



16 January 2008

Catherine Geslain Lanéelle
Executive Director
European Food safety Authority
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Italy

Dear Catherine

EFSA contribution to the food safety/risk assessment of A1 and A2 β -casein in cows' milk

Thanks very much for your letter Ref HD/mm (2007) – out – 2588469 of 20 December relating to our future relationship and your desire to address the possible food safety issue of A1 and A2 β -casein in cows' milk.

In relation to the possible food safety issue of A1 and A2 β -casein in cows' milk, you asked for comments on your planned activity as described in your letter.

We are very supportive of your proposed two-step approach with the first step being an evaluation of the relevance and robustness of the claim that BCM7 resulting from human digestion of A1 β -casein in cow's milk is associated with a wide range of non-infectious diseases. We support your view that the best way to do this is a comprehensive review and analysis of the peer-reviewed scientific literature and, if deemed appropriate, a risk assessment will follow.

When we visited with you in November we discussed the terms of reference that NZFSA had drafted and your proposed activities seem to cover the various elements we had listed. The

New Zealand Ministry of Health has subsequently reviewed the draft terms of reference and provided us with comments. We would ask for your consideration of the following specific points raised by them in respect of the elements that will make up your initial evaluation:

- Specifically identify any (new) evidence that has become available since 2004 and the weight given to it in the evaluation
- Consider all disease types that could be involved rather than a limited number
- Include review of any mechanistic studies (e.g. biological, immunological, physiological) that may be available
- Provide a rationale for limiting the scope to milk rather than all dairy products.

The New Zealand Ministry of Health has also expressed the view that "further research, especially independent human trials and animal experimental studies, will be required to definitively identify A1 β -casein in milk as a risk factor for disease". This point is worth noting.

We also wonder at the editorial clarity around the statement in your final bullet point beginning "Epidemiological evidence of adverse health effects in humans in animals fed with cow milk.... ." It is not clear whether it is your intention to review and evaluate both human epidemiological studies and animal feeding studies for evidence of adverse health effects or not, and also whether a review of any mechanistic studies that may be available is to be included.

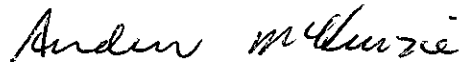
We have had some enquiries from an interested party in New Zealand (specifically the A2 Corporation), concerning information they wish to make available to the review process. I indicated to them that I would forward a brief summary of their views and a list of scientific publications that they saw as relevant. I note that the review and analysis will be of the peer reviewed scientific literature on possible adverse health effects of cow milk consumption with emphasis on A1 β -casein-rich milk. I think however that it may be appropriate to understand their views and also to have read Professor Woodford's book "The Devils in the milk" which has rekindled the controversy down here in New Zealand.

I will also inform A2 Corporation and other interested parties of your planned activities and indicate that they will need to be a part of established EFSA processes if they wish to make additional representation in any way. I presume your web site will have the necessary contact details and outlines processes for providing inputs.

In relation to the issue of a closer working relationship, my Minister for Food Safety is very keen that we pursue this and has even indicated a possible visit (by her) to EFSA in two to three months to 'sign' some sort of 'arrangement'. I think we can develop the document that EFSA's Stef Bronzwaer and NZFSA's Donald Campbell signed last September when Stef attended our conference. To this end I will have some work done here on the subject shortly and provide you with some of our ideas. If we don't manage to agree something that we both think is a significant step forward from our current arrangement quickly and within our Minister's timeframe, we can perhaps aim to have something concluded by September when you visit New Zealand.

I wish you all the best for 2008 and I look forward to the results of your work on A1A2 milk as well as to working with you to progress the relationship between EFSA and NZFSA.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Andrew McKenzie".

Andrew McKenzie
Chief Executive
New Zealand Food Safety Authority

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Parma, 6 February 2008
Ref FV/mp (2008) – out-2669178

Dr. Andrew McKenzie
Chief Executive
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New Zealand

Subject: EFSA contribution to the food safety/risk assessment of A1 and A2 β -casein in cows' milk

Dear Andrew,

Thank you for your comments of 16 January 2008 to our proposed project outline for the food safety evaluation of A1 and A2 β -casein in cow's milk.

EFSA will soon establish a working group to address the issue, taking into account also the points raised by you and the New Zealand Ministry of Health. The final scope of the review is quite broad and multidisciplinary. In order to guarantee adequate consideration of the different scientific aspects involved we will therefore look for proper expertise in the respective areas to build up the working group.

The possible presence of "grey areas" of scientific knowledge on this subject will need to be reflected in the final report, where relevant. Various aspects of the project are expected to be quite time-consuming and a reference timing of up to 1 year is considered reasonable. The review process is therefore not expected to be completed much before the end of 2008, depending on the cooperation of the interested parties and on the availability of the experts. We will keep you informed on the review progress.

In relation to the issue of closer relationship between our respective agencies we would be very pleased to receive a visit from your Minister for Food Safety and, as suggested by you, we will await your further draft of a possible agreement.

Yours sincerely,


Catherine Geslain-Lancelle