

**Application for consultation to determine the status of a novel food, pursuant to Article 4(2) of the above Regulation**

**Pili nuts (*Canarium ovatum*)**

**Recipient Member State: UK Food Standards Agency (FSA)**

***Name and description of the novel food concerned:***

The food is the nut / kernel found within the fruit of the pili nut tree (*Canarium ovatum*). It is primarily grown in the Philippines and exported to a number of countries. The suggested uses of the nut would be eaten as such or roasted. Wider uses are consistent with tree nuts and include pralines, ice cream etc. Food uses are also suggested for the oil from the nut.

***Status – Novel Food***

***Novel food category (where applicable) – iv) foods consisting of, isolated from plants or their parts.***

***Reasons Statement:***

The dossier consisted primarily of published materials on Pili nuts which contained references to the scale of export of Pili nuts to EU countries pre-1997. While these references do support the conclusion that there has been exports of Pili nuts to EU countries in the pre-1997 period, it was difficult to assess from the information the scale and regularity of supply. These were largely single references relating to exports in a particular year. For example, the evidence presented suggest that 276lb of Pili nuts were exported to Sweden in 1984. The UK considered that these contributed to the assessment but were not definitive.

Information was also provided on four consignments of Pili nuts exported to Spain in the 90's. The applicant suggested that in 1991 alone the 16,620 kg of nuts were exported to Spain is the equivalent of 160,000 portions at 100g each. The total volume of the consignments in 1996 totalled 87,090kg.

The UK requested further information from the applicant to reach a conclusion on this data. Information was sought on the use of the consignments and they responded suggesting that the product would not be for feed use given the high value of the crops. They also highlighted that the invoice indicates that the nuts are sold as a brand and in some instances, were salted. They also commented that the name of the receiving company in Spain translates as 'snacks dried fruits'. Other information in the dossier suggests this was not likely to be for cosmetics use, as Pili tree nut resin is more commonly used in the cosmetics sector.

Information had been provided on the post 1997 exports and while these cannot be used to support a history of consumption they did provide context for the Pili nut sector. The data suggest that EU countries can be taking up to 40% by value of Pili nut exports in some years and none in others. Further information was requested to understand why there was a high degree of variability in the destination of exports and the implications this has for considering that Pili nuts have been consumed significantly in the EU. It was explained that skill is needed to remove the shell of the nut and leave the nut intact, which until recently had not been industrialised. The industry is largely small operators and a lack of investment in drying and storage facilities has impacted on how much spoilage of the crop occurred affecting the ability to capitalise on export markets.

The data presented indicates some exports of Pili nuts to the EU. In order to reach a conclusion on whether this represented a significant history of consumption colleagues in the Member States were consulted. The view in the responses received was that this would not be significant consumption in the context of the markets in the Member States for which data was presented. It was felt that it was not possible to verify the use of the product for food purposes or that the product was accepted into the EU at customs. As the applicant was clear that further information on this aspect is not available the UK has reached its conclusion based on the data presented.

### **Conclusion**

From the information supplied the UK concludes that a history of consumption in the EU has not been established. While there have been exports of Pili nuts it has not been possible to validate that this was a regular market rather than individual consignments in the pre-1997 period. Based on the advice of colleagues it was also not possible to establish if the level of imports represented a significant history of consumption in the context of the diets in the countries for which data was provided.

It was noted that there was data presented in the dossier on the exports to third countries and therefore it may be possible to seek an authorisation as a traditional food from a third country.