

Summary of the application: Chia seeds in a number of foods (extension of use)

Applicant: The Chia Co, 45 Broad Street, Stamford, Lincolnshire, PE9 1PX, the United Kingdom

The novel food application concerns the request for authorisation of an extension of use of chia seeds in a number of food categories.

Applicant is seeking use and use levels be applied to most processed food and prepared food categories with a maximum 10% inclusion rate and/or maximum 15 g chia seeds content per serve; whichever is less. Applicant is also seeking previous conditions and use levels in food categories be revoked. Recommended chia seed use and use levels have been assessed in terms of nutritional contribution against the UK's National Diet and Nutrition Study data. Geographical origin, growing regions, production methods, consumption levels, and safety data of chia seeds have already been extensively explained in previous novel food applications; reviewed and approved by 2009/827/EC and subsequent extensions of use.

Chia seed is consumed globally as a whole seed or included as an ingredient in food throughout Europe, North America, South America, Australasia and Asia. EU member states imported approximated 16,182 tonnes of chia seed in 2016 (Peperkamp, Michel, 2017) which equates to 1.07 billion 15g serves of chia seed (the maximum daily intake required by EFSA 2017/2470) or the equivalent of 2.9 million consumers' daily dose of chia seed for an entire year. Chia seed is currently available in hundreds of commercially manufactured food products consumed at breakfast, lunch, dinner, and as snacks. All foods are viable for consumption by male and female consumers of all ages. Dozens of recipe books are dedicated to chia seed as an ingredient or include some recipes with chia seed. Apart from the EU, Chia seed usage and use levels are not regulated in any market that The Chia Company is aware of.

The Applicant has performed a safety assessment in accordance with "Guidance on the preparation and presentation of the notification and application for authorisation of traditional foods from third countries in the context of Regulation (EU) 2015/2283" (EFSA_NDA_Panel, 2016). One confirmed allergic reaction to chia seed has been recorded for chia seed and reviewed by AECOSAN during previous chia seed novel food extension of use application. Apart from the issue of chia seed allergenic potential that has been widely discussed, the Applicant has not identified any other negative impacts to human health during the literature review of chia seed, the review of the EFSA Chemical Hazard Database (OpenFoodTox), and the review of all located human clinical studies on chia seed.