

SNIPPETS

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Volume 14. Number 5. 2009
013-075NPO

WORLD'S FIRST ROOIBOS YOGHURT GETS CANSA RECOGNITION

CANSA has recognised Fair Cape Free Range Rooibos Yoghurts as a Smart Choice, primarily on the grounds that a serving contains the Rooibos equivalent of one cup of tea.

Dr Carl Albrecht, head of research at CANSA says: "After eight years' worth of research, CANSA has officially recognised Rooibos as a source of chemicals that can help to prevent cancer in both humans and animals. Glutathione, in the reduced state, is the body's own antioxidant, but it decreases over time as we age and due to other factors, including smoking. Glutathione is linked to lower heart attack and cancer risk and also counteracts ageing."

"CANSA research has found that Rooibos raised the ratio of reduced glutathione to oxidised glutathione by 100% in humans who consumed six cups a day over a period of three months. It is this set of results that excites CANSA and leads to the understanding that Rooibos could help to prevent cancer. This is a sound foundation and we are indeed fortunate that Rooibos is an indigenous South African tea which is affordable and easily accessible to the public at large," adds Dr Albrecht. www.AFRIPLEX.co.za PRESS RELEASE 30 July 09

STUDY SUPPORTS SAFETY OF ARTIFICIAL SWEETENERS

Artificial sweeteners, including saccharin and aspartame, are not linked to increased risk for stomach and pancreatic cancers, according to a study published in the August issue of *Cancer Epidemiology Biomarkers & Prevention*.

Researchers tracked the odds of developing cancers of the stomach, pancreas, and endometrium in a group of more than 3,000 Italians, comparing the odds of developing cancer between users and nonusers of artificial sweeteners.

"The present study adds further evidence on the absence of an adverse effect of low-calorie sweetener (including aspartame) consumption on the risk of common neoplasms in the Italian

population," the study abstract states. *IFT Weekly Newsletter* 12 Aug 2009.

PESTICIDES DEBATE HEATS UP AFTER UK'S FOOD SECURITY ASSESSMENT

The European Crop Protection Association has expressed concern that restrictive EU regulation on pesticide use could stand in the way of global food security, following the UK's Food Security Assessment.

The UK's Department of Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs (Defra) published its assessment on 10 August 2009, as part of the government's first major rethink of food strategy since the Second World War. And although environment minister Hilary Benn said that the UK needs to produce more food and become less reliant on imports, opinion is divided on how to boost production.

Director general of the European Crop Protection Association Dr Friedhelm Schmider said: "Sustaining our food supply begins with agricultural policies which understand scientific farming and the natural pressures faced by agriculture. However, European legislation might be pulling us in another direction. Recent legislation on pesticides – a key element of production in any farming system – will ban substances that have been rigorously tested and demonstrated to be below the strictest risk assessment thresholds applied anywhere in the world."

Helen Browning, senior policy advisor for the organic advocacy group The Soil Association, disagrees with Schmider about the best way this can be done, saying: "Food systems must become less dependent on fossil fuels, more resilient in the face of climate change, and able to contribute to the government's pledge to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 80 per cent by 2050. Farming based on organic principles can deliver against all three challenges." *FOODnavigator.com* 12-Aug-2009

U.S. HOUSE APPROVES FOOD SAFETY BILL

According to the Washington Post, the U.S. House of Representatives approved the first major changes to food-safety laws in 70 years on July 30, providing the U.S. Food and Drug Administration with greatly expanded authority to regulate the way food is grown, harvested, and processed.

The legislation affects every aspect of the U.S. food system, from farmers to manufacturers to importers. It places significant responsibilities on farmers and food processors to prevent contamination.

In addition, the House bill requires food manufacturers to identify the particular risks they face, create controls to prevent that

contamination, monitor those controls to make sure they are working, and update those measures regularly. Such controls have been mandatory for the seafood and juice industries since the 1990s after several high-profile contamination cases; they are widely believed to have reduced outbreaks involving those products. The bill calls for the FDA to set safety standards for farmers and manufacturers who process food. And it requires imported food to meet the same standards.

IFT Weekly Newsletter. 5 August 2009

DEFINING NANO: SIZE DOES MATTER

In order to educate manufacturers and consumers on nanotechnology a definition is critical.

Current understanding and acceptance has it that nanotechnology refers to particles of around 100 nanometres or less. But that's vague to say the least. The UK's FSA says a definition for nano needs to be finalised. The USA's FDA says a definition could be misleading. So who's right?

Stating that a regulatory body does not have an exact definition suggests that said body doesn't really understand what it's dealing with: How, therefore, could it possibly ensure the safety of our food supply?

Does going to the nano-scale really make a difference? Well, yes. Gold is the classic example. In its bulk form gold is inert. But take gold down to the nano-scale, let's say particles of 3-4 nanometres, and it becomes highly reactive, able to catalyse the oxidation of carbon monoxide at -20 °C, for example. (which, as anyone with a basic knowledge of catalysis will tell you, is one impressive achievement).

So clearly, size does matter.

The EU's Council of Ministers recently proposed the following definition for 'engineered nanomaterial' as: "*Any intentionally produced material that has one or more dimensions of the order of 100nm or less or is composed of discrete functional parts, either internally or at the surface, many of which have one or more dimensions of the order of 100nm or less, including structures, agglomerates or aggregates, which may have a size above the order of 100 nm but retain properties that are characteristic to the nanoscale.*"

"We do not have a definition about what nano size is. We need to talk more in terms of impact," said Dr Annette McCarthy of the FDA addressing the IFT conference in June 2009.

And it would appear as if the agency has no plans to define this because putting a cut-off value, such as 100 nanometres and not 101 nanometres, could end up being misleading, she said.
FOODnavigator.com 07-Jul-2009

CODEX ADOPTS DEFINITION OF 'FIBER'

The Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) has adopted a new definition of fiber, designed to harmonize the use of the term around the globe.

The provision, adopted by the CAC during a meeting held in Rome, Italy, recently, follows the establishment of the definition in 2008 by the Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses (CCNFSDU).

The new definition is consistent with the previous debated Codex definition in that it describes fiber as one of three categories of carbohydrate polymers: Naturally occurring edible carbohydrate polymers; carbohydrate polymers obtained from food raw material by physical, enzymatic or chemical means; and synthetic carbohydrate polymers.

The previous definition that Codex had been debating for over 15 years recommended that the carbohydrate polymers must have a degree of polymerization not lower than three (to exclude mono- and disaccharides).

In contrast, the definition adopted last week states that the carbohydrate polymers must have ten or more monomeric units. However, a footnote included in the provision essentially dismisses this recommendation, by suggesting that the "decision on whether to include carbohydrates from three to nine monomeric units should be left to national authorities". *NUTRAingredients. 06-Jul-2009*

CHOCOLATE LINKED TO BETTER HEART HEALTH

Recent studies carried out by Janszky and colleagues as part of the Stockholm Epidemiology Program show that heart attack survivors who snack on chocolate at least twice a week could greatly reduce their risk of dying from heart related problems or coronary heart disease

The joint US-Swedish study observed the effects of chocolate consumption on around 1169 non-diabetic heart attack patients, hospitalised after their first attack and aged between 45 and 70. Each patient was followed up for 9 years after their heart attack and questioned on their dietary habits, particularly chocolate consumption. The findings, published in the Journal of Internal Medicine, showed that those who ate chocolate regularly were nearly 70% less likely to die from cardiac problems compared to those who rarely consumed it. *RSSL Food e-News Edition 451: 12 - 19 August 2009*

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