

SAFEGUARDS

SGS CONSUMER TESTING SERVICES

FOOD

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EU PLACE WARNING LABELS ON FOODS CONTAINING DYES

Starting from the 20th July 2010, most foods that contain certain artificial food dyes must display a warning label. This warning label must state that the food may have an adverse effect on activity and attention in children. The regulation is mandatory for six colors. Food which is produced before 20th July might be sold without the label. The action is based on different studies, which conclude a risk for artificial food colors of altering the activity and attention in children.

Artificial food dyes are under suspicion of enhancing activity and reducing attention since 1973 when Benjamin Feingold issued a set of dietary rules for children suffering from attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Several studies have been conducted since then which support these theses. In 2004 a meta-analysis of these studies concluded that some children's behaviour is worsened by artificial dyes.

As anticipated in an earlier [SGS Safeguard in 2009](#) (056/10) the European Union (EU) has put a labelling requirement on certain artificial food dyes in place. According to [EU regulation \(EG\) No. 1333/2008, Article 24, Annex V](#) EU makes it mandatory from 20th of July 2010 to label food and drinks containing six synthetic food dyes. The label must include the phrase "name or E number of the color(s): may have an adverse effect on activity and



attention in children". Products produced before due date can be sold without the label. The following colors have been addressed by the authority:

- Tartrazine (E102): used for coloring sweets and fizzy drinks
- Quinoline yellow (E104): a greenish yellow colorant of food
- Sunset yellow (E110): used in fermented or heated food
- Carmoisine (E122): a red colorant used in jellies\
- Ponceau 4R (E124): used in sausages and beverages
- Allura red AC (E129): used in sweets and beverages

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With the exception of foods where the colour(s) has been used for the purposes of health or other marking on meat products or for stamping or decorative colouring on eggshells.



Artificial food dyes are used widely in the USA but have not been as accepted in the EU. Many manufacturers have exchanged synthetic food dyes with natural dyes already. Therefore, it is not known how many products of food and beverages will ever include the warning label.

Surveillance of the supply chain in global trade is recommendable due to this lack of knowledge and the deviating requirements in certain regions. Several producer of different kind of food have voluntarily started programs to ensure the consumer that their products are free of any artificial dyes. SGS supports them by offering the necessary analysis.

SGS has thorough experience in the identification and quantification of all synthetic food dyes. We can offer you the determination in all kind of matrices using state-of-the-art test methods. Please do not hesitate to contact us for further information.

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