

1st February 2019

Response by the Health Food Manufacturers' Association (HFMA) to the European Commission's reclassification of CBD products as a Novel Food

"The European Commission's U-turn on the classification of CBD products as novel foods in its non-binding Novel Foods Catalogue is mystifying and causing extensive confusion and concern amongst retailers and manufacturers, who have been legally making and selling CBD-based products for several decades.

Rather than consult food businesses on the presence of products on market before May 1997, as would be expected, the Commission announced its new position on CBD as part of a general update to their Novel Food Catalogue. They have given no further explanation, do not appear to have consulted with stakeholders as they are required to do, and are seeking to apply what would in effect be a blanket requirement for approval rather than considering products on a case-by-case basis, which is the required approach.

We are pleased that the Food Standards Agency (FSA), the UK's competent authority in this area, has now accepted our urgent request for a meeting to discuss this, and we can confirm that we will be meeting with FSA in the next few days. It is important to remember that the Novel Food Catalogue provides guidance for regulators, a case-by-case assessment is required, and it is not legally binding.

The Commission has given no detail in support of its new classification and as well as seeking a solution for UK manufacturers and retailers based on the facts, including the historic use of these products, and we shall be urging the FSA to press the Commission for a detailed explanation for this change to the Novel Food Catalogue, and why industry has not been consulted.

Hemp and hemp-derived products have been used in tinctures and infusions for hundreds of years and only last year the WHO concluded in an authoritative Critical Review Report that CBD is safe and that there is absolutely no evidence that its consumption creates any public health-related problems."

ENDS

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The HFMA

The Health Food Manufacturers' Association (HFMA) is the voice of the UK's natural health industry and represents around 120 manufacturers and suppliers of natural health products.

Founded in 1965, the HFMA is a not-for-profit organisation which operates long-standing codes of practice to ensure that member companies adhere to high standards and offer good quality, safe products supported by responsible, lawful information.

For further information about the HFMA, visit www.hfma.co.uk.