

23 August 2002

Standards Liaison Officer – P235  
Food Standards Australia New Zealand  
PO Box 7186  
CANBERRA ACT 2610

Dear Madam,

**Submission to the Initial Assessment Report – P235: Review of Food-Type Dietary Substances**

General Comments

The Food Section of the South Australian Department of Human Services supports the development of a standard for Food-type Dietary Supplements. Given their existence on the market, and their availability through New Zealand as a consequence of the TTMRA, there needs to be an agreed approach with New Zealand to develop improved controls that can be uniformly administered in both countries. It is assumed, from the options provided in the Initial Assessment Report, that New Zealand would not be willing to ban outright the sale of products in New Zealand that are presently legal under their Dietary Supplements Regulations. Accordingly, options 2 and 3 are preferred.

Label Statement Suggestion

The distinguishing feature of FTDS would be that they carry implied benefits to health. The problem with this approach is that the benefits would be seen by health authorities to be illusory in many instances and in conflict with the advice to gain good nutrition by eating a balanced diet in accordance with national dietary guidelines. The classification of a 'food' as a FTDS might in itself enhance consumer perceptions as to its health value. It may be possible to clarify for consumers what classification as a FTDS means, or rather doesn't mean, by requiring the addition of a statement to the effect that the classification of a substance as an FTDS does not imply that it has been assessed for its efficacy by regulators. The statement could be of the following form:

"FTDS are not assessed and approved by regulatory authorities as providing health benefits."

Additional wording could include:

"In the absence of medical advice to treat a condition a balanced diet is recommended for good health."

Some additional specific comments follow:

Addition of Nutritive Substances

The current FSANZ policy on the addition of vitamins and minerals is endorsed for FTDS.

Special Purpose Foods

It is agreed that most FTDS may not fit the existing definition and it may be necessary to create a new category in the Code.

Added Substances

It is agreed that there may be safety issues with the addition of substances such as herbs and the risk-based approach in Figure 2, Section 2.4.1 appears an acceptable approach.

Label Claims

It would appear reasonable to apply the same regime for nutrient and health claims (proposed) in food to FTDS.

Yours sincerely

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Manager, Food Section  
**Environmental Health Branch**  
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