

ENSA position on FAO report on the evaluation of dietary protein quality

Brussels, 11 March 2015

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has just published a new report entitled ‘Research approaches and methods for evaluating the protein quality of human foods’, in which several methods are presented for measuring protein digestibility of commonly eaten foods. In this light, ENSA - the European Natural Soyfood Manufacturers Association - would like to express its views on the report and stress the importance of recognising the high quality of soy protein.

Up to now, the approved method for evaluating protein quality is the **Protein Digestibility-Corrected Amino Acid Score (PDCAAS)**.

The FAO report investigates current and possible future methods to measure digestibility. It is clear that many challenges need to be overcome before the new proposed DIAAS (Digestible Indispensable Amino Acid Score) method can be adopted to determine the protein quality in human nutrition and before it can be used by regulatory agencies to issue dietary and policy recommendations:

- The report states there is a clear need for generating sufficient digestibility data for human foods and clear methodologies to gather such data; and
- there is a need to review the practical effects on public health policies

As such, **the currently approved method for evaluating protein quality (PDCAAS) will continue to be used as sole official method** until further research clarifies the above concerns on alternative methods.

The PDCAAS confirms **the high quality of soy protein comparable to milk, egg and meat protein**, and endorses that:

- Soy protein contains all essential amino acids in sufficiently high quantity in comparison to the reference protein. This is in contrast to other plant-based proteins which often fully or partially lack an essential amino acid (e.g. lysine is too low an amino acid in cereals).
- Soy protein is highly digestible.

Next to the health aspect, ENSA wants to stress that soy-based products are by nature sustainable food products. They have a much better record in terms of water use, land use and carbon footprint than dairy products – a soy drink requires on average 2,5 times less water, 3 times less land and emits 5 times less CO₂ gasses than milk.

About ENSA

Established in January 2003, the ENSA represents the interests of natural soyfood manufacturers in Europe. The term “natural” refers to the production process used by ENSA members to produce food using whole soybeans. Soy food products from ENSA members are produced without any use of GM (genetically modified) material or GM beans.



ENSA is an association of internationally operating European companies, producing soy and other plant-based foods and beverages ranging from large corporations to small, family-owned businesses with an annual turnover of €0.5 billion. Since its establishment in 2003, ENSA has been raising awareness about the role of soy and a plant-based diet in moving towards more sustainable food production and consumption patterns.

For more information about ENSA, please visit www.enssa-eu.org or contact the ENSA Secretariat.

ENSA Secretariat

Neo Building box 7

Rue Montoyer 51

Brussels 1000

Tel: + 32 2 741 62 15

Fax: + 32 2 737 95 01

Email: secretariat@enssa-eu.org

Website: www.enssa-eu.org