

Irish Breakfast Cereals Association

The Irish Breakfast Cereals Association is affiliated to FDI/IBEC and represents the interests of a number of Breakfast Cereal companies in the Republic. Its members include Flahavans, Kellogg's, Nestle Cereals, and Weetabix.

Breakfast cereals offer the most nutrient dense and lowest fat choice at breakfast time. Eating breakfast has been shown to be beneficial for both body and mind in several ways:

- People who eat breakfast consume more essential nutrients, which are necessary for a healthy body and lifestyle, than those who don't
- People who eat breakfast tend to be slimmer than those who skip breakfast
- Eating breakfast contributes to cognitive performance and improves concentration.

A typical serving size for breakfast cereal products in Ireland is in the region of 40g.

Position on Acrylamide

The Irish Breakfast Cereals Association (IBCA) takes the issue of food safety extremely seriously. The IBCA are actively minimizing the levels of acrylamide in breakfast cereals.

Since its discovery, the industry has been working to improve the knowledge on the formation this substance in foods. In subscribing to the CIAA toolbox, the IBCA work in accordance with industry best practice.

According to the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) it "does not consider that people should make major changes to their diet or stop eating any of the food products in which acrylamide has been reported."

Recent studies into the issue of acrylamide have pointed to a reduction in levels present in food. Companies continue to make efforts to reduce the level of the substance in their products. The most up to date tools available to the food industry is known as the CIAA Toolbox (Annex 1).

Immediately following the initial discovery of acrylamide, the food industry took action to understand how acrylamide was formed in foods, and to identify potential to reduce consumer exposure. The efforts of many individual food manufacturers and food associations have been shared to identify and accelerate the implementation of possible steps to reduce acrylamide levels in foods. The result has been the CIAA Acrylamide “Toolbox”.

The “Toolbox” reflects the results of industry co-operation to understand acrylamide formation and potential reduction measures. It summarises measures evaluated and, in many cases, already implemented by food manufacturers and other partners in the food chain. It allows individual manufacturers to assess and evaluate which of the reduction measures identified so far may be helpful to reduce acrylamide formation in their specific manufacturing processes and products.

It outline acrylamide as “forming via the reaction of asparagine, which is naturally present in all grains, and reducing sugars such as fructose and glucose”. Acrylamide is formed at temperatures higher than 120 °C. Formation accelerates rapidly as moisture falls below 5%. Three factors affect the formation of acrylamide. They are the recipe, the process and the toasting conditions.

Essentially the “Toolbox attempts to do four things:

- Minimise reducing sugars in the cook phase.
- Do not over bake or over toast
- Maintain a uniform colour for the product
- Consider other inclusions e.g. nuts.

The vast range of different recipes, grains, ingredients and processes used in breakfast cereal manufacture means there is no single, simple way to reduce acrylamide formation. For example, wheat based cereals generally contain more than rice or maize based cereals but each grain has its own distinctive nutritional and eating characteristics. Manufacturers are advised to select those “Tools” that are most suitable to the type of product that they are producing.

The Irish Breakfast Cereals Association through its linkages with CEEREAL (The European Cereals Association) is committed to the actions undertaken through the CIAA “Toolbox”.

The Irish Breakfast Cereals Association will continue to monitor research on acrylamide and work with the FSAI and relevant stakeholders to increase knowledge and understanding.

For further information contact Thomas Burke
Secretary
Irish Breakfast Cereals Association
Tel: +353 1 6051688
Email: Thomas.burke@ibec.ie

Editors notes:

The CIAA “Toolbox” reflects the results of several years of industry cooperation to understand acrylamide formation and potential intervention steps. Its aim is to provide brief descriptions of the intervention steps taken by food manufacturers and other partners in the food chain. This approach is intended to assist individual manufacturers to assess and evaluate which of the intervention steps identified so far may be helpful to reduce acrylamide formation in their specific manufacturing processes and products