

To: Lead Food Officers
Cc: REHIS, CoSLA, SFELC

20 July 2015

FSS/ENF/15/006

Dear Colleague,

Erucic Acid in Mustard Oil

A maximum level of 50 g/kg (5%) has been set for erucic acid (a monounsaturated fatty acid naturally present in some plant-derived oils including mustard oil) in the Contaminants in Food Regulations. Erucic acid could cause adverse effects in the heart muscle including fatty deposits, inflammation and lesions. Mustard oil is known to contain high levels (20-50%) of erucic acid, with recent investigations finding levels of up to 50%. Mustard oil with such levels are non-compliant with Contaminants in Food Regulations and they could represent a health risk.

Some food business operators are labelling mustard oil 'for external use only' as the product has high levels of erucic acid however, enforcement officers have frequently found these products to be on sale alongside other food oils, misleading the consumer as to the suitability of this product as food. Companies have also issued statements on their websites, indirectly suggesting these products are suitable as food products.

Food Standards Scotland and the Food Standards Agency are requesting that appropriate enforcement action is taken where non-compliant products are found on sale to ensure a consistent approach throughout the UK.

Officers should inform suppliers that non-compliant mustard oil within their area is not permitted for sale as a food. We are requesting that Local Authorities take appropriate action to withdraw non-compliant products from sale and where appropriate, manufacturers should be advised to reformulate their products. For internet sales, Local Authorities in liaison with FSS should notify the Originating Authority.

If you would like any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me
(Jacqueline.angus@fss.scot, 01224 285175)

Yours faithfully



Jacqui Angus
Food Standards Scotland