Bringing food information closer to consumers: the European insect sector publishes guidelines for edible insects
IPIFF – the International Platform of Insects for Food and Feed - the EU umbrella organisation for the European insect production sector is publishing today a Guidance document on EU food labelling standards applicable to insects and insect-based products (hereinafter - 'FIC Guidance').
Built around the framework of the European legislation that defines the criteria for ‘food information to consumers’ - Regulation (EU) 1169/2011 - this publication aims at assisting prospective and active Food Business Operators (FBOs) in the production of insect-based food in order to comply with the relevant labelling provisions. In addition to regulatory standards, this document brings together directions from different Commission Notices, but also fair practices from the food sector.

The FIC Guidance represents the joint efforts of IPIFF members (within the framework of the Working Group on 'Food Safety & Consumers') to follow EU regulatory standards. The primary objectives of this Guidance document are to exemplify the relevant provisions of the EU food labelling standards in the context of edible insect-based food products and to facilitate the application of EU compulsory labelling requirements. ‘Despite the young age of our sector, we wish to demonstrate that we act responsibly, adapting our activities to the dynamic EU legislative framework’, explains Antoine Hubert, IPIFF’s President. This Guide focuses on labelling requirements, Health and Nutrition claims, standards on the labelling of allergens, origin, as well as the responsibilities of operators along the food chain.

Presently, standards on the placing of edible insect-based products on the market are defined by Regulation (EU) 2015/2283, which establishes harmonised rules for the EU-wide commercialisation of Novel Foods (including insects). While specific insect-based products are currently approved by certain Member States, it is foreseen that a number of novel food applications will be authorised by the European Commission in the near future - eliminating the barriers for the EU trade of edible insect-based products (see IPIFF guidelines on insects as novel food). Therefore, the FIC Guidance will prove to be beneficial for actors active on Member State level, but also for FBOs who aim at selling their products in the Single Market.

Thus, this Guidance document provides recommendations towards best labelling practices, building from obligations derived from Regulation (EU) 1169/2011. ‘We also wish to raise awareness regarding the excellent nutritional properties of edible insects - a label in line with EU best labelling practices is the first step in order to transparently inform consumers’, complemented Marijn
Concurrently, IPIFF is also launching a one-page factsheet that summarises the relevant nutritional and health benefits of edible insects and their potential contribution to a well-balanced diet (hereinafter - 'insect nutrition factsheet'). ‘Edible insects are popular in numerous countries across the globe and they are known to be a viable complementary source of proteins, minerals and vitamins. During the past years, more and more Europeans wish to integrate edible insects in their diet to combat nutrient deficiencies or as functional food’, concluded Bastien Rabastens, IPIFF Executive Committee Member.

The FIC Guidance and the insect nutrition factsheet are publically available on IPIFF’s website. Furthermore, the FIC Guidance will be periodically updated so as to incorporate future developments in terms of EU labelling standards. The Secretariat of IPIFF will also take the opportunity to speak about the FIC Guidance on the occasion of an International Workshop on 'Research activities for the insect sector', that will be organised on the 3rd of December this year in Brussels. More information will be published during the upcoming weeks.
The International Platform of Insects for Food and Feed (IPIFF) is a non-profit organisation which represents the interests of the insect production sector towards EU policymakers, European stakeholders and citizens. Composed of 52 members, most of which are European insect producing companies, IPIFF promotes the use of insects and insect-derived products as top tier source of nutrients for human consumption and animal feed.