

Current Global Status of Flavorings

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< Summary >

Food flavorings are used to give flavor to various processed food. There are characteristics;
Most occur in food; Consist of many components in a very small quantity; Simple structure;
Self limiting.

Since flavor regulations in the world are not harmonized and available materials of flavorings are different, we have to confirm whether not only the flavoring product itself but also the finished food which contains flavorings conforms to a regulation, when we export/import it. Since there is a difference also in the method of safety evaluation in each country/region, the conditions to get permission of the use are different.

Internationally, safety evaluation of flavoring substances is being performed by JECFA from 1996 by the scientific and rational method based on the characteristics of flavorings. By present, nearly 2,000 flavoring substances were evaluated, and were concluded to be no safety concern when they were used as flavoring. Though Japan has adopted a different evaluation method from many foreign countries or JECFA, globally, it is converging on adoption of a JECFA evaluation method.

European Union is shifting to a new flavor regulation. EFSA is evaluating the flavoring substances in order to establish the positive list (Union List of flavoring substances) by the end of 2010. The guideline about evaluation required before marketing of a new flavoring was also published by EFSA.

IOFI (International Organization of the Flavor Industry) has performed activity which aims at global harmonization of flavor regulation for a long time. In 2008, Codex Commission adopted "Guideline for the Use of Flavours", under the situation that JECFA has been evaluating a lot of flavoring substances. In order to supply safe and useful food flavorings, it is important to aim at achieving the global harmonization of flavor regulation and safety evaluation method.