



94 White Lion Street, London N1 9PF.

Dame Deirdre Hutton
Chair, Food Standard's Agency
And the other members of the Board of the Food Standards Agency

Dear Dame Deirdre and colleagues,

Open letter to the Board of the FSA on artificial additives

As 35 organisations and individuals concerned with children's diet and well-being, we are writing this open letter to the Board of the Food Standard's Agency to signal our disquiet at the Agency's response to the Southampton study on additives undertaken by Professor Stevenson and to ask the Board to take further action.

In particular we do not believe the advice given by the FSA to consumers, which applies to parents of children predisposed to hyperactivity, is supported by the science, which applies to all children, including those without a predisposition to hyperactivity.

The study showed that mixtures of colours and sodium benzoate caused significant and measurable adverse effects in a representative cross-section of children. The Lancet press release accompanying the paper said: "Importantly, these adverse effects are reported in children in the general population and across a wide range of severities of hyperactivity, and not just in those with extreme hyperactivity (ADHD) as established in previous studies." At the launch of the Lancet paper Professor Stevenson claimed the study showed "a significant demonstration of harmful effects".

By contrast, the statement from the FSA said: "Parents of children showing signs of hyperactivity are being advised that cutting certain artificial colours from their diets might have some beneficial effects."

The gap between what Stevenson and his colleagues showed, and the FSA's advice, creates the impression that the Agency is giving the benefit of the doubt to the food and chemical companies rather than to consumers, or the protection of public health. We believe the FSA failed to follow its remit to protect the public's health and consumer interests in relation to food.

Given the strength of the evidence and the wide range of food and drink affected (including unlabeled products), we believe it is not reasonable to place the burden of avoiding these artificial additives on consumers. Therefore we believe the FSA Board should:

1. Immediately extend the Agency's advice so that it covers all children, in line with the scientific evidence in the Southampton study.
2. Acknowledge that the study provides a "demonstration of harm".
3. Apply for a suspension of the EU Additives Directive to allow these six colourings to be banned immediately in the UK and not wait for action from the European Food Safety Authority.

4. Undertake studies into other artificial additives where a suspicion of harmful effects also exists. Given the demonstration that these additives cause harm, we believe there is a strong public interest case for the FSA to commission such research.

We would be happy to meet you to discuss these issues in more detail and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Mike Rayner; Chair, Children's Food Campaign, and Vice-Chair of Sustain.

And:

Academy of Culinary Arts: Sara Jayne Stanes; Director.
Action Against Allergy: Pat Schooling; Executive Director.
Allergy Alliance: Michelle Berriedale-Johnson.
Alliance for Childhood: Marion Briggs.
Association of Teachers and Lecturers: John Puckrin.
Biodynamic Agricultural Association: Bernard Jarman.
British Dental Health Foundation: Dr. Nigel Carter; Chief Executive.
Mary Creagh, MP for Wakefield
Elm Farm Organic Research Centre: Richard Sanders.
Friends of the Earth: Vicki Hird; Senior Campaigner.
Food Additives Campaign Team: Professor Erik Millstone.
Food Commission: Jessica Mitchell; Director.
Food Matters: Victoria Williams.
Health Education Trust: Joe Harvey; Director.
HUSH – UK ecoli support group: Steve Nash; Director.
Hyperactive Children's Support Group: Sally Bunday MBE; Director.
Institute of Health Promotion and Education: Elaine Tilling; Hon Vice President.
International Association of Consumer Food Organisations: Dr Tim Lobstein.
McCarrison Society: Dr Michael Crawford; Chairman.
National Children's Bureau: Jo Butcher; Assistant Director - Well-being.
National Council of Women of Great Britain: Sylvia Owen; Vice President (Policy).
National Day Nurseries Association: Julie Bower.
National Family and Parenting Institute: Lucy Lloyd.
National Union of Teachers: Steve Sinnott, General Secretary.
National Youth Agency: Fiona Blacke; Chief Executive.
Netmums: Cathy Court, Director.
Organix brands: Lizzie Vann.
Pre-school Learning Alliance: Neil Leitch; Director of Communications.
Royal Institute of Public Health: Robert Silberman; Chief Executive.
Royal Society of Health: Professor Richard Parish; Chief Executive.
Soil Association: Peter Melchett; Policy Director.
tFX - the UK campaign against trans-fats: Oliver Tickell.
Unite – Community Practitioners and Health Visitors Association: Ros Godson; Professional Officer.
UK Public Health Association: Angela Mawle; Chief Executive.