



CENTER FOR
FOOD SAFETY



INTERNATIONAL CENTER
FOR TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT



ENVIRONMENTAL
WORKING GROUP



Friends of
the Earth



INSTITUTE FOR
AGRICULTURE AND TRADE POLICY



Coalition of NGOs Releases Nanotech Recommendation Reflecting Concern About Use of Nanotech In Foods

Companies Urged to Address Potential Risks from Emerging Technology

OAKLAND, CA – March 12, 2015 – Responding to rising concern about manufacturers using unregulated nanomaterials in food, a coalition of advocacy groups in the U.S. and abroad has released a [policy recommendation](#) for companies in food-related industries to assist them in avoiding or reducing the risks from nanomaterials in food products and packaging.

The recommendation requests that companies: adopt a detailed public policy explaining their use of nanomaterials, if any; publish a safety analysis for any nanomaterials being used; issue supplier standards; label all products that contain nanoparticles smaller than 500nm; and adopt a hierarchy of hazard controls approach to prevent exposure of its employees to nanomaterials.

Nanomaterials are engineered materials containing extremely small particles; a human hair is 100,000 nanometers wide. Studies have indicated that a range of health harms may be caused by ingestion or inhalation of nanomaterials. The United States Food and Drug Administration, which has not yet issued nanomaterials regulations for food additives, states in its [guidance](#) that they “are not aware of any food ingredient... on the nanometer scale for which there are generally available data sufficient” to determine that the ingredient is Generally Recognized As Safe.

The Nanomaterials Policy recommendation is also accompanied by a [fact sheet](#) to help inform companies and consumers about the potential risks of nanomaterials. The Nanomaterials Policy recommendation was developed by As You Sow, Center for Food Safety, Center for International Environmental Law, Environmental Working Group, Food and Water Watch, Friends of the Earth, The Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, The International Center for Technology Assessment, and The International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF). The goal of the policy is to provide a single recommendation for food manufacturers, endorsed by groups working on nanomaterials policy issues, to avoid confusion and multiple mandates.

“This policy reflects an emerging consensus that using nanomaterials in foods is a risky business,” said Danielle Fugere, President of As You Sow. “Using technology before it is proven safe exposes consumers to health harms and companies to the risks of litigation and consumer backlash.”

“Products containing engineered nanoparticles are being rapidly introduced into commercial production at every stage of the food chain, yet there are no specific safety regimes or adequate hazard assessments in place to protect workers, the public and the environment,” said Ron Oswald, IUF General Secretary.

“It’s time to shed light on this novel food technology. If we continue to allow a lack of regulation and transparency, we should be prepared to deal with the consequences of walking blindly with a risky technology,” said Ian Illuminato, Friends of the Earth Health and Environment Campaigner.

“The FDA needs to complete regulations which mandate the kinds of tests that nanomaterials need to undergo before FDA review,” said Jaydee Hanson, Senior Policy Analyst at the Center for Food Safety. “It needs to formally exclude nanomaterials from Generally Recognized As Safe. All nanomaterials used in food should be considered new food additives and should be reviewed accordingly. The FDA needs to stipulate which sizes of nanoparticles can be used in food.”

“FDA’s voluntary guidance to industry on the use of nanomaterials in food products and food packaging, and FDA’s refusal to recognize that food substances are entering commerce without regulation specific to nanomaterials leaves consumers reliant on the good intentions of industry-self regulation,” said Steve Suppan, Senior Policy Analyst at The Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy. “The pressure on FDA to make their regulations ‘least trade restrictive’ increases the likelihood that foreign food products with nanomaterials could enter into the United States without inspection and testing.”

“It is time for food manufacturers to disclose whether they use nanomaterials in their food and food packaging and release safety reviews of these additives,” said David Andrews, Ph.D., Senior Scientist at the Environmental Working Group. “The use of emerging nanotechnology may revolutionize the food industry, but safety must come first.”

#

CONTACT: Austin Wilson, (510) 735-8149, awilson@asyousow.org
Danielle Fugere, (510) 735-8141, dfugere@asyousow.org

As You Sow is a nonprofit organization that promotes environmental and social corporate responsibility through shareholder advocacy, coalition building, and innovative legal strategies. For more information visit www.asyousow.org.

The **Environmental Working Group** is a non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to protecting human health and the environment. Our mission is to empower people to live healthier lives in a healthier environment. For more information visit www.ewg.org.

The **International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF)** is an international federation of trade unions representing workers employed in agriculture and plantations; the preparation and manufacture of food and beverages; hotels, restaurants and catering services; and all stages of tobacco processing. The IUF is composed of 400 affiliated organizations in 126 countries representing a combined membership of around 2.6 million. For more information visit www.iuf.org.

The **Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy** is a non-profit, non-governmental organization headquartered in Minneapolis, MN, with an office in Washington D.C. The Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy works locally and globally at the intersection of policy and practice to ensure fair and sustainable food, farm and trade systems. For more information visit www.iatp.org.