

Soil Association

Health Products Standards Committee

29th April 2008

Summary Minutes

Present: Jo Fairley (Chair), Mike Brook, Peter Roberts, Steve Simmonds, Ian Taylor, Louisa Gedge, Marian Morley.

Staff: Francis Blake, Maarten Van Perlo, Keith Ball, Emma Titterton, Lucy Watkins, Isabel Griffiths, Liz Butterfield.

1. Apologies

Eleanor Gallia, Dirk Develter, Cyril Lombard, Pauline Hili, Abi Weeds, Helen Lynn, Romy Fraser.

2. Health products workplan

In the difficult process of prioritisation within the overall work plan, the standards board identified health and beauty as one of the priorities. Within this, the health products standards committee identified the following main areas:

- progressing European harmonisation
- improved systems and procedures for approving ingredients
- completing the standards for herbal medicines
- reviewing parabens.

It was hoped these would be possible to complete within this year.

3. Parabens

The committee were given a presentation about the safety of parabens preservatives by an invited industry expert. After the ensuing discussion, the committee agreed that it was not appropriate to reopen the issue of parabens at this time. However, it may be possible to consider this again in the context of a future work plan.

4. Residue update

SA Certification Ltd (SACL) questioned how to deal better with contaminant residues in ingredients. A two stage process was suggested:

- 1) gather the information from suppliers regarding their ingredients, reaction pathways and likely contaminants, etc to build up knowledge of the issue;
- 2) review this knowledge to then decide in the future whether to set additional limits for contaminants.

The committee agreed with this approach.

There was a discussion on how to handle information about the availability of ingredients. Currently this information is connected with individual licensees and therefore SACL cannot share it with other licensees because of confidentiality issues. The committee supported the proposal to establish a list of approved ingredients and agreed that SACL should work out the technical, procedural and financial mechanisms to develop and operate an effective system with the appropriate safeguards.

5. Certification issues

5.1 Lanolin

The committee agreed to allow organic lanolin, but not non-organic lanolin.

5.2 Sodium stearoyl lactylate

The committee agreed that the derogation was for the substance (not the products in which it is used) and applies from the date it is granted (not the date of launch of the product).

5.3 Labelling the percentage of organic ingredients

SACL pointed out that this standard, which was aimed at preventing misleading labelling, was also penalising genuinely clear labels. The committee agreed that SACL should exercise discretion with very small labels and where

organic is not prominent on the label, e.g. in the brand name. Licensees will be informed through *Certification News* and SACL will provide mock-ups for the next meeting.

6. Table of prohibited items for the website

The committee agreed the table with some minor amendments.

7. Update report on the working group on common cosmetics standards

It was reported that, together with several key issues that remain to be resolved, there was about a 50% chance of agreeing a standard that can be published for consultation at the IFOAM Congress in June. There was discussion about a contingency if the working group failed to reach agreement. It was agreed that forming an alternative partnership with other organisations was a viable option, if necessary.

8. Any other business

8.1 Vice chair

Mike Brook was unanimously elected as vice chair.

8.2 Aromas - parfum

The committee suggested 10 was a suitable minimum number of ingredients that licensees could group together to call 'parfum'.

9. Date of next meeting

11.00am Thursday 23rd October 2008 - London