

Technical Alert

Low-THC Hemp Seeds as a Food

Today Australian Ministers, the New Zealand Minister responsible for food safety and the Australian Local Government Association met and agreed the priority areas for the food regulation system for both countries for 2017-2021. Ministers discussed a range of food regulation issues, including finalising their investigation into low-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) hemp seeds as a food.

Ministers had requested that the Food Regulation Standing Committee (FRSC) investigate information gaps identified in considering the adoption of low-THC hemp seeds as a food. These covered marketing and labelling issues, legal and Treaty implications, maximum levels of cannabidiol (CBD) and the potential effects on road side drug testing. A report by the Swinburne University of Technology regarding consumption of low THC foods and the effect on random drug testing protocols in Australia and New Zealand (the Consumption Report) was received.

Ministers noted the key finding of the Consumption Report is that it is highly unlikely that consumption of food products containing the levels of THC tested would result in any positive tests on oral fluid, blood or urine.

In light of these findings Ministers **supported** the draft standard that will allow low-THC hemp seeds to be sold as a food. The standard will take effect six months after it has been gazetted.

Ministers acknowledged that there is still a range of New Zealand and State and Territory legislation that currently prohibits the sale of low-THC hemp seeds as a food, which will need to be amended. Ministers also supported the establishment of an Implementation and Monitoring working group.

Background

On the 25 August 2016, CMA provided a submission to FSANZ, urging the Australian and New Zealand Ministerial Forum on Food Regulation to approve FSANZ *Proposal 1042* to permit low-THC hemp to be legally designated as a food.

This follows years of consultation including:

- *Application A1039 - Low THC Hemp as a Food, 16 December 2014.*
- *Application A1039 - Low THC Hemp as a Food, 8 November 2012*
- *Application A1039 was submitted on 4 December 2009, seeking approval for the use of the seed and seed products of Cannabis sativa (C. sativa) with low levels of delta 9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) as food.*

[The Australia and New Zealand Ministerial Forum on Food Regulation Communiqué 28 April 2017](#)
CMA Submission: *Proposal P1042 - Low THC Hemp Seeds as Food* can be accessed [here](#).

ENDS