European Food Safety Authority

Parma, 6 September 2006

PRESS RELEASE

EFSA re-assesses safety of noni juice

Today, EFSA's Panel on dietetic products, nutrition and allergies (NDA) issued an opinion on the safety of noni juice, a fruit juice made from the fruit of "noni". EFSA was asked for scientific advice by the European Commission to assess whether case reports of acute hepatitis had an impact on the safety of noni juice. Noni juice was authorised in 2003 to be put on the market as a novel food ingredient. The NDA Panel came to the conclusion that there is no convincing evidence for a causal relationship between the acute hepatitis observed in the case reports and the consumption of noni juice. On the basis of the available information, it is unlikely that consumption of noni juice at the observed levels of intake induces adverse human liver effects. It should be emphasized that EFSA did not investigate or evaluate possible health benefits associated with noni juice nor the scientific validity of any related health claims.

Noni juice is made from the fruit of the *Morinda citrifolia* L. plant, sometimes known as the Indian Mulberry. It was authorised in the European Union in 2003 for use as a novel food ingredient in pasteurised fruit drinks[1], under the Novel Foods Regulation, after its safety was assessed in a risk assessment carried out by the EU's former Scientific Committee on Food (SCF)[2].

Following information from the Austrian authorities, the European Commission asked EFSA to re-assess the safety of noni juice by reviewing recent case reports of severe hepatitis in people consuming noni juice. In addition, EFSA's NDA Panel considered various data including studies conducted with humans and laboratory animals to test potential toxicity, as well as data on noni juice consumption in Europe.

In conclusion, the Panel confirmed the findings of the SCF regarding the studies on toxicity as well as genotoxicity and allergenicity. From a toxicological point of view, noni juice has been adequately tested. On the basis of the available information, it is unlikely that consumption of noni juice at the observed levels of intake induces adverse human liver effects. The Panel concluded that there is no convincing evidence for a causal relationship between the acute hepatitis observed in the case studies reported and the consumption of noni juice.

It should be underlined that EFSA focussed on the safety assessment and the Panel did not evaluate health claims related to the consumption of noni juice.

The full text of the opinion is available at
http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/science/nda/nda_opinions/nda_op_ej376_noni.html

[1] Commission Decision of 5 June 2003 http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2003:144:0012:0012:EN:PDF
[2] "Opinion on Tahitian Noni® Juice" http://ec.europa.eu/food/fs/sc/scf/out151_en.pdf

For media enquiries, please contact:
E-mail: Press@efsa.europa.eu

Carola Sondermann, Senior Press Officer
Tel: + 39 0521 036 294
or
Anne-Laure Gassin, EFSA Communications Director
Tel : + 39 0521 036 248
Mobile: + 39 348 640 34 34