The International Platform of Insects for Food and Feed

Brussels, 4th May 2021

IPIFF welcomes EU Member States’ green light to the authorisation of the first insect food products at European level

The International Platform of Insects for Food and Feed (IPIFF) - the European umbrella organisation representing stakeholders active in the production of insects for food and feed - welcomes the recent decision of the European Union (EU) Member States’ authorities to allow the commercialisation of dried yellow mealworm (and derived products) on the European Union market.

On May 3rd, EU Member States’ delegates in the EU Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed have backed a draft Commission Implementing Regulation, aiming at authorising the placing on the EU market of dried Tenebrio molitor larvae, based on a novel food application submitted by the French insect producer SAS EAP Group Agronutris. This positive vote follows the recent publication by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) of a scientific opinion which concluded that such product is safe, in accordance with the conditions of use and specifications proposed by the abovementioned applicant.

According to SAS EAP Group Agronutris co-founder and IPIFF Member, Cedric Auriol, ‘the green light given by EU Member States represents a major milestone for our company, but also for the insect producing sector as a whole’. In line with the voted draft Regulation, the applicant will have the possibility to commercialise the products containing dried Tenebrio molitor larvae across the EU for a five-year period, pursuant to the data protection mechanism foreseen in the EU novel food legislation.

However, this authorisation will also benefit companies which intend to incorporate the ingredients produced/commercialised by Agronutris into insect-based products. Other producers of dried yellow mealworm also have the possibility to use the ‘protected’ scientific data included in the novel food application developed by Agronutris, if agreed by the latter company.

While this step rewards the efforts of Agronutris, which becomes the first European insect producer officially authorised to sell insects as human food within the EU, this first authorisation will also pave the way for other European producers of edible insects. ‘Agronutris being among the first insect producers that have heavily invested in the development of novel food applications, contributed to the development of scientific evidence demonstrating the safety of insect food products’, added C. Auriol. Those views were echoed by the IPIFF President, Antoine Hubert, who hailed this vote as an ‘important milestone towards the wider EU commercialisation of edible insects’.

According to applicable EU procedures, the European Commission is set to officially adopt the draft legal text prior to its publication in the EU Official Journal and its final entry into force. ‘We are hoping that these final procedural steps will lead to the effective authorisation of these products before the summer’, explained IPIFF Secretary-General, Christophe Derrien.

Pending the future confirmation by EFSA on the safety of other insect food products forming the basis of a novel food application, European insect producers who have lawfully commercialised their products at national level before 2018 may benefit from a so-called ‘transitional measure’. This provision, provided under the EU novel food legislation, aims at allowing such producers to continue marketing their products.
at national level, until the EU novel food authorisations – which apply all across the European Union territory - are being granted. However, this possibility has been used by several EU countries only[iv].

‘Following the EU Member States positive vote on dried Tenebrio molitor products and a recent ruling of the Court of Justice of the European Union[iv], we are urging EU Member States to make full use of the possibilities to implement this novel food transitional measure on their national territory, in full compliance with applicable novel food provisions[iv] and EU general food safety and traceability standards’, concluded Derrien.

Note: As annex to this Press Release, IPIFF also launched an updated version of its ‘Frequently Asked Questions’ document, which covers the subject of novel food and the steps from the submission of a dossier to the final approval by the EU Member States.

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Interested to know what ‘insect farming’ is about? Check our updated

‘Frequently Asked Questions’ on the IPIFF website!

If you wish to hear more regarding the development of the European insect sector, follow us on our social media platforms!
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 75 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.