

SECOND CONSENSUS WORKSHOP ON NOVEL FOOD

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM 5-7 FEBRUARY 2003

Abstract

How does the consumer perceive novel foods other than GMOs?

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In 2001 Consumentenbond initiated a campaign on functional foods. Title of the campaign was: 'Functional Foods: *Function or Fiction?*'

The main focus of this campaign was false information and misleading claims on products. It consisted of:

A survey with 1000 participants (consumers) about their perception of food claims.

Research on novel foods, enriched products and products with food supplements.

A 9-page special in our consumers magazine about the kinds of food products with claims you can find in stores, the different types of claims and the risks that are linked to functional foods (e.g. too high level of calcium)

Several actions towards government and the (retail) industry in order to convince them of the importance of proper regulation and qualitative audits.

Consumer survey

The survey showed that a lot has to be improved about the information and advice to consumers on functional foods. The results also show that consumers are in favour of the development of functional foods, but that they would appreciate additional information about these products. Furthermore it shows that the assumptions or expectations consumers have about products with claims are often incorrect.

Code of conduct for food claims ("Gedragscode")

In coalition with the Dutch Voedingscentrum (Dutch food information centre) a code of conduct for food claims has been drawn up, according to which a food claim has to be scientifically based. This code of conduct is a voluntary code and up until today it hasn't reached the level of effectiveness Consumentenbond had hoped for. This is caused by several factors that we are trying to improve. If the code would become more (or perhaps even legally) binding for every food claim, misleading information on products will no longer appear on food products