

PRESS RELEASE

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AACC challenges FNB Food Fiber Definitions

St. Paul, Minn. (May 20, 2003) — The American Association of Cereal Chemists (AACC) is challenging the definitions for dietary, functional, and total fiber recently published by the Food Nutrition Board (FNB) of the Institute of Medicine and the National Academies.

The definitions proposed by FNB separate fiber into two categories: dietary fiber and functional fiber. According to FNB's definitions, dietary fiber consists of non-digestible carbohydrates and lignin that are intrinsic and intact in plants. Functional fiber consists of isolated, non-digestible carbohydrates that have beneficial physiological effects in humans.

According to Jon DeVries, a member of the AACC Dietary Fiber Technical Committee, the FNB definitions not only present analytical and scientific concerns, but they are also confusing to the consumer and could have a negative impact on nutritional research and education. "A definition for dietary fiber must be scientifically sound, promote international harmonization, and define the constitution and makeup of macrocomponent food based on its physiological or physical-chemical properties, not its state of being. The FNB definitions do not satisfy these requirements, do not reflect current scientific consensus on the physiology of the dietary fiber, and are operationally impractical," DeVries said.

AACC believes that to maximize the benefits of dietary fiber intake by consumers, dietary fiber should not be separated into two arbitrary categories for labeling or other purposes. If dietary fiber is divided into two arbitrary categories, a severe limitation will be placed on food manufacturers trying to produce foods with the elevated fiber content necessary to meet daily recommended intakes.

AACC utilized a scientific review committee with global representation from academia, industry, and government, to adopt the following definition:

Dietary fiber is the edible parts of plants or analogous carbohydrates that are resistant to digestion and absorption in the human small intestine with complete or partial fermentation in the large intestine; dietary fiber includes polysaccharides, oligosaccharides, lignin, and associated plant substances; dietary fibers promote beneficial physiological effects including laxation, and/or blood cholesterol attenuation, and/or blood glucose attenuation.

AACC supports the above definition and believes this definition is scientifically credible and can form the basis of regulatory policy around the world.

A complete article on this topic is enclosed. The American Association of Cereal Chemists (AACC) is an international organization of nearly 3,500 grain scientists and other professionals who study the chemistry of cereal grains and their products or work in related fields.