

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2017–2018, 29 & 30 May 2017

Ref No: SQ17-000731

OUTCOME: 2 – Health Access and Support Services

Topic: Nanomaterials in food

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Janet Rice

Question:

FSANZ indicates on its website that “The findings are also inconsistent with the body of evidence from previous animal studies which have shown that titanium dioxide was not associated with any tumour type in carcinogenicity studies in mice or rats following oral ingestion, even at very high exposure levels.”

- (a) Is it the view of FSANZ that the finding of pre-cancerous lesions indicates a fault with the study?
 - i. If no to a), what is the basis then for effectively dismissing the study as FSANZ has done?
 - ii. If yes to a), what are the faults in the study that resulted in the pre-cancerous lesions?
- (b) Were the previous studies referred to ingestion studies?
- (c) If yes to b), are you aware that the ToxConsult report commissioned by FSANZ found that “there are few studies investigating the toxicity of TiO₂ by dietary exposure, those that exist are old (>20 years) and do not specify the grade or particle size of the TiO₂.”
- (d) Do these old studies identified by ToxConsult form part of the “body of evidence” that FSANZ indicates contradict this most recent study?

Answer:

- (a) No
 - (i) The French study presents preliminary findings which have a number of significant limitations (see SQ17-000730). The study authors themselves have clearly stated that the findings cannot be extrapolated to draw conclusions for human health.
 - (ii) Not applicable.
- (b) Yes. The body of evidence supporting the safety of titanium dioxide for its approved uses includes animal ingestion studies as well as a long and extensive history of safe use in the human population.
- (c) Yes.

- (d) Yes. The body of evidence that supports the safety of titanium dioxide includes studies that are greater than 20 years old. This is to be expected for a food additive that has a very long and extensive history of safe use in human populations.