

UE : la Commission soutient une limite légale pour les acides gras trans

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Une limite maximale d'acides gras trans dans les aliments est le moyen le plus efficace pour réduire le risque cardiaque chez les européens, dit la Commission européenne dans son rapport très attendu, mais elle ne dit pas ce que cette limite devrait être.

Le rapport a examiné les avantages et les inconvénients des différentes options pour réduire les niveaux de gras trans industriels dans le régime alimentaire des européens, y compris la réduction volontaire et l'étiquetage obligatoire.

Il a conclu que la limite réglementaire serait la plus efficace: «Les consommateurs seraient systématiquement approvisionnés d'aliments sains sans avoir à distinguer les produits dont le niveau d'acides gras trans est inférieur.

A limit on permitted levels of industrial trans fats in food is the most effective way to reduce Europeans' risk of heart disease, says the European Commission in its long-awaited report but it does not say what that limit should be.

The report looked at the pros and cons of different options to reduce levels of industrial trans fats in Europeans' diets, including voluntary reduction and mandatory labelling.

It concluded that a legal limit would be the most effective: "Consumers would be systematically provided with healthier food options without needing to distinguish products with lower TFA (trans fatty acid) levels. Potential public health benefits would be the highest for this option as all products would be covered and all population groups would benefit from TFA reductions, including the more vulnerable groups."

Voluntary reformulation from manufacturers has meant that most food in the EU already has less than 2% of trans fat per 100 g of fat, but this varies widely from country to country and high levels of trans fats have been found in Poland, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Croatia and Sweden. "This suggests that in certain parts of the EU little progress has been made," said the Commission in a fact sheet.

For certain foods such as popcorn and biscuits, up to 50% of the fat content is trans fat.

With a limit on trans fats already in place in four EU countries, and other countries expressing their readiness to implement a limit, the EU market is at risk of becoming increasingly fragmented – another reason in favour of EU harmonisation, the report said.

It could also benefit trade. “Should no action be taken at EU level, difficulties might also arise for EU producers who are interested in access to the US market,” the report says. The USA has revoked the GRAS (generally recognised as safe) status of partially hydrogenated oils, the main source of industrial trans fats, and producers have three years to remove them.

Reactions

The report was welcomed by both consumer groups and health associations. Director general of EU consumer rights group BEUC, Monique Goyens, said: “The Commission finally recommends EU legal limits on artery-clogging trans fats. Setting limits is the only way to guarantee consumers across the EU are equally protected, wherever they live and whatever they buy.”

Source : <http://www.foodnavigator.com/Policy/Commission-report-backs-a-legal-limit-for-trans-fat>