



ECA position paper-ref #T-6 – June 2005 – revision 1

ALLERGENS: ECA POSITION ON THE INVOLUNTARY PRESENCE OF PEANUT ALLERGENS IN COCOA PRODUCTS INTENDED FOR USE IN FOODS FOR THE FINAL CONSUMER

Over and above the requirements set out by the new European Directive 2003/89 EC regarding ingredients present in foodstuffs, the cocoa industry has conducted a risk assessment analysis in terms of occurrence and level on the presence of peanut allergens in cocoa products.

The complex cocoa beans supply chain justified a detailed investigation of the prospective presence of peanut allergens.

The first conclusion has been that the likelihood that peanut is present as an impurity in cocoa products is low. Two elements are of particular relevance in that regard:

-in the main cocoa producing areas, peanuts are primarily grown for domestic use, and thus do not enter the commercial chain.

-even in regions where both commodities are farmed, different type of bags are used for each product.

Using two parallel approaches some analytical tests have been performed in order to confirm the conclusion reported above.

1. Potential cross contamination at the very beginning of the supply chain was estimated by sieving cocoa beans and determining peanut materials by handpicking in the throughput. Peanut materials were estimated to be lower than 1 mg/kg.
2. Independent analyses conducted after processing into cocoa mass showed that peanut allergens were not present at a detection limit of 2.5ppm

Based on these elements, ECA claims that customers of its members should not make precautionary allergen labelling for cocoa products, as there are no facts pointing to any significant risk (in terms of both occurrence and level)