



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
HEALTH & CONSUMER PROTECTION DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

Directorate E – Safety of the Food Chain
E3 - Chemicals, Contaminants and Pesticides

SANCO

12. 01. 2007

Brussels,
DG SANCO E3/MW/km D 530019 (2007)

Subject: Use of spinach extract containing high levels of nitrate in meat products

Dear Mr Dobbelaere,

You will wish to be aware that the above subject was recently discussed at the meeting of the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health (Section Toxicological Safety of the Food Chain) on the 14th December 2006.

The issue was placed on the agenda of the meeting following reports that some manufacturers of meat products were using standardised spinach extracts containing high levels of nitrates. Furthermore such products were reportedly labelled to imply that they contain no added preservatives. A Member State therefore questioned whether such use of a spinach extract should be considered as that of a food additive as it may exert a preservative and/or colour fixing effect.

This issue was first discussed at a meeting of the Working Party of Governmental Experts on Food Additives on the 22nd September 2006 and the outcome of that meeting was endorsed by the Standing Committee on the 14th December 2006. Member States considered that such a practice would be a deliberate use of a food additive if used for the intended technological purpose of preservation in the final food. Consequently such a use of a food additive should comply both with the food additive legislation and also be labelled in compliance with the appropriate food labelling legislation.

Following this meeting I feel that it is appropriate to make you aware of the outcome of the discussions so that you may make your membership aware of this issue.

Yours sincerely,

Patricia Brunko
Head of Unit

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