

Fonterra Co-operative Group Ltd Submission on FSANZ Proposal P298 Benzoate and Sulfite Permissions in Food

14 September 2005

Fonterra Co-operative Group Ltd

Fonterra Co-operative Group Ltd is a leading multinational dairy company, co-operatively owned by 11,332 New Zealand supplier shareholders. Exporting 96 percent of our shareholders' production, Fonterra is the world's largest exporter of dairy products, responsible for a third of international dairy trade across open borders.

Fonterra's global supply chain stretches from our shareholders' farms in New Zealand to customers and consumers in 140 countries. Collecting more than 13 billion litres of milk a year, we manufacture and market over 2 million tonnes of product annually, making us the world's leader in large scale milk procurement, processing and management, with some of the world's best known dairy brands.

Submission

- 1 Fonterra appreciates the opportunity to comment on FSANZ Proposal P298 with regard to Benzoate and Sulfite Permissions in Food.
- 2 Fonterra is often questioned about benzoic acid by our customers who can become concerned by its presence when they find it through routine analysis, and who are often unaware that benzoic acid is a natural component of milk.
- 3 It is worth noting that milk contains natural benzoic acid at low levels - typically less than 1 mg/kg. As benzoic acid is a normal component of milk, it is naturally present in all dairy products at low levels. Fermentation of milk increases the amount of benzoic acid, and therefore the levels of benzoic acid in dairy products such as cheese and yoghurt can often have a natural benzoic acid content of 50 mg/kg or more. Some relevant references are:
 - Richardson R K & Gray I K (1981)
The levels of natural benzoic acid in casein and whey by-products. *New Zealand Journal of Dairy Science and Technology*, **16**, 179-186.
 - Sieber R, Bütikofer U & Bosset J O (1995)
Benzoic acid as a natural compound in cultured dairy products and cheese. *International Dairy Journal*, **5**, 227-246.