

Consultation request for the determination of novel food status

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: Sweden, Swedish Food Agency

Name of the food

Mycelium of *Rhizopus oligosporus*

Description of the food

Rhizopus oligosporus is a fungus of the family *Mucoraceae*. It has traditionally been used in the production of and been consumed as part of Tempeh, a food consisting of soybeans fermented with fungi where a mycelium is created and part of the final food. Unlike the production process of Tempeh, the mycelium of *Rhizopus oligosporus* is produced by submerged liquid fermentation in a bioreactor. The end products are in dried or fresh form.

After cultivation, the *Rhizopus oligosporus* biomass is inactivated by heating, washed, and de-watered, after which it is either dried, frozen and packaged for storage or formed into minced bits or whole chunks to be used in fresh form.

The dried mycelium of *Rhizopus oligosporus* is intended to be used as an ingredient in several food categories such as vegetable hamburgers or sausages, snacks, smoothies, soups, or dairy products and the fresh form is intended to be used as meat substitute in ready-to-eat products.

Status

Not novel

Food category

Not applicable

Reasons for the statement

The use of mycelium of *Rhizopus oligosporus* in food production is not novel since it has been widely consumed in the EU before the 15th of May 1997 as part of Tempeh.

The Finnish Food Authority made a statement on the 7th of June 2022 that dried mycelium powder of *Rhizopus oligosporus*, produced by submerged liquid fermentation, was not novel, referring to the history of consumption of the food as a part of Tempeh. It was shown that submerged liquid fermentation did not cause significant changes in the end product as compared to the mycelium in Tempeh.

The Swedish Food Agency agrees with this statement and state that the fresh form of the food does not differ significantly from the dried form.

Conclusion

Mycelium of *Rhizopus oligosporus*, in dried or fresh form, is not a novel food.