

PETITION

to the

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

about the

**Draft Regulation on Amendments
to the Nutrition Claims Annex**

July 2009

PETITION

Draft Regulation on Amendments to the Nutrition Claims Annex

We, the undersigned group of international scientists specialising in lipids and fatty acids, urge the Commission to suspend work on the proposed amendments to the Nutrition Claims Annex.

We greatly value the priority and urgency the Commission has given to developing a Regulation on five claims for omega-3 fatty acids, monounsaturated, polyunsaturated and unsaturated fat.

Because of our work, we are particularly aware of unsatisfactory current practices in nutrition claims for these substances --- simultaneously confusing to consumers and unfair to responsible producers. So we share the Commission's desire for a Regulation to bring order, consistency and clarity to the market.

HOWEVER

- (a) The summary of the latest meeting of the Commission Working Group made clear that there are a large number of complex and unresolved issues with the Regulation as currently drafted; and
- (b) Time is insufficient to resolve them sensibly if the Commission seeks to put a final version of the Regulation to a vote at the SCFCAH on 15 July

THEREFORE, we urge the Commission not to proceed with this rushed timetable. We urge the Commission to suspend discussion of the proposed claims temporarily, then to reconvene a proper scientific discussion of the issues, without an artificial deadline.

In making this petition, we are fully aware of the implications. It will mean there are no approved nutrition claims for these substances in the Annex by the deadline of early 2010.

But we feel that the current draft is so unsatisfactory that it would actually make matters worse. Specifically, it would allow manufacturers to fortify products with cheap vegetable oils, but present them to the public as delivering the same proven health benefits as EPA/DHA. Better no Regulation than a bad Regulation.

The process we propose will take time, but it will provide a coherent scientific foundation for claims and for educating both the general public and food producers. Taking care with the underlying science now will lead to better, and more enduring, claims in the end.

We stand ready to contribute to the full scientific discussion that we propose. And, indeed, to assist the Commission in any other way that will lead to an appropriate resolution of all outstanding issues.

Prof Michael Crawford

Director of the Institute of Brain Chemistry and Human Nutrition
London Metropolitan University.

Peter Clough

Technical Director
Efamol Limited

Prof Claudio Galli

Professor of Pharmacology
University of Milan

Capt Joseph R Hibbeln

Acting Chief, Section on Nutritional Neurochemistry
National Institutes of Health

Prof William E M Lands

Professor of Biological Chemistry (Retired)

Dr Alexandra Richardson

Senior Research Fellow, Oxford University

Prof Clemens von Schacky

Professor of Preventive Cardiology
University of Munich

Prof Andrew Sinclair

Professor of Human Nutrition
Deakin University

Prof John Stein

Professor of Physiology, Anatomy and Genetics
Oxford University

Prof Jack Winkler

Director of the Nutrition Policy Unit
London Metropolitan University