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TOX/2021/29 Matters Arising

COMMITTEE ON TOXICITY OF CHEMICALS IN FOOD, CONSUMER PRODUCTS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Conclusions of the Overarching Statement and Addendum on the potential risks from contaminants in the diet of infants aged 12 to 60 months – Summary tables for SACN

Editorial update on the conclusions on arsenic

Introduction

1. Following discussions at the SACN meeting on 17 May 2021, Members noted that “commercial infant foods could cause concern” and queried whether the wording could be amended to specifically identify the key source?
2. The following text provides the summary for arsenic as endorsed by the COT in 2020; proposed changes are highlighted.

Arsenic

The COT concluded that the total exposure to inorganic arsenic, from dietary (commercial infant foods and other foods) and non-dietary (soil and dust) sources, in young children aged 12 to 60 months was of potential concern to health. Dietary sources generally contribute more significantly to exposure in these age groups than non-dietary sources such as soil and dust. **In general, the food groups making the highest contribution were miscellaneous cereals (including rice and commercial rice products for this age group) and potatoes. Consumption of infant or “adult” rice cakes did not indicate an increased risk, while the COT concluded that the current FSAs advice not to use rice drink as substitute should remain in place.**

The COT reiterated that efforts to reduce the levels of inorganic arsenic in food and water should continue.

https://cot.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/finalstatementonarsenic_0.pdf

Questions to the Committee

- i. Does the Committee agree with the track changes proposed?

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- ii. Does the Committee have any other comments?

Secretariat

July 2021