



Biopolymer International Position Regarding the Implementation of Regulations No1829/2003 and No 1830/2003 on Genetically Modified Food and Feed for Xanthan Gum

In response to questions regarding the GMO aspects of xanthan gum, Biopolymer International is providing the following information.

Xanthan gum is an extracellular polysaccharide secreted by the natural strain of the bacterium *Xanthomonas campestris* according to the definition given in Directive 98/86/EC on purity criteria for food additives. The xanthan gum manufacturing process consists mainly in a fermentation step in contained use followed by extraction and purification.

Xanthomonas campestris, the micro-organism used by Biopolymer International members to produce xanthan gum, is NOT a genetically modified organism as defined in Directive 90/219/EEC¹ as amended and in Directive 2001/18/EC².

Some of the organic nutrients may be derived from crops for which genetically modified variants may be available besides the conventional ones³. In any event, the nutrients are metabolized during fermentation and their residues are removed during the extraction and purification steps.

Recital 16 of Regulation (EC) 1829/2003 draws a distinction between products made with a GMO and products made from a GMO, the former being generally exempt from labelling whilst the latter are not. Xanthan gum marketed by members of Biopolymer International fall into the former category. Furthermore, the EC Commission (DG SANCO) has indicated that "substances produced by fermentation of micro-organisms do not fall in the scope of the legislation (authorisation and labelling) if produced from a conventional micro-organism, irrespective whether the substrate used for this fermentation is genetically modified or not"⁴.

Considering the aforementioned information, Biopolymer International interprets that xanthan gum is neither subject to the authorisation requirements of Regulation (EC) 1829/2003 of 22 September 2003 nor to the specific traceability and labelling requirements of the Regulation (EC) 1830/2003 of 22 September 2003.

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¹ *Directive 90/219/EEC of 23 April 1990 on the contained used of micro-organisms.*

² *Directive 2001/18/EC of 12 March 2001 on the deliberate release into the environment of genetically modified organisms.*

³ *More information is available from individual company members of Biopolymer (see website for details).*

⁴ *Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health - Summary record of 10th meeting - 30th April 2004.*