

Plant-based foods to get a more prominent role in dietary guidelines in the UK and Netherlands



Brussels, 29 March 2016. – The European Natural Soy and Plant-Based Foods Manufacturers Association (ENSA) welcomes new dietary guidelines recently published by public health authorities in the UK and the Netherlands. Both guidelines emphasise the importance of increased consumption of plant-based foods and foods low in saturated fat and sugars.

On 18 March, Public Health England published an updated version of its Eatwell Guide, which aims to provide advice to consumers on a healthy, balanced diet. The updated Eatwell Guide recommends that people should consume "some dairy or dairy alternatives (such as soya drinks), choosing lower-fat and lower-sugar options" to maintain a healthy diet. In addition to animal-based protein (meat), the Eatwell Guide recommends consuming more environmentally friendly non-meat proteins such as beans, pulses, fish and eggs.

On 22 March the Netherlands published their updated food-based dietary guidelines (Wheel of Five), which also advise people to consume less meat and increase the intake of plant-based products, such as beans, pulses, nuts, tofu and tempeh. The Wheel of Five also seeks to limit the environmental footprint of food consumption and therefore suggests keeping the intake of dairy within recommended limits so as not to burden the environment more than necessary.

Soy foods are a source of important nutrients, such as high quality protein, calcium, vitamins B2, B12 and D. Plain soy drinks are low in sugars and saturated fat.

Both sets of guidelines place calcium-fortified soy foods in the same category as dairy and thus recognise that they have the same nutritional value.

Koen Bouckaert, President of ENSA: "These new guidelines reflect a growing trend among European countries to increase the consumption of plant-based foods as part of a healthy, balanced diet because of their nutritional benefits and low environmental footprint. Increasing consumption of plant-based foods and beverages is part of the solution to instilling healthy eating habits and curbing obesity rates in Europe."

ENSA calls upon European authorities to recognise the important contribution of plant-based drinks to a healthy, balanced diet alongside dairy. Therefore, ENSA calls for a level playing field with dairy with regard to VAT rates as well as in the context of the public debate on reducing the intake of sugars.

ENDS

About ENSA

Established in January 2003, ENSA represents the interests of natural soy and plant-based food 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 companies, ranging from large corporations to small, family-owned businesses with an annual turnover of €0.8 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.

For more information about ENSA, please visit www.enssa-eu.org or contact the Secretariat.

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