GMA to Assess the Safety of Ingredients Used in Food Products

Grocery Manufacturers Association

(Washington, D.C.) Today, the Grocery Manufacturers Association (GMA) announced a five-part initiative that will advance the procedures used to assess the safety of ingredients used in food products.

“Our industry is committed to providing consumers with safe, quality, affordable and innovative products," said Dr. Leon Bruner, Chief Science Officer for GMA. "In the spirit of that ongoing commitment, today we are launching a modernization initiative that will improve the process and increase transparency for making Generally Recognized As Safe (GRAS) determinations of ingredients added to food."

This five-part initiative to help modernize the process for making GRAS determinations of food ingredients will include the following actions:

- GMA will take the lead in defining a standard that will provide clear guidance on how to conduct transparent state of the art ingredient safety assessments. These advanced procedures will be documented in a Publicly Available Standard (PAS) for GRAS determinations. The PAS will be a science-based framework that specifies a rigorous and transparent ingredient safety assessment process. The procedures included in the PAS will also ensure GRAS assessments meet the regulatory requirements of the Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act. The PAS will be developed by an independent body of technical experts in an open public process that includes interested stakeholders. The PAS will be suitable for accreditation using an independent official accreditation body.
- GMA is establishing a program to ensure the FDA has increased visibility to the ingredients that are assessed as GRAS by members of the food industry. The increased visibility will be made possible through the establishment of a GMA-sponsored database that will list information on all GRAS assessments conducted by the food industry. Information in this database will be made available to FDA and other stakeholders to provide increased visibility of ingredients used in the food supply that have been assessed for safety using the procedures defined in the PAS on GRAS assessment procedures.
- GMA will expand its curriculum of GRAS education and training programs in order to further increase the capability of scientists who assess the GRAS

status of ingredients used by the consumer packaged goods industry.

- GMA's broad-based educational programs provide GMA members and other interested stakeholders a clear understanding of the scientific procedures that need to be followed in order to complete a robust and transparent safety assessment. They also provide training on requirements defined in GRAS regulations so new ingredients are fully compliant with US food additive law and regulations.
- GMA has taken the lead in establishing the Center for Research and Ingredient Safety (CRIS) at Michigan State University launched in the spring of 2014. CRIS will serve as an independent academic center of expertise on the safety of ingredients used in foods and consumer products. Their expertise on ingredient safety and independent analysis will be available to all interested stakeholders.
- GMA members have committed to drive improvement in the GRAS assessment process by adopting a Code of Practice at the GMA Board of Directors Meeting held on August 22, 2014. The Code outlines the commitments GMA members have made to conduct assessments according to the procedures defined in the PAS, to maintain the database with up to date information and to ensure that their employees are fully trained on GRAS procedures.
- GMA will execute a communications outreach program to inform stakeholders and consumers of the steps being taken by industry to increase the integrity of procedures used to assess ingredient safety.

"GRAS determinations of ingredients added to food are but one of many important procedures the industry uses to provide consumers with the safe, quality and innovative product choices they demand," continued Dr. Bruner. "We are confident that this initiative along with the industry's efforts to implement the Food Safety Modernization Act will strengthen the food safety programs used by the entire food industry and thereby provide consumers more assurance that food products produced by US manufacturers are and will remain the safest available in the world."

Based in Washington, D.C., the Grocery Manufacturers Association is the voice of more than 300 leading food, beverage and consumer product companies that sustain and enhance the quality of life for hundreds of millions of people in the United States and around the globe.

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