

Article 4 Request
Regulation (EU) 2015/2283

Recipient Member State: Ireland, Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI)

Name of the Food: Monk fruit decoctions

Date: 12/07/2022

Description of the food

'Monk fruit decoctions' are water extracts of the fruit of the plant *Siraitia grosvenorii*, commonly known as monk fruit or "luo han guo". These extracts are obtained by first steeping the fresh or dried fruits in hot water, followed by filtration to remove suspended solids, and an optional concentration step for the partial removal of water before it is pasteurised and packaged. The applicant states that no selective extraction of mogrosides (the sweetening component of the fruit) takes place and that the content of mogroside V in the decoctions $\leq 5.5\%$.

'Monk fruit decoctions' are intended to be used as a food ingredient in hot and cold beverages and other foodstuffs such as desserts, sauces, baked goods, and breakfast cereals, provided that the mogroside V content in the final food does not exceed 37 mg/100 g.

Novel or Not Novel

The FSAI has concluded that 'monk fruit decoctions' are **novel foods**.

Reasons why it is a Novel Food

None of the competent authorities in the EU Member States in which the face-to-face interviews and surveys by questionnaire were carried out were of the opinion that a significant history of consumption of 'monk fruit decoctions' prior to May 15, 1997, had been satisfactorily demonstrated within their jurisdictions. It is considered by Member States that, in general, data from face-to-face interviews and surveys by questionnaire are of limited use as primary evidence of a history of significant consumption since they may not be verifiable when compared to product receipts or import or export data published by a reliable source.

In addition, the evidence provided suggests that 'monk fruit decoctions', as intended by the applicant, were not commercially available but rather the whole fruit itself for the preparation of the decoction at home as well as pieces of dried monk fruit or its juice as ingredients in other food products (e.g., ready-to-use soup mixes and instant monk fruit beverage cubes/granules). It is also noted that much of the reported 'monk fruit decoctions' consumption was for medicinal reasons rather than as a food. Historical consumption of a product for medicinal reasons does not equate to a history of consumption as a food.

Appropriate Novel Food Category

The applicant correctly proposes that if the food is considered novel, it would fall within the novel food category defined in Article 3.2(a)(iv) of Regulation (EU) 2015/2283, "food consisting of, isolated from or produced from plants or their parts, except when the food has a history of safe food use within the Union and is consisting of, isolated from or produced from a plant or a variety of the same species obtained by:

- traditional propagating practices which have been used for food production within the Union before 15 May 1997; or
- non-traditional propagating practices which have not been used for food production within the Union before 15 May 1997, where those practices do not give rise to significant changes in the composition or structure of the food affecting its nutritional value, metabolism or level of undesirable substances".