

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2014-2015, 2/3 June 2014

Ref No: SQ14-000567

OUTCOME: 1 – Population Health

Topic: Nanosilica in food

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Siewert, Rachel

Question:

Is FSANZ aware that a nano-silica, Evonik Aerosil 200F and 380F, is commercially available in Australia as an anti-caking agent? (<http://www.trojanfibreglass.com.au/aerosil-200.php>). In light of the clear evidence that these nano additives are being sold in Australia, will FSANZ act to ensure that the product is removed from sale until a proper safety assessment is carried out?

Answer:

There is no evidence from the link provided that these products are used in foods sold in Australia.

However, the use of silicon dioxide (amorphous) (INS No. 551) is permitted in accordance with Good Manufacturing Practice in processed foods in Schedule 1 of Standard 1.3.1 in the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (the Code). The primary particle size of silica may be present in the nanoscale range, however, this material has been used safely in foods for many years and is not considered to be the product of a new or novel use of nanotechnology.

Food Standards Australia New Zealand is further reviewing the scientific literature for certain insoluble materials for which existing permissions exist in the Code, to determine whether there is any justification to establish specifications based on particle size, based on the best scientific evidence.