

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2017–2018, 29 & 30 May 2017

Ref No: SQ17-000735

OUTCOME: 2 – Health Access and Support Services

Topic: Nanomaterials in food

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Janet Rice

Question:

ToxConsult in its review undertaken for FSANZ notes that “Despite being used in food products for a long time, the extent of systemic uptake after ingestion, and biokinetic behaviour of TiO₂ nanoparticles in humans is not known.” (ToxConsult p. 25)

- (a) Is permitting the use of additives or ingredients when so little is known about them standard practice for FSANZ?
- (b) In your review, you refer to ‘weight of evidence’ – does FSANZ rely on a weight of evidence approach even in situations where there is clearly not enough information or data to make a finding of safety?
 - (i) Does FSANZ have a policy position on the precautionary principle?
 - (ii) If yes to (i) please table.

Answer:

- (a) No.
- (b) The weight of evidence indicating safety of titanium dioxide is the lack of identified human health adverse outcomes associated with the long established use of food grade titanium dioxide. It is also supported by evidence in experimental animal studies (as previously tabled in SQ15-000778). FSANZ conclusions are consistent with international assessments of the safety of titanium dioxide used in food. We are unaware of any regulatory action taken by international regulators with regard to the use of titanium dioxide in food.
 - (i) No.
 - (ii) Not applicable.