



ENSA position on Swedish National Food Agency study on heavy metals and minerals in foods for infants and young children

Brussels – 30 January 2013: The European Natural Soyfoods Manufacturers Association (ENSA) takes note of the conclusions of the Livsmedelsverket/Swedish National Food Agency report entitled, 'Contaminants and Minerals in Foods for Infants and Young Children', which found that infants and young children may be exposed to increased levels of certain contaminants and minerals by the consumption of certain foods. ENSA believes that maximum levels for harmful substances should not be surpassed and consumers should be accurately informed about the products they consume.

On 23 January 2013, Livsmedelsverket, the Swedish National Food Agency (NFA), published a report that analyzed 92 different foods. These foods included processed foods and foods for special medical purposes for infants and young children, infant formulae and follow-on formulae, breast milk and **some foodstuffs for normal consumption which are not explicitly intended for children including rice drinks and soydrinks**. The Swedish NFA concluded that some harmful substances can be found in foods for infants and young children.

ENSA takes note of this study and recognizes the importance of this topic because it shares the position that maximum levels of harmful substances should not be surpassed. ENSA would like to state the following remarks:

- First of all, it is important to note that the ENSA members do not market products for infants but foods for normal consumption.
- The study by the Swedish NFA accurately states that certain contaminants, such as arsenic, occur naturally in soil, are absorbed by plants and occur in many foods and water. Arsenic also naturally occurs in rice grain and consequently in rice drinks.
- The EU has introduced maximum levels for harmful substances in food. It is worth noting that the study by the Swedish NFA does not find that existing maximum levels have been exceeded. Moreover, the rice drinks analyzed in the study are foods for normal consumption and, as indicated on the packaging, are not recommended as a substitute for infant formulas or breast milk.
- Concerning the amount of manganese in soy drinks, the study indicated that generally the products had a high concentration due to the natural presence. The study also mentions in its conclusion that from a nutritional point of view the intakes were found to be adequate. Indeed approximately 7 portions are needed to reach an adequate intake of 1200 microgram/day. Moreover the soy drinks analyzed in the study are foods for normal consumption and are not intended as foods for young children.
- ENSA proactively advocates for accurate communication and labeling so that consumers are correctly informed about the content of the foods they consume and are able to make deliberate choices, also making clear the distinction between foods for normal consumption and foods intended for young children.

Soy foods and rice drinks fit perfectly in a balanced diet and a healthy lifestyle. The members of ENSA manufacture soy and plant-based products such as soy and rice drinks, soy desserts and fermented soy products.



For any questions, please contact the ENSA Secretariat.

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