



APPLICATION EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

January 2025

TO:

Food Standards Australia New Zealand

IN RELATION TO:

Application to amend Schedule 15 – Substances that may be used as food additives of the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code

Extension of use to permit up to 350mg/kg steviol equivalents in flour products (including noodles and pasta) [Schedule 15 - 6.4].

This application seeks to amend the *Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code* (the Code) to extend the permitted use of steviol glycosides (hereafter SG) to flour products that are cooked on hot plates - crumpets, pikelets, and pancakes (category 6.4 in Schedule 15) at a level of up to 350mg/kg steviol equivalents.

Stevia is a plant-based sweetener extracted from the leaves of *Stevia rebaudiana*. Stevia is already permitted for use in a range of food product categories under Standard 1.3.1 and Schedule 15 of the Code and is used widely by the food industry as a high-quality, low-calorie sweetener to replace the use of sugar partially or completely in product formulations.

SG are already permitted for use in several food product categories in accordance with Standard 1.3.1 and Schedule 15. Flour products (including noodles and pasta) are permitted to contain food additives listed at item 6.4 of the table to Section 15-5 of [Schedule 15](#) of the Code. Item 6.4 does not currently list SG as a permitted food additive. The specific products this application relates to are defined as 'hotplate products'.

The term **hotplate product** refers to a type of food prepared by cooking batter directly on a flat, heated surface such as a hotplate, griddle, or skillet. These products typically have a distinct texture and appearance due to their cooking method, which involves heat applied from below without the use of an oven.

The amendment requested is therefore required to establish permission to add SG to hotplate products which sit under category 6.4 - Flour products (including noodles and pasta) of Schedule 15 to:

1. provide a feasible technical solution to enable the applicant to manufacture crumpets with a sweeter taste profile than is currently available in the GWF product portfolio without compromising on processing capabilities and nutrition profile.
2. provide the applicant with the means to reduce sugar content in pikelets and pancakes improving the overall nutrition profile of these products.

Permission to add SG into hotplate products presents an opportunity to expand the applicant's portfolio to include products with improved flavour and nutrition profiles and manage production waste streams. Alternative sweeteners do not provide the technical outcomes required. The requested addition rate of up to 350mg/kg steviol equivalents has been determined through a rigorous product development process to achieve the specified purpose and has been proven to be stable through the short shelf life of these products.

The requested amendment is voluntary so manufacturers will be able to choose whether they take up the opportunity to produce hotplate products containing SG for their consumers.

This application does not seek to introduce new types of SGs or modify or extend the specifications for the different types of SGs that may be used in food in Schedule 3 of the Code. It seeks to extend the use of an already-permitted additive to the flour products category. As such, it is not necessary to make any change to the labelling or other requirements for flour products.

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The safety of steviol glycosides has been assessed by a number of international scientific and regulatory bodies, including JECFA, FDA, EFSA, Codex Alimentarius, FCC, GB Standards, Japanese Regulations and Health Canada.

JECFA has reviewed the safety of steviol glycosides in five separate meetings and has established an ADI for steviol glycosides of 0 to 4 mg/kg body weight expressed as steviol equivalents (JECFA 2005, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2023).

An ADI of 0 – 4 mg/kg bw (expressed as steviol) was established at the 69th JECFA (2008). This has not changed with the release of the 2023 Specifications Monographs.

FSANZ established an ADI for steviol glycosides of 0-4 mg/kg bw/day steviol equivalents in 2008, as a part of application [A540](#). The ADI was derived by applying a 100-fold safety factor to the No Observed Effect Level (NOEL) of 970 mg/kg bw/day (equivalent to 383 mg/kg bw/day steviol) identified in a two-year study in rats.

FSANZ has since reviewed SG several times and updated the hazard assessment for SG as part of other applications assessed from 2011 - 2024, of which the most recent is [A1273](#) - Steviol glycosides as a food additive in Food for special medical purposes in 2024.

The Applicant notes that in 2023 FSANZ published a refined dietary exposure assessment for steviol glycosides for the Australian and New Zealand populations, based on the results of an analytical survey of steviol glycosides in a variety of foods (FSANZ, March 2023).¹

A hazard assessment confirmed the ADI, and the estimated dietary exposures to steviol glycosides were well below the ADI for all population groups assessed. Furthermore, no public health and safety issues were identified as a result of the risk assessment.

The safety of the proposed use of SGs in hotplate products can be clearly demonstrated based on previous FSANZ assessments, as well as a subsequent scientific literature review conducted by the applicant. There is no basis to conclude that the proposed use of stevia in hotplate products poses any risk to any particular segment of the general population.

¹ [Steviol glycosides \(960\) \(intense sweetener\) \(stevia\) | Food Standards Australia New Zealand](#), accessed 30/12/2024.

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