nutrition labelling.

'Naturally occurring TFA should not be considered in any legal activities, says Joop Kleibeuker, Secretary-General of the EDA. 'As the ENVI Study illustrates, there is a clear difference between industrially produced TFA and naturally occurring TFA. Consumption of natural TFA with dairy products at levels normally found in the diet does not have an impact on cardiovascular disease risk factors and is, in consequence, of no concern for public health.'

Dr. Kleibeuker further warns that *'labelling of naturally occurring TFA will confuse, mislead and unnecessarily worry the consumer. It might even result in a lower consumption of dairy foods. This will in turn have a detrimental effect on public health because of the automatic reduction in the intake of essential nutrients. There is simply no reason to impose any labelling requirements on natural TFA.'*

ABOUT THE EUROPEAN DAIRY ASSOCIATION

The European Dairy Association represents the interests of dairy processors in the European Union. The membership of the EDA consists of the national trade associations for dairy processors in each EU Member State.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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