



EUROPE - NEWS SCAN

Development of Nutrient Profiling Criteria Likely to be Delayed in the EU – 2009/03

Reports by NutraIngredients.com suggest that the European Commission is far from finalizing nutrient profiling criteria that will govern which foods and beverages can make health and nutrition claims.

The criteria were initially scheduled for debate in the European parliament but the process has been held up, in part because a draft text due March 27 2009 will not be completed in time. The next opportunity for the EU's 27 member states to vote on a draft text will be April 27.

NutraIngredients.com reports significant differences in opinion on nutrient thresholds and exemptions amongst key decision-makers. For example, some argue that the threshold for sugar, salt and fat should be increased, thereby allowing more products to make nutrition claims. Still others are concerned that some products – such as bread and yogurt - may exceed thresholds in salt or fat, and therefore be prevented from making health claims, though the exemption rule states that products high in either salt, sugar or fat can make nutrition claims. Categorical exemptions may include vegetable oils, spreadable fats, dairy products, cereals and cereal products, fruits and vegetables and fruit/vegetable products, meat and meat products, fish and fish products, and non-alcoholic beverages.

An industry consultant has suggested that it is unlikely that a final text will be assessed by the European parliament before the June elections, which means that legislative measures are unlikely to be implemented until late 2009, early 2010.

Alberta companies need to pay attention to this development as it could have a significant impact on the activities in the European market.

Source: Starling, Shane. "EU set for (yet more) nutrient profiling delays," Foodanddrinkeurope.com; 19-Mar-2009.