

Seamons, Colleen

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Sent: Tuesday, 26 April 2011 2:34 PM
To: standards management
Subject: Low THC Hemp as food

FSANZ Application A1039

Hemp Foods for Australia

Discussion points

1. Are you aware of any evidence that consumers believe that low THC hemp foods have psychoactive effects?

Consumers have a wide range of beliefs on any given product but there are sufficient sales in Europe and North America to suggest consumer confidence exists and that a significant sector of the population is not concerned with psychoactive effects.

1. Are you aware of any evidence that representations on low THC food (including labelling and advertising) mislead consumers by leading them to believe that low THC hemp foods have psychoactive effects when consumed?

There is a propensity for any product to be sold via false representation. I believe there is little scope to mislead consumers with regards to low THC food having psychoactive effects.

1. Can you provide any evidence in addition to that presented in this consultation paper whether or not the consumption of low THC foods can return a positive test for a THC drug test?

I am unaware of any evidence to confirm the consumption of low THC foods can return a positive test for a THC drug test.

1. Can you provide information on THC testing in Australia and NZ, particularly with regard to regulatory limits of THC that may be set?

No.

1. Can you provide information to indicate whether there will be an impact on the cost of testing for THC in humans that could arise from an approval of hemp foods?

The cost of testing for THC in humans will not increase following an approval of hemp foods. Regulatory standards will ensure that false positives are not likely to occur. This has not become an issue in the USA, a land where mandatory drug testing is more common than in Australia.

1. Do you agree that there are adequate controls currently in place, or that would be achieved by imposing maximum limits for THC, to mitigate any risk of high THC Cannabis varieties entering the food supply?

Adequate controls can be achieved to impose maximum limits for high THC varieties entering the food supply. The seed itself is free of THC, the only possible and very limited source of THC comes from the seed's covering which can be satisfactorily removed by a simple process. Low THC seed doesn't require this process. Overseas experience indicates most high THC cultivators are careful with their seed and are players in the Medicinal Cannabis industry and not the Low THC industry.

1. Do you consider that trade practices legislation in Australia and New Zealand is sufficient to mitigate the potential risk that representations (including labelling and advertising) of hemp foods could suggest psychoactive properties relating to consumption of those foods? If not, what labelling and representations of hemp foods should be considered?

As previously mentioned low THC foods are not more likely to lead false representations. The immunological value of hemp seeds essential fatty acids are a strong enough selling point in themselves.

1. What is the potential opportunity costs for current producers of hemp crops if hemp foods continue to be prohibited?
The continued prohibition of hemp foods will hold back an entire industry. Seed crops can pave the way for future fibre crops. A hemp fibre industry would provide a better ecological alternative to the Murray Darling basin than the present cotton one.

1. What are the potential benefits to food manufacturers if hemp foods were approved for use?

Hemp seed provides a wide range of alternatives for food manufacturers. To give a small example, some consumers derive protein from factory processed beans which require cooking to make them nutritionally viable. Hemp seed contains sufficient protein without the added cost of cooking.
It can also offers another an alterative to people who suffer food allergies.
In general it is highly adaptive and would be a boon for food manufacturers.

1. . Are there likely to be any additional costs for food manufacturers wishing to supply hemp foods?
No as mentioned above hempseed is highly adaptive, easily produced and able to be intergrated into a manufacturing process. Manufacturers will not be forced into using it but will sell it due to the immunological benefits of its essential fatty acids.

1. . Would the approval of low THC hemp foods increase the cost of food enforcement beyond what would be expected of the approval of any other substance added to food, or other food regulatory change?

No prohibitive additional costs can be reasonably anticipated beyond the usual establishment of a regulation.

1. . What other legislation would affect or be affected by approval of hemp foods?
Once again approval of hemp foods is not difficult and would require minimal legislative change.

1. Would the approval of hemp food have an impact on hemp regulations in Australia and New Zealand? Would industrial hemp destined for use in food require additional controls to those already specified in industrial hemp regulations?

Once again any regulations required can be introduced

1. Would food manufacturers be required to be licensed under existing hemp regulations?

The current regulation for growing fibre and seed in Australia is sufficient.

1. Would additional costs be incurred by government agencies responsible for granting licenses for the cultivation of hemp as a result of approval of hemp foods?

The greater the expansion of any regulated industry the greater the running costs. Using a user pay system like licencing means that government revenue also increases.

1. . Can you identify risk management options that have not been considered in the impact analysis?

Possible unidentified risks are no greater in establishing this industry than in any other comparable industry.

1. . Can you identify any other costs and benefits for any of the risk management options considered in this paper?

No

1. . Do you have a view about the appropriate preferred regulatory options regarding the approval of hemp foods, based on benefits and costs?
My major concern is to protect the integrity of hemp seed's essential fatty acids.
With this in mind unhulled eg uncracked seeds offer the greatest viability.
It is unfortunate that some sections of society are so afraid of THC contamination from hempseed or the propagation of low THC hemp from unhulled seed sources. This attitude undermines hemp seed's natural endowment.

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