

To: Interested Parties

28 February 2008

Reference: FIN 03/2008

Dear Sir or Madam

## **UPDATE ON EUROPEAN COMMISSION PROPOSAL TO AMEND IMPORT RULES FOR FISH OIL**

This letter provides an update on progress of the restricted working group that is considering fish oil import conditions with the European Commission and builds on information contained in FIN 12/2007 of 17 December 2007 and FIN 02/2008 of 18 February 2008. It also asks for views of interested parties on the parameters and standards for crude and refined oils that have been proposed. **It would be helpful to receive interim views by 12:00 05 March** in order to inform the UK position in further discussions on 06 March. Final views should be received by close of play 18 March.

I apologise for the short period of time available for a response.

The group met on 27 February 2008 to consider revised proposals drafted by the European Commission which are shown in Annex I. Please note that the draft may not necessarily represent the views of the Commission or the Food Standards Agency and the document that is presented for formal adoption may differ.

The Agency is now seeking your views on the proposals and also on the parameters and standards that have now been elaborated for crude and refined oils (shown in Annex II). Whilst some of these may be quality parameters it has been suggested that they may be viable indicators of hygiene standards throughout the production chain. The Commission will also be inviting comments from stakeholders.

The Commission will now take the proposals to the hygiene implementation working group on 06 March with a view to tabling proposals for a vote in April or May 2008. This consultation is likely to be the last opportunity that will be available to interested parties to comment on the proposals. If the proposals are not agreed at or before the meeting in May then there is a high likelihood that the current derogation will expire on 31 October 2008 and full hygiene requirements will apply.



### Further Information

If you need any further information please let me know. You may also be aware that we have an imports section on the Food Standards Agency's website that can be found at [www.food.gov.uk/imports](http://www.food.gov.uk/imports)

Yours sincerely

Mark Ball  
Imported Food and Food Standards Enforcement Division

COM REV 27/2/08

**ANNEX**

In Annex III to Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 Section VIII is amended as follows:

- 1 In Chapter III, Part E is hereby deleted;
- 2 Chapter IV is replaced by the following:

**'Chapter IV: REQUIREMENTS FOR PROCESSED FISHERY PRODUCTS**

Food business operators ~~cooking crustaceans and molluscs~~ must ensure compliance with the following requirements, where relevant, in establishments handling processed fishery products.

**A. REQUIREMENTS FOR COOKING OF CRUSTACEANS AND MOLLUSCS**

1. Rapid cooling must follow cooking. Water used for this purpose must be potable water or, on board vessels, clean water. If no other method of preservation is used, cooling must continue until a temperature approaching that of melting ice is reached.
2. Shelling or shucking must be carried out hygienically, avoiding contamination of the product. Where such operations are done by hand, workers must pay particular attention to washing their hands.
3. After shelling or shucking, cooked products must be frozen immediately, or be chilled as soon as possible to the temperature laid down in Chapter VII.

**B. REQUIREMENTS FOR FISH OIL INTENDED FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION**

1. Raw materials used in the preparation of fish oil for human consumption must:
  - (a) in the case of fish that are directly used for that purpose:
    - (i) come from vessels registered pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 or in accordance with this Regulation;
    - (ii) be transported and stored in hygienic conditions and chilled as soon as possible, unless they are processed within 36 hours after loading.
  - (b) in the case of other raw materials:
    - (i) come from establishments, including vessels, registered or approved pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 or in accordance with this Regulation;

(ii) derive from fish which are fit for human consumption and comply with the provisions laid down in this Section;

(iii) be transported and stored in hygienic conditions and remain at the temperatures specified in Chapter VII.

2. The production process for fish oil must ensure that:

(a) all raw material intended to produce crude oil is subject to a heat treatment of at least 90 degrees for 10 minutes followed by including heating, pressing, separation, centrifugation and purification steps, where relevant.

(b) the crude oil obtained in accordance with point (a) is subject to further appropriate processing, refining and purification steps in order to improve its physico-chemical quality before being placed on the market for the final consumer.

3. A food business operator may produce and store both fish oil for human consumption and fish oil and fish meal not intended for human consumption in the same establishment provided that the raw materials and the production process comply with the requirements applying to fish oil intended for human consumption.

4. Fish oil, depending on the type, must comply with the following requirements:

(a) Crude fish oil for further processing must comply with the parameters set out in the following table.

Table Crude oil

(b) Fish oil for human consumption must comply with the parameters set out in the following table.

Table refined oil

5. The introductory sentence of Chapter V is amended as follows:

'In addition to ensuring compliance with microbiological criteria adopted in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 852/2004, food business operators must ensure, depending on the nature of the product or the species, that fishery products placed on the market for human consumption meet the standards laid down in this Chapter. The requirements of points A, B, C and D are not applicable to fish that are used directly for the preparation of fish oil intended for human consumption.'

Annex II Proposed parameters and standards (for insertion into 4 a and b in text above)

<b>Parameter</b>	<b>Crude</b>	<b>Refined</b>
Free fatty acids	[5%]	[2%]
Peroxide Pv	[10 meq/kg]	[10 meq/kg]
Anisidine Av	[30 meq/kg]	[30 meq/kg]
TOTOX (AV + 2PV)	?	?
total insoluble impurities	[0.5%]	[0.2%]
water content	[<1%]	[<0.3%]
stability test?		

NB this table is in draft form and comments are welcome on both parameters and standards to be used. Where possible the European Pharmacopoeia has been used as a basis for the standards proposed. Question marks indicate specific areas where further information is requested.