EUROPEAN DAIRY ASSOCIATION
ASSOCIATION LAITIÈRE EUROPÈENNE
EUROPÄISCHER MILCHINDUSTRIEVERBAND

PRESS INFORMATION

EFSA Report: dairy protein is beneficial to human health

Brussels, 11 February 2009

The European Dairy Association (EDA) welcomes EFSA's ruling on dairy protein health risks. Following the scientific review of the potential health impact of β-casomorphin-7 (BCM7), a peptide sequence present in the milk protein β-casein, the EFSA concluded last week that there are no risks linked to this protein. For the EDA, EFSA's conclusion confirms that dairy protein is a high quality protein and that inaccurate concern about the healthfulness of dairy protein is not justified. The EDA hopes that consumers will no longer be concerned unnecessarily when eating or drinking dairy products.

EFSA Report

Because of the ongoing debate over the health implications of proteins and peptides such as β-casein A1 and A2, the two most common proteins in cow's milk, EFSA has carried out a detailed review of the available scientific literature that addresses possible health effects of β-casomorphins and related peptides; in particular β-casomorphin-7 (BCM7), a peptide sequence present in the milk protein β-casein. EFSA focused on BCM7 because a couple of studies suggested that BCM7 may contribute to increased risk of certain non-communicable diseases such as diabetes type 1, autism and cardiovascular diseases.

Having carried out its review, EFSA concluded clearly that a cause and effect relationship cannot be established between the dietary intake of BCM7, related peptides or their possible protein precursors and non-communicable diseases.

Dairy protein, a high quality protein

The EDA, representing the interests of the dairy industry in the European Union, welcomes EFSA's conclusion. For the EDA, there was never any doubt that dairy protein is a high quality protein that contains all the amino acids in roughly the right proportions that humans need.

'*We are pleased with EFSA's conclusion'* tells Joop Kleibeuker, the EDA's Secretary-General, '*we hope that from now on consumers will no longer be unnecessarily concerned about the healthfulness of A1 milk* and plainly can enjoy its benefits. We have always be convinced that both A1 and A2** milks are nutritious foods. Most milk products contain a mixture of the two protein types.'*

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According to the EDA there has never been any probable evidence or proof that the A1 β-casein from cow's milk is a risk factor for diabetes type 1, cardiovascular diseases or autism.

Dr. Kleibeuker concludes by stating that '*the dairy industry has always been interested in innovation; this is clearly demonstrated by the broad variety of dairy products available to the consumer. It is clear that EFSA's conclusions on BCM7 will enable the dairy industry to refute the claims of those parties who have tried to frighten consumers away from nutritious conventional dairy foods.*'

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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* A1 The protein in milk exists as whey protein (20%) and casein protein (80%). Casein is composed of four major components: alpha (α), beta (β), gamma (γ) and kappa (κ) casein. B-casein represents 30-35% of total casein and comes in several forms depending on the genetic make-up of the cow. There are 13 genetic variants of β-casein, of which A1 and A2 are the most common.

** A2 The difference between A1 and A2 β-casein is very slight. A1 and A2 are an identical chain of amino acids, linked together to form the protein, apart from a single change in one of the amino acids at position 67. In A1 this change results in the release of β-casomorphin 7 (BCM7). In position 67 of the β casein chain, the proline in A2 is substituted by histadine in A1.