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MINERAL OIL AROMATIC HYDROCARBONS (MOAH)

EU DEVELOPMENTS: NO FURTHER MOAH MONITORING FORESEEN FOR SUGAR

For more than a decade, the European food industry has been committed to minimising the potential transfer of mineral oil hydrocarbons into food. Likewise, CEFS supports measures to reduce the presence of these substances. To evaluate the possible occurrence of MOAH residues in sugar, the European sugar industry has conducted systematic monitoring of sugar over the past ten years. These analyses have not detected any measurable levels of mineral oil aromatic hydrocarbons (MOAH) in sugar!

Regular Developments

In December 2023, the European Commission published a draft proposal for a Regulation on MOH in food. The proposal included maximum limits (MLs) for MOAH in certain foods and a recommendation for monitoring MOAH based on indicative levels.

Although sugar was not initially included, later internal drafts briefly suggested an ML for sugar. CEFS provided comprehensive monitoring data in September 2024, confirming the absence of MOAH in sugar.

In addition, EFSA confirmed in the most recent 2023 opinion (update of the risk assessment of MOH in food), that sugar does not contribute to dietary exposure to MOAH, as all analytical results remain below the detection level of 0.5mg/kg and further does not raise any human health concerns¹. Conclusively, sugar does not contribute to dietary exposure to MOAH and is not considered a relevant source of MOH contamination within the food chain.

¹ EFSA (2023): [Update of the risk assessment of mineral oil hydrocarbons in food | EFSA](#)



Based on these outcomes, DG SANTE and Member States agreed in December 2024 to remove sugar from the scope of the proposed Regulation.

The latest draft (June 2025) maintains this approach. A final SCoPAFF discussion is expected in November 2025, with adoption foreseen before year-end and entry into force on 1 January 2027.

Conclusion

Extensive monitoring over more than a decade has consistently show that MOAH is not detectable in sugar. Against this background, analysis of MOAH in sugar provide no additional value for food safety, consumer protection, or public health.

The European Commission and Member States have therefore discussed to not to include sugar in the scope of the forthcoming Regulation or monitoring recommendation.

Summary

The forthcoming EU Regulation on mineral oil hydrocarbons (MOH) in food does not include a maximum level (ML) for mineral oil aromatic hydrocarbons (MOAH) in sugar. Over more than a decade, extensive monitoring conducted by the European sugar industry has consistently shown that MOAH levels in sugar remain below the analytical detection limit of 0.5mg/kg.

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