



**Statement on the presence of toluene in vanillin produced by one manufacturer
- legal status and its safe use as flavouring substance -**

Following the notification submitted by the Italian RASFF contact point regarding toluene in vanillin (ex lignin) for desserts from Norway (RASFF Alert Notification 2010.512 dated 27th April 2010) several EFFA members were already confronted to queries from customers seeking for some clarification regarding the above mentioned notification, especially with a view of the conformity of the product with the existing legal framework.

The notification can be downloaded under:

https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/rasff-window/portal/index.cfm?event=notificationDetail&NOTIF_REFERENCE=2010.0512

In fact, what is at stake in the present case are the levels of toluene in vanillin produced by a Norwegian manufacturer.

According to this manufacturer the presence of toluene in vanillin is at low levels which would result in residues in the final food products well below the limits cited by risk assessment bodies like JECFA. Hence there is no safety concern or risk to the final consumer.

The present document aims at providing the EFFA members some further information in the context of the above mentioned alert allowing them to react to any potential questions on the marketability and/or the legal status of the product concerned:

- The manufacturer of the product concerned has already publicly asserted that the relevant product has been produced in full compliance with the relevant EU-Regulations and has also been considered as marketable by the Norwegian authorities.
- Vanillin ex lignin is a nature identical flavouring substance (according to Directive 88/388/EEC). According to EFFA's understanding toluene is not used for extraction purposes in the meaning of the EU-Extraction Solvent Directive 2009/32/EC in the course of the patented manufacturing process but rather as a solvent for other processes than extraction during one of the stages in the vanillin production. **Consequently, toluene cannot be considered as an extraction solvent.**
- Such a solvent is subject to EU Regulation 315/1993/EC laying down Community procedures for contaminants in food (please refer to Articles 1 (1) and (2) in conjunction with Article 2 (1) and (2)).
- To the best of EFFA's knowledge no specific maximum residue levels of toluene are stipulated in the applicable EU legal framework.
- According to the manufacturer the presence of toluene in vanillin is at low levels which would result in residues in the final food products well below the limits cited by risk assessment bodies like JECFA. **Hence there is no safety concern or risk to the final consumer.**

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