

Looks like fruit... Tastes like fruit... But *is* it fruit?

Well, according to a consumer group in Britain, no it is not... not often enough... The organisation claims that many people (the report relates to the UK) are being misled into buying fruit-flavoured products that contain little or no fruit.

According to the Food Commission, too many products have images of fruit on the label, but often none inside and they are calling for companies to reduce the number of artificial flavourings.

The pressure group says all too often artificial flavourings are used instead of real fruit and they are calling for companies to stop the practice.

The Food Commission, which campaigns against the use of artificial additives in food, says they should not be used to replace an ingredient that might be more beneficial to health.

The consumer group suggests that describing a product as strawberry flavour and plastering the packet with pictures of strawberries, when that product contains just a tiny percentage of strawberry or even no real fruit at all, is misleading and a deception.

Strawberry? What strawberry?

The Food Commission has produced a lengthy list of strawberry-flavoured products on sale in British supermarkets which it believes could mislead customers; these included strawberry jelly and milkshakes which contained no strawberry element whatsoever and a strawberry fruit bar with 0.5% of a strawberry which was almost entirely made from apples.

Other so-called strawberry products on the list were Premier International Food's Angel Delight - None; Nestle's Nesquik milkshake - 0% strawberry; Sainsbury's Cranberry, Strawberry and Raspberry tea bags: 0.2%; Premier International Food's Hartley's Jelly - 0% and Asda Great Stuff milkshake with just 0.6%.

The commission says Yoplait yop strawberry yoghurt also had 0% strawberry content and also used the colouring E124; a strawberry flavouring is much cheaper than real strawberries.

The Food Commission, says there are approximately 2,700 different flavourings currently allowed in food, but few are ever identified on ingredients lists; 'flavourings' allow companies to cut costs at the public's expense.

Manufacturers have an obligation to not mislead the consumer

As there are thousands of cheap flavourings from which to choose, many food manufacturers can now flavour their products using these specialist additives instead of real ingredients.

The UK Food Standards Agency says food manufacturers have an obligation to not mislead customers about the content of their products.

The Food Commission says flavourings are purely cosmetic food ingredients with no nutritive value of their own and are used in processed foods to replace flavours lost during processing or to 'bump up' the taste.

such foodstuffs.

Apparently, they can also be used to mask unpleasant flavours caused by other ingredients or additives, some are artificial and others are derived from natural sources.

Hard to avoid

The Food Commission says that these additives in their pure, concentrated state are often unpleasant, necessitating the use of protective clothing, goggles and even respirators.

However, sufficiently diluted, they produce a flavour or aroma that encourages consumption of foods and drinks and are used in so many food and drink products that they can be hard to avoid.

According to the Food Commission, flavourings may have a much wider, indirect effect on our health because of the way in which they are used to improve the appeal of low nutrient or high fat, sugar, salt (HFSS) foods and by encouraging the consumption of HFSS foods, it is likely that flavourings directly affect our health.

Source: <http://www.news-medical.net>

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