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Application for consultation to determinate the status of a novel food, pursuant to Article 4(2) of the Regulation (EU) 2015/2283 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2015 on novel foods.

Recipient Member State: SPANISH AGENCY FOR FOOD SAFETY AND NUTRITION (AESAN)

Name and description of the novel food concerned:

The food for which the opinion is requested is: **Tuber (roots) of *Cyperus esculentus* from hydroponic culture**

Tigernut is an edible tuber from the herbaceous plant *Cyperus esculentus*. The plant *Cyperus esculentus* grows to a height of around 40-50 centimetres and boasts a rhizome root system, on which terminal tubers (chufa) ultimately form. These are ellipsoid, subglobular or ovoid in shape, can grow to between 3 and 15 mm in diameter, turn greyish-brown when ripe and are odourless and tasteless when dry.

The tuber in question is grown using hydroponic farming, a method of plant production that uses mineral solutions rather than agricultural soil, and which is not traditionally used to grow chufa. The roots are fed a balanced nutrient solution dissolved in water with some chemical elements that are essential for plant development.

The product is intended to be consumed as such and as an ingredient for different foodstuff

Status –Not novel in foods.

Novel food category (where applicable): not applicable

Reasons Statement:

The tubers (roots) of *Cyperus sculentus* were available on the market as a food and consumed to a significant degree prior to May 1997.

Although the applicant provides few data regarding the differences in composition and undesirable substances between traditional tigernuts and those from hydroponic culture, we understand that although this new production process (hydroponics) gives rise to changes in the composition of the food affecting its nutritional value (e.g. sugar and protein content), these changes are not significant if we take into account the natural variability provided by conventional culture.

Conclusion:

The tuber (roots) of *Cyperus esculentus* from hydroponic farming does not imply changes in the condition of the food if it is compared with traditional tuber obtained with traditional methods, with history of consumption before 05/15/97 in the European Union in the food field, don't falling within the scope of Regulation (UE) 2015/2283 on Novel foods.