

News Release

Pressure Applied on the U.S. CODEX Office Regarding GMO Contaminated Infant Formula

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The National Health Federation (NHF) participated in an FDA-arranged conference call earlier this week in preparation for the U.S. position to be taken at the upcoming meeting of the Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses to be held in Bali, Indonesia, this late November. The topic was the proposed draft Nutrient Reference Values (NRVs) for labelling purposes in the guidelines on nutrition labelling. This is a joint FAO/WHO food standards program purportedly designed to protect children at risk from malnutrition and wasting by using fortified infant formula, follow-up formula, cereals, and also to set NRVs for infants and children. Unfortunately, Codex is allowing “fortification” with GMO-contaminated ingredients and that turned out to be the focus of the conference call.

There were only 21 present on the call despite the fact it is open to the general public. This conference call was conducted using the same protocol as in regular Codex meetings and participants were invited to speak at the end of reviewing the various sections up for debate.

Sadly, Fluoride is up for consideration to receive an NRV. Most likely, it will not receive an NRV in this Codex committee; but Fluoride will be reviewed for assignment of an NRV for Non-Communicable Diseases by a Working Group that the United States is working on. NHF will continue to follow this issue as our documented position has always been that Fluoride is toxic at any of the levels and for any of the purposes being considered by Codex.

As an accredited INGO at Codex, NHF participates in the electronic Working Group (eWG) for special dietary foods like infant and follow-up formula (FUF). FUF is designed for children from 6-36 months when transitioning from breast milk to a regular diet. Codex is concerned with wasting and malnutrition and these formulations are supposed to prevent both. Others have expressed the opinion, also noted in the Codex record, that FUF is primarily related to creating a market for a product targeting a certain demographic and that it is unnecessary. NHF agrees.

During the call, NHF made the comment, noted in the record, that NHF does not only feel that follow-up formula is unnecessary but that it is actually harmful, as the first ingredients listed are GMO ingredients such as corn, corn syrup, corn maltodextrin, and soy and/or soybean oil depending upon whether the FUF is milk-based or soy-based.

Of course there are other problems with FUF, but today’s focus was on GMO and the fact it is not needed and is actually harmful.

Ingredients in the Nestle® version of FUF:

SKIM MILK POWDER, CORN SYRUP, CORN MALTODEXTRIN, PALM OLEIN, SOYBEAN OIL, COCONUT OIL, HIGH OLEIC SAFFLOWER OIL OR HIGH OLEIC SUNFLOWER OIL, MINERALS (CALCIUM CITRATE, TRICALCIUM PHOSPHATE, POTASSIUM CHLORIDE, SODIUM CITRATE, POTASSIUM CITRATE, FERROUS SULPHATE, ZINC SULPHATE, COPPER SULPHATE, POTASSIUM IODIDE, MANGANESE SULPHATE), VITAMINS (SODIUM ASCORBATE, CHOLINE CHLORIDE, INOSITOL, ALPHA-TOCOPHERYL ACETATE, NIACINAMIDE, CALCIUM PANTOTHENATE, THIAMINE MONONITRATE, RIBOFLAVIN, VITAMIN A ACETATE, PYRIDOXINE HYDROCHLORIDE, FOLIC ACID, PHYLLUQUINONE, BIOTIN, VITAMIN D3, VITAMIN B12), TAURINE. NHF advised the conferees that the focus on the NRVs (essentially, recommended daily allowances of vitamins and minerals) should not be the only concern but that the safety of the product must be considered. This formulation, we argued, will cause the very wasting and malnutrition it is designed to protect against (by the alteration of GI bacteria and the resultant inflammation). I asked if this aspect was able to be considered at this stage of the Codex process. Silence...

Next, there was a call by the Chairwoman for anyone else on the line familiar with or expert in GMO to comment. It was completely silent once again. Next, a request was made for NHF to state the GMO (contaminated) ingredients, so I ticked off the list: corn, sugar, and soy (which held the lion's share) in the product and mentioned that these would be fed to infants and young children around the World. Again, the silence was deafening.

It is amazing that considering the GMO aspect should appear such a novel concept; no one seemed to be able to recite the macro-ingredients forming the largest percentage of FUF and acknowledge that they were GMOs. It was a case of "can't see the forest for the trees" by only seeing the NRVs and not realizing that no amount of good nutrition was going to offset the disaster at the start of the formulation. Next, there followed an invitation to NHF that formal comments in regards to GMO in follow-up formula be submitted prior to the regular meeting in November. NHF already planned to submit research and comments on this topic as well as the NRVs, but now has this added incentive to do so.

Many other infant formulas have the same problem with GMO contamination. Last year, Abbot Laboratories shareholders voted to retain the GMO in Similac® despite the fact that it clearly has multiple GMO contaminations. Similac® soy formula has even more GMO content than Similac Sensitive®, probably more than 70% since the first few listed ingredients include 42.6% corn syrup, 14.7% soy protein isolate, 10.1% sugar (if beet sugar), and 8.4% soy oil.

This is why it is vital for NHF to be present at every level, protecting the consumer and speaking in defense of health and health freedom particularly for those who cannot speak to defend themselves. The issue of contamination with GMOs was totally ignored prior to our broaching the subject. Granted, it is the job of the Codex Committee on Food Labelling (CCFL) to handle that issue. But, we cannot ignore this. If NHF achieves getting it sent back through the CCFL for consideration, then we will have made progress. It might take some time but we are in it for the long term.

Whether researching, submitting comments, participating in eWGs as with this week's phone conference, or appearing at international Codex meetings, NHF has the power to shape policy globally. It is unlikely that Nestle and the other big-name producers will stop making follow-up formula even though these children upwards of six

months of age for whom it is designed need to be weaning to indigenous foods versus eating contaminated products.

NHF will continue to educate consumers and apply pressure in order to clean up these formulations and protect the health-integrity of growing children worldwide. If you would like to make your voice carried with us to the Codex Nutrition Committee this November, then [please donate](#) by helping underwrite a portion of NHF's expenses and know your decision to help is impacting billions of the World's children.

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