1. Opinion on a draft Commission Decision authorising the placing on the market of ‘salatrim’ as a novel food ingredient for bakery and confectionery products

Eight Member States were uncomfortable with a proposal to authorize an ingredient for bakery and confectionery products “not aimed at children”, especially as no warning was foreseen on labels. Additional concerns were expressed in respect of: gastro-intestinal and hepatic complications, the declaration of the energy value (and the need to adapt Directive 90/496/EEC), and the use of a generic name as a trade name.

The Chairman concluded that it was necessary to discuss all these aspects with the applicant.

2. Labelling: general discussion on future work

The Committee welcomed the information from the Commission on forthcoming proposals (nutrition and health claims, nutrition labelling).

The forthcoming Danish Presidency indicated that progressing the Proposal for amending Directive 2000/13/EC (to abandon the 25% rule for compound ingredient and to label all allergenic ingredients) was one of its priorities in the food sector. As to the labelling of alcoholic beverages, Denmark suggested that the amended Proposal (following Parliament’s first reading) was not sufficiently in line with general rules on the labelling of foods and asked the Commission to consider bringing a fresh Proposal; this view was strongly supported by two Member States (other Member States did not take a position in this respect).

The Commission’s intention to carry a comprehensive evaluation of the labelling legislation was warmly welcomed by the Committee. It was agreed that delegations would contribute by sending the outcome of similar work carried out at national level to the Commission.

3. Discussion concerning chicken fillets imported from The Netherlands into Ireland: water content and labelling.

The Dutch delegation informed the Committee about ongoing discussions with the Irish Authorities. The necessary measures have been taken in The Netherlands to put an end to the fraudulent practices. The Irish delegation confirmed that they were satisfied with the co-operation with the Dutch Authorities.
The Commission representative and several Member States’ delegations indicated that this sort of fraud was extremely shocking and risked undermining consumer confidence in chicken meat in general.

The Netherlands were requested to keep the Committee informed of further measures they would be taking to ensure that the fraudulent practice would be definitely discontinued.

4. Report on meeting of experts on so-called “energy drinks”.

A meeting of Member States’ experts had been held on 28 February 2002. At the meeting Member States had been informed of the legislative position regarding so-called “energy drinks” in different Member States. The concerns with regard to “energy drinks” related to the ingredients not the products per se. Possible legislative action, such as establishing maximum levels for certain ingredients and labelling, were discussed. In general the experts considered that maximum levels should be established on a scientific basis and in the absence of such a basis it was not appropriate to develop compositional standards. Some Member States favoured advisory labelling on “energy drinks” but this proposal was opposed by other Member States. The meeting of experts concluded that there was no consensus on community-wide legislative action. They recommended that the issue should be considered again once the more recent evidence on “energy drinks” and certain ingredients had been reviewed by the Scientific Committee on Food.

The Committee noted the outcome of the meeting of experts and agreed with their conclusions. Sweden informed the Committee that a study had been commissioned in April 2002. Ireland indicated that the report commissioned by the Irish Authorities had been published. One Member State proposed that there should be labelling provisions based on the conclusions of the Irish report but this proposal did not receive support. The Commission noted that the use of certain food Ingredients could be of concern and that it may be necessary to reflect about possible measures that would facilitate their control when necessary. Several Member States shared this point of view.

5. Foods containing kava – information received from Member States

The Commission Services had received information from France expressing concern about the potential marketing in the European Union of food supplements containing extracts of a plant named kava (also known as *Piper methysticum*). Their concern was based on alleged hepatic problems linked to the consumption of products containing kava. The Commission services had sought information from other Member States on food products containing kava on their market. Two Member States had indicated that there had been food products containing kava on their market. In one Member State these had been voluntarily withdrawn from the market. In the other Member State the opinion of their expert committee did not support prohibiting the sale of the products but the industry had voluntarily introduced restrictions on the maximum level of kava lactones in products and advisory statements. In five other Member States kava was either considered a medicinal product or was not permitted as a food. The Committee agreed that there was no basis
for taking action on foods containing kava but noted the relevance of some of the points made during the discussion of the previous item.

6. **Enlargement : state of play of negotiations and monitoring activities.**

   The Committee welcomed the information provided by the Commission representative and asked for this item to be included at every meeting of the Section.

7. **Miscellaneous**

   a) **At the request of Germany : presence of GM pollen in honey**

   The Commission representative reminded the earlier position of the Standing Committee on Foods, that the honey in question is not a novel food. The GM (rapeseed) pollen present in the honey could be considered as a technically unavoidable contamination. In view of the very small quantities (level of detectability) found and considering that there appears to be no safety concern, it would not be appropriate to recommend withdrawing the honey in question from the market. This view was endorsed by the Committee.

   b) **At the request of Belgium : notifications under the WTO agreement (specifically the problem of dual notifications under TBT and SPS)**

   This will be discussed at the next meeting of the Section.

   c) **At the request of Spain : labelling of bottled water**

   This will be discussed at the forthcoming experts meeting on natural mineral waters on 11 July 2002.

   d) **At the request of Italy : application of Directive 2001/101 to mechanically recovered meat**

   It was agreed that this matter would be reconsidered after the adoption by Council of a new definition for mechanically recovered meat.

   e) **At the request of The Netherlands : Clostrinium/botulium in honey and infant botulism**

   This is a well known problem. Several Member States have developed information campaigns to inform parents. However, there was a general view that these campaigns may not be sufficient. Norway has a mandatory labelling warning. It was agreed that The Netherlands would keep the Commission informed about their plans and other countries would inform the Commission about measures adopted at national level.