

ENSA Statement on EFSA risk assessment of isoflavones supplements

EFSA confirms the safety of isoflavones

Brussels, 22/10/2015 - On 21 October 2015, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) published its scientific opinion “Risk assessment for peri- and post-menopausal women taking soy food supplements containing isolated isoflavones”. The risk assessment concludes that human data do not indicate any suspected harmful effects from a potential interaction of isoflavones on endocrine pathways (in mammary gland, uterus and/or thyroid). These conclusions about food supplements indirectly confirm the safety of foods which naturally contain isoflavones at lower levels than food supplements, such as soy foods.



On the request of the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR), EFSA conducted a risk assessment of peri- and postmenopausal women taking food supplements containing isolated isoflavones. On 21 October 2015, EFSA published the conclusion of this risk assessment, which states that no harmful effects could be linked to the consumption of isolated isoflavones in food supplements for post-menopausal women.



Isoflavones are naturally occurring substances present in a number of plants, including soy. EFSA investigated whether an association could be found between intake of isoflavones from food supplements and adverse effects on three target organs (mammary gland, uterus and/or thyroid) in peri- en post-menopausal women.

Although the EFSA Panel concluded that it was not possible to derive a single health-based guidance value for isoflavones supplements for post-menopausal women, the doses used in the intervention studies could serve as a guidance for the intake of food supplements as no harmful effects have been found.



The amount of isoflavones naturally present in soyfoods is lower compared to the amount dosed in food supplements. As no effects have been observed by EFSA at the highest intake levels of isolated isoflavones in food supplements, it also means that the consumption of soyfoods, naturally containing isoflavones, can be regarded as safe. Soyfoods have been consumed in Europe for more than 40 years and for centuries in Asia, without any adverse effect on human health.

For further information, please do not hesitate to contact ENSA Secretariat:

ENSA Secretariat
Neo Building box 7
Rue Montoyer 51
Brussels 1000

Tel: + 32 2 741 62 15
Fax: + 32 2 737 95 01
Email: secretariat@ensa-eu.org
Website: www.ensa-eu.org

About ENSA

Established in January 2003, the ENSA represents the interests of natural soyfood manufacturers in Europe. The term “natural” refers to the production process used by ENSA members to produce food using whole soybeans. Soy food products from ENSA members are produced without any use of GM (genetically modified) material or GM beans.

ENSA is an association of internationally operating European companies, producing soy and other plant-based foods and beverages ranging from large corporations to small, family-owned businesses with an annual turnover of €0.5 billion. Since its establishment in 2003, ENSA has been raising awareness about the role of soy and a plant-based diet in moving towards more sustainable food production and consumption patterns.