

IPIFF INFO SHEET

COMMERCIALISATION OF EDIBLE INSECTS IN THE EU

In addition to the ‘general food hygiene requirements’, the production and marketing of insects as food in Europe is governed by the ‘Novel Foods’ legislation - i.e., Regulation (EU) No 2015/2283. This legislation applies to all categories of foods that ‘were not used for human consumption to a significant degree’ within the European Union before 15 May 1997, which is the case of insects.

Whole edible insects and their derived ingredients can be lawfully placed on the EU market - but require pre-market authorisations. The market authorisation is granted following the submission of an application to the European Commission (EC), the safety evaluation of the novel food by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), and a favourable vote given by the EU Member States (MS). Edible insects are regulated under the ‘new’ EU novel foods legislation - Regulation (EU) 2015/2283 which applies from 1 January 2018.

✚ WHO CAN SUBMIT AN APPLICATION FOR THE AUTHORISATION OF AN EDIBLE INSECT NOVEL FOOD?

The definition of ‘placing on the market in the ‘General Food Law’ (i.e., Regulation (EC) 178/2002), provides ‘indications’ on those actors whom the legislator sees as responsible for applying for authorisation, namely the first food business operator that places a novel food on the EU market (i.e., the first actor in the supply chain). Consequently, the main responsibility of submitting applications will generally lie on the insect primary producers (breeders), as they determine the composition / intrinsic characteristics of the product that forms the subject matter of the application.

The actors who have submitted applications so far are mostly insect primary producers/insect breeders (usually micro-, medium-sized, or small enterprises) who sell insects as ‘ingredients’ to a subsequent processor (operators involved in the preparation of insect-based ingredients or end-consumer products) and/or directly to consumers through an intermediary or distributor.

However, three applications were submitted by a national association of insect producers (i.e., the Belgian Insect Industry Federation) and one by the Finnish Beekeepers' association. IPIFF has not filed any novel food application itself.

IPIFF seeks, to support all 'interested applicants' by providing them with general scientific evidence (existing literature on the toxicologic risk associated with insect food, information on the history of consumption of insects in Europe), and legal and administrative support in the preparation of their applications.

THE INDIVIDUAL CHARACTER OF EDIBLE INSECTS' NOVEL FOOD APPLICATIONS

Insect food products are assessed and then, potentially, authorised based on the individual applications submitted by insect producers. Therefore, for each authorised edible insect food product, the European Commission publishes an Implementing Regulation that authorises its commercialisation. Such a regulatory act only enters into force after the validation by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) regarding the safety of its product and votes by the EU Member States.

SUBMITTED APPLICATIONS FOR EDIBLE INSECTS AS NOVEL FOOD

Since January 2020 there have been over **20 edible insect novel food products applications** submitted for authorisation. IPIFF Members, additionally, informed that other applications are in the process of being submitted.

AUTHORISED EDIBLE INSECTS' PRODUCTS AS NOVEL FOOD

Presently (Q3 2022), **6 Novel Food authorisations have entered into force for edible insects, covering 4 different insect species.**

1. The first authorised insect novel food product corresponds to the **dried yellow mealworm (*Tenebrio molitor*)**.
 - The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) published its positive opinion on the safety of the product on the 13th of January 2021.
 - The European Commission Implementing regulation authorising its commercialisation entered into force in June 2021.
2. The second authorised insect novel food product is for **dried and frozen migratory locust (*Locusta migratoria*)**.
 - EFSA Opinion published on the 2nd of July 2021
 - The Commission Implementing Regulation entered into force on the 15th of November 2021
3. The third authorised insect novel food product is for **frozen, dried, and powder yellow mealworm (*Tenebrio molitor*)**.
 - EFSA Opinion published on the 8th of February 2022
 - The Commission Implementing Regulation entered into force on the 28th of February
4. The fourth authorisation respects **dried, ground, and frozen house cricket (*Acheta domestica*)**.
 - EFSA Opinion published on the 11th of February 2022
 - The Commission Implementing Regulation entered into force on the 2nd of March 2022
5. The fifth authorisation concerns **partially defatted house cricket (*Acheta domestica*)**.
 - EFSA Opinion published on the 13th of May 2022
 - The Commission Implementing Regulation entered into force on the on the 4th of January 2023
6. The sixth authorisation refers to frozen and freeze-dried formulations of Lesser mealworm (*Alphitobius diaperinus larva*).
 - EFSA Opinion published on the 4th of July 2022
 - The Commission Implementing Regulation entered into force on 6th of January 2023.

✚ RECENT EFSA'S POSITIVE OPINIONS ON EDIBLE INSECTS AS NOVEL FOOD

- EFSA published its Opinion on the safety of UV-treated powder of whole yellow mealworm (*Tenebrio molitor*) as Novel Food on the 1st of June 2023.

✚ EDIBLE INSECTS' PRODUCTS THAT ARE CURRENTLY BEING ASSESSED BY THE EFSA

- Currently, there are 8 other edible insect novel food applications being assessed by the European Food Safety Authority.
- These applications cover at least 2 additional insect species: **black soldier fly** (*Hermetia illucens larvae*) and **honeybee drone brood** (*Apis mellifera male pupae*).