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Dear Sir/Madam

P1057 – Review of the urgent proposal to amend Standard 2.6.3 - Kava

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the 12-month review of the kava food standard amended in March 2022 to clarify the existing permissions for kava and its intent to support traditional use and protect public health and safety.

Since 1 December 2021 imports of kava have been entering Australia under the Australian Government's Kava Pilot program. Since the commencement of the pilot a total quantity of 136,615.2 kg of kava has been imported from mostly Pacific Island countries, with Tonga, Fiji and Vanuatu importing over 90 %.

As kava is identified as a risk food, every consignment of kava is initially referred to the Imported Food Inspection Scheme (IFIS) for visual inspection and to check the label for compliance with the requirements in Standard 2.6.3 and the *Country of Origin Labelling Information Standard 2016*.

In the recent amendment to Standard 2.6.3, kava root is now defined as the peeled root or peeled rootstock of a Noble variety of kava. To assist with verifying compliance with this new requirement, it is recommended that Standard 2.6.3 be further amended to require the variety of the kava to be declared on the label. Without this amendment, the department is unable to verify the variety of imported kava under the IFIS. Currently, there is no laboratory capability in Australia to analyse kava to determine its variety.

The risk advice provided to the department from FSANZ, states that kava should not be consumed by pregnant or lactating females, adolescents or children. Our authorised officers, inspecting kava, under the IFIS, have therefore queried why there is no warning required to alert vulnerable consumers to the risks of consuming kava. It is recommended FSANZ consider requiring such a warning statement to be included in the label.

Yours faithfully

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