

Advice 04-2012 of the Scientific Committee of the FASFC regarding nanotechnology in the food chain

Nanotechnology is a promising and one of the fastest growing areas in the fields of scientific research, technological development and industrial innovation. For the food industry, nanotechnology offers new, interesting perspectives, both in terms of food safety and food quality, and with respect to new ingredients and the more efficient use of ingredients and phytosanitary products. However, nanotechnology also raises questions needing quick answering. This opinion discusses the current status and knowledge gaps regarding the definition and classification of nanoparticles. The current knowledge regarding the toxicological aspects, the (real and potential) applications and the risk assessment of nanotechnology and nanomaterials in the food chain are discussed as well, together with the problems posed by the communication to the consumer and his perception of this novel technology, and the policy issues.

The current European regulation on food is strict and seems to cover sufficiently products produced using nanotechnology. Nevertheless, some concerns remain, primarily regarding the toxicology of nanomaterials. As such, the development and validation of reliable tests are crucial for the objective assessment of possible toxicological properties and the detection and characterization of nanomaterials in food. Finally, a transparent communication towards the consumer, both by industry and government, is indispensable for a successful implementation of these “new” technologies.

The full text is available on this website in dutch and in french, respectively under the section “Wetenschappelijk Comité/Adviezen” and “Comité scientifique/Avis”.