



A1119 Monk Fruit Extract as a Food Additive

August 2018

The Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA) is the national association of the dietetic profession with over 6000 members, and branches in each state and territory. DAA is a leader in nutrition and advocates for food and nutrition for healthier people and healthier nations. DAA appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposal A1129 Monk Fruit Extract as a Food Additive by Food Standards Australia New Zealand.

Organisation:	Dietitians Association of Australia
Address:	1/8 Phipps Close, Deakin ACT 2600
Telephone:	
Facsimile:	02 6282 9888
Email:	

DAA interest in this consultation

DAA is the peak professional body for dietitians in Australia and responsible for the Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD) program as the basis for self-regulation of the profession.

DAA advocates for a safe and nutritious food supply in which the community has confidence and which meets the nutritional needs of all Australians, including groups with special needs.

As experts in nutrition, APDs assist the general population and groups with special dietary needs to meet their nutritional needs. APDs also assist with the translation of food labels and nutrition content claims.

DAA understands this application is to permit the use of monk fruit extract (luo han guo extract) as a food additive to perform the technological purpose of an intense sweetener. DAA understand this will permit the use of monk food extract in table top sweetener products and as a sweetener in a range of ready-to-consumer products.

Recommendations

DAA supports the FSANZ draft variation to the Code which permits the use of monk food extract as a food additive to perform the technological purpose of an intense sweetener for the following reasons:

- FSANZ have identified no public health and safety issues when monk food extract is used as an intense sweetener.
- Generic labelling requirements would apply to provide consumers with information on the presence of monk food extract in food to enable informed choice.
- The proposed amendments will enable greater choice for consumers and industry of natural intense sweeteners.

DAA Recommend FSANZ continue to review the evidence on the long-term safety of artificial sweeteners in order to ensure the consumption of these is not causing any potential long-term harm to the health of consumers. DAA also recommends an ongoing public awareness campaign and education on the effects of sweeteners to ensure consumers can make informed choices.

Discussion

DAA recognises that FSANZ undertakes a comprehensive safety assessment of all food additives, including sweeteners, before they are approved for use in food.

DAA understands that many artificial sweeteners are safe from a toxicological point of view, however is aware of a growing body of evidence that artificial sweeteners may have unwanted metabolic effects.

DAA acknowledge that much of the evidence at this stage is based on lower quality evidence from both animal and observational studies, and that there are a number of further limitations within the studies themselves (including methodology quality, and funding bias). A list of studies assessing the impact of artificial sweeteners is included below for reference. DAA acknowledge that research is continuously being undertaken in this area and bodies of evidence continue to expand. As such, it is imperative FSANZ continue to review the evidence to ensure the food supply remains safe for the public and continue to provide public access to this information

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