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Media Release

FSANZ colour report misses the real issue says consumers

Consumer advocates have given a cool reception to the survey on food colours in the Australian food supply - issued yesterday by Australia's food regulator - claiming that it distracts from the main issue.

"The survey released by Australia's Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) fails to look at the bad effects of food colours, which is the main concern of consumers," said Julie Eady for the Kids First Campaign.

"This report makes a virtue of the fact that Australia uses lower levels of colours than the UK, but in the UK these colours are currently being withdrawn by the entire food industry due to their proven detrimental effects on children's behaviour and learning.

"How is it that Australian manufacturers will need to put a warning on foods containing these six colours when they export them to the EU, but the same company will not be obliged to warn our kids in Australia?"

Six colours (Tartrazine 102, Quinoline Yellow 104, Sunset Yellow 110, Carmoisine 122, Ponceau Red 124 and Allura Red 129) are in the process of being withdrawn in the UK and from the end of 2009 will carry a warning in the EU, stating: "*may have an adverse effect on activity and attention in children.*"

These six food colours were found to affect normal children's learning and behaviour in a landmark study published in the esteemed British medical journal *The Lancet* last year.

The Kids First Campaign is lobbying to ban the six artificial colours now being withdrawn in the UK and unites the efforts of the three leading food additive consumer advocates in the country; Julie Eady from Additive Alert, Sue Dengate from the Food Intolerance Network and Kathleen Daalmeyer from Additive Education.

Sue Dengate pointed out that EU countries have far less colours in their food supply, with only 34 foods containing them in Sweden, 119 in Austria and 344 in Denmark, while the UK had more than 1000.

"In Australia we have found 457 products so far with these colours, meaning that our situation is similar to the UK, but FSANZ continues to downplay the risks from these additives despite the overwhelming evidence that they are harmful to children," she said.

"Yet again, Australia's food regulator FSANZ has failed to put consumers first and neglected its responsibility to protect our children's health."

The Kids First Campaign is demanding that FSANZ follow the UK's lead by banning the six additives in question from Australian food. Consumers can support the campaign by adding their name to the online petition at www.additivealert.com.au.

Ends

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Note to editors/producers: Julie Eady and Sue Dengate are available for media interviews.