

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

WORKING GROUP ON PHYTOESTROGENS

Submission from Mr Richard James (received 24/07/00)

Background

1. In conjunction with Dr Mike Fitzpatrick (see submission PEG/2001/3), Mr James runs the Soy Online Service website in New Zealand. He is concerned about the toxicity of soya products. The website aims to raise awareness on the potential adverse health effects of ingesting soya & soya-based products. Mr James's interest in this area stems from the observation that parrots he was breeding developed health problems, which he has associated with the soya-based diet, the parrots were fed. Mr & Mrs James also fed their children soya-infant formulae & have associated subsequent health problems their children experience with the use of soya formulae.

Submission

2. In his submission Mr James suggests that the Working Group contact the scientists involved in a number of studies documenting adverse effects of phytoestrogens. He highlights the following documents from these scientists:

3. Correspondence from Cesare R Sirtori to the Lancet: Dr Sirtori discusses the benefits & risks of soya phytoestrogens. He concludes that it is unwise to attempt to single out potential beneficial or harmful roles for phytoestrogens based on the often conflicting and incomplete data available for these compounds.

4. Correspondence from Drs Doerge & Sheehan protesting the FDA approval of health claims for soy: Dr Doerge & Dr Sheehan, toxicologists at the US National Centre for Toxicological Research, oppose the FDA decision to allow health claims for soya. This letter was submitted to the Working Group (PEG/2001/5).

5. Article from Food Labelling and Nutrition News: This article discusses the letter written by the FDA toxicologists Dr Doerge and Dr Sheehan (see submission PEG/2000/5). However, it inaccurately describes the rhesus monkey study. The reproductive abnormalities described relate to a study of diethylstilbestrol not genistein.

6. The submission also includes a number of abstracts from the 3rd International Symposium on the Role of Soy in Preventing and Treating Chronic Disease:

- Sheehan DM et al. Genistein toxicity from dietary exposure from early pregnancy through puberty. This abstract has not been published in full at this time.
- Newbold RR et al. Long-term adverse effects after developmental exposure to genistein. This abstract has not been published in full at this time.
- White L. Association of high midlife tofu consumption with accelerated brain ageing. This study has been published in full & was considered by the Working Group during the January 2001 meeting (PEG/2000/25).
- Abstract from BJU International detailing links between a vegetarian diet and hypospadias: A draft of this article was discussed by the COT in 1999. The COT concluded there was insufficient evidence to support the suggestion that a vegetarian diet had a deleterious effect on the male reproductive tract.