

CSIRO Submission on the Consultation Paper – W1109 – “Consultation about beta-glucan and blood cholesterol health claims”.

Submitted on behalf of CSIRO by:

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Text of submission follows: Answers to questions in section 8.1 of document W1109.

1. What do you consider to be the best approach for managing this food-health relationship in the Code, given the outcomes of the systematic review for the food-health relationship for a HLHC about beta-glucan (see Section 7.1)? Please give reasons for your response.

CSIRO considers it is premature to consider changing the code based on the evidence considered in the systematic review. Since the systematic review was completed additional evidence supporting a relationship between barley beta-glucan and cholesterol lowering has been published (Ho et al 2016). The new scientific evidence should be considered along with the existing systematic review and previously published meta-analyses all of which show a consistent relationship between consumption of wholegrain barley or foods containing concentrates of barley beta-glucan and cholesterol lowering. The available evidence strongly indicates that a high level health claim between whole grain barley consumption and cholesterol lowering is appropriate.

CSIRO does not recommend making any changes to the pre-approved food-health relationship for the GLHC about beta-glucan and reduced dietary and biliary cholesterol absorption.

Ho, HVT (2016) et al. A systematic review and meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials of the effect of barley β -glucan on LDL-C, non-HDL-C and apoB for cardiovascular disease risk reduction. European Journal of Clinical Nutrition 70, 1239-1245.

2. What do you consider to be the impacts of amending the Code for consumer understanding of beta-glucan, oats and barley and blood cholesterol?

This would likely cause confusion among consumers as they would not understand that the decision to remove the high level health claim for barley is not due to a lack of evidence of cholesterol lowering but rather to a reduction in the confidence level from high to moderate as a consequence of the lower number of participants in the selected barley whole grain trials.

3. Do you consider that such amendments to the Code would be consistent with dietary guidelines and other relevant public health messages? Why/why not?

No as the amendment to the code would probably lead to a reduction in consumption of wholegrains and there is a clear relationship and consumer understanding between wholegrain consumption and health benefits. FSANZ is also required to have regard for the promotion of consistency between domestic and international food standards and changing the code in such a way would go against the recommendations of several other countries regulatory authorities.

4. What do you consider to be the impacts on the food industry of such an amendment?

There would be less incentive for the food industry to include barley grains in food products.