

Time to consult on food enzyme, additive and flavouring guidance

By Sarah Hills, 28-Jul-2011

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An association representing European small and medium-sized businesses is calling on its members to consult on draft guidance for submitting applications to the EU for food additives, food enzymes and food flavourings.

The guidance document provides potential applicants with practical information to help them prepare and submit applications on the "food improvement agents" to the European Commission's DG SANCO for approval.

Dr Ludger Fischer is a spokesman for the UEAPME, an employer's organisation representing the interests of European crafts, trades and SMEs at EU level.

He told FoodNavigator.com: *"It is indeed difficult to interpret EU regulations and directives in daily life. So guidance documents are very welcome, especially by SMEs."*

Fischer said the UEAPME has been very much involved in the preparation of some other guidelines and added: *"The draft guideline will be corrected or adjusted according to the comments of UEAPME members and other stakeholders."*

So it is an opportunity for SMEs to get their views or requirements across.

The UEAPME has now written to its members stating: *"Since this guidance is targeted at potential applicants we would appreciate if you provide us with your comments and feedback on this document by 19 August 2011 at the latest."*

Fischer added that guidance documents issued by the European Commission are much clearer, stick to practical application and *"translate"* legislative language into the language of those who have to follow the regulations.

For some businesses such applications can be crucial as Ludger said especially in the baking sector, for example, *"some of the enzymes and additives are essential for the production of high quality products"*.

On 16 December 2008 a legislative package was adopted by the European Parliament and Council, consisting of three sectoral food Regulations on so-called *"food improvement agents"* and a common procedure for the evaluation and authorisation of these substances.

The three areas are food additives, food enzymes and food flavourings including certain food ingredients with flavouring properties.

There was also a regulation concerning the content, drafting and presentation of applications to establish or update the Union lists of food additives, food enzymes and food flavourings, the arrangements for checking the validity of applications and the type of information that must be included in the opinion of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA).

However, the draft guidelines document states that the time limits established in the relevant regulation for various stages of the common Union assessment and authorisation procedure currently only apply to food additives.

It adds: *"As for food flavourings and food enzymes these time limits will be valid when the Union lists on both substances are established."*

The draft guidelines will be valid as of 11 September 2011, but may be regularly updated.

UEAPME is a recognised European Social Partner and acts on behalf of crafts and SMEs in the European Social Dialogue and in discussions with the EU institutions.

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