

SAFE calls for numerical maximum levels for glycerol (E 422) in foods and drinks, including de-alcoholised drinks

Following ESFA’s assessment of acute exposure to glycerol (E 422) from slush drinks and de-alcoholised wine, recommending numerical maximum levels in drinks, SAFE calls for numerical maximum levels for all uses of glycerol, an additive frequently found in ultra-processed foods (UPFs).

SAFE’s Deputy director Luigi Tozzi said: “A decade has passed since the first assessment of glycerol. Yet, to this day, there are no maximum levels for this additive, now considered as a safety concern by EFSA, and the food industry continues to use it without restriction. We cannot trust the industry to prioritise health. This is why we call for numerical maximum levels of glycerol for all foods, beyond EFSA’s recommendation for drinks, to cover all ultra-processed foods that pose a risk for everyone, particularly for children.”

Glycerol is widely used as thickener, sweetener, and solvent in food processing.

Tozzi said: “Europe needs to start taking seriously all the evidence linking ultra-processed foods with negative health outcomes, taxing unhealthy additives to encourage reformulation and actively promoting the consumption of whole foods among Europeans. UPFs are a public health problem, and they must be addressed as such.”