

Hamburg, 22 April 2010

Transglutaminase and Transparency: Position of Ajinomoto

The immense carbon footprint of meat production and the state of the world's economy discourage wasteful behavior by both consumers and industries, and the considered use of natural enzymes to help avoid food waste is positively considered by most, if not all.

In close conjunction with the European Commission and the Member States of the European Union, Ajinomoto engaged in an open consultation process with consumers, their organizations and other industries. On this basis, Ajinomoto has carried out a consumer survey in 2009 regarding consumers' views on the future labeling of meat and fish end-products in which any kind of food technologies are used for the purpose of combination.

According to an opinion poll a majority of consumers preferred and understood the proposed label 'combined meat parts'. In the same poll 70% of the consumers indicated that meat parts "should never be thrown away". 66% said they "do not mind if meat parts are technically put together" while 82% of those 66% stated they "want to be informed that the product they buy is made of meat parts technically put together".

Ajinomoto has presented the results to the European Commission and the EU Member States in mid 2009 and proposed to consider and discuss the potential future labeling of the use of such products for consumer clarity.

www.transglutaminase.com describes the occurrence of the transglutaminase enzyme in nature. Moreover, scientific sources portray the functioning of transglutaminase: enabling the formation of cross-links in liquid proteins. The process as such is not new at all: natural cross-links formed by naturally occurring transglutaminase are widely contained in ordinary foods such as cooked ham, egg white, hamburger and surimi (crab/fish sticks).

The same website provides official information on the safety and efficacy of the enzyme, including its safe use over the past fifteen years. Like other food enzymes that are essential to our way of life (for example, those that are necessary to make beer), transglutaminase is used in many food applications. There is no doubt that transglutaminase brings economical and environmental benefits to both food industries and consumers. It is now time for a balanced and well-informed dialogue between government, industry and consumers. Ajinomoto is fully prepared to take its responsibility in this dialogue.