

Permitted colouring matter : Natural colours

Trade Consultation Forum
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Background

- ✿ CFS has received some enquiries regarding the regulatory control of some natural colours in food in HK
- ✿ Aims to provide more information in this aspect for trade reference

Colouring Matter in Food Regulations (Cap. 132H)

- ✱ First Schedule – Permitted colouring matter
 - ✱ Part I – Coal Tar Colours
 - ✱ Part II – Other Colours

} Specific name listed = permitted colouring matter
- ✱ Colouring matter natural to edible fruits or vegetables or their pure colouring principles whether isolated from such natural colours or produced synthetically

Permitted or non-permitted?

✿ Spirulina blue

- ✿ Extracted from a type of algae
- ✿ A permitted colouring matter in HK

✿ Crocin

- ✿ One of the main colouring principles of saffron and gardenia fruit
- ✿ A permitted colouring matter in HK

More examples of permitted natural colouring matter in HK

- ★ Beet red [INS 162]
- ★ Canthaxanthin [INS 161g]
- ★ Gardenia blue [INS 165]
- ★ Gardenia green
- ★ Gardenia red
- ★ Gardenia yellow [INS 164]
- ★ Grape skin extract [INS 163(ii)]
- ★ Paprika oleoresin [INS 160c]

Some non-permitted natural colouring matters in HK

- ★ Colouring matter which is not natural to edible fruits or vegetables e.g.
 - ★ Red kojic rice
 - ★ Monascus red
 - ★ Lac dye red (Lac red)

Advice to trade

- ✿ Use only the permitted colouring matter in food and the quantity added is limited to the lowest possible level necessary to accomplish its desired effect
- ✿ Ensure to provide accurate information on prepackaged food label including specific natural colouring matter used
- ✿ Should there be any doubt on the use and labelling of natural colouring matter, seek advice from food scientists or the authority

Thank you