

***The request was made in regard to gaining further insight into 'Demonstrating Human Consumption to a Significant Degree for edible Insects' and was for:***

***1. The current numbers on consumers and companies producing edible insects and their products, that you may have collected through your means from 2015 onwards.***

***2. Please do guide us to relevant documents/links that could enlighten us in order to gain more information on the edible insect market in the UK. Please do kindly provide us with the respective information and we look forward to your response***

In response I can confirm:

**Q1:** Following a thorough search of our records, information on current numbers on consumers and companies producing edible insects that you have requested is not held by the Food Standards Agency (FSA).

In the UK food businesses must register with their Local Authority, who are also the enforcement authority for food legislation. The registration process does not include collecting detailed information on the products sold by the business and so we are not aware of any information held by Local Authorities of the number of businesses which The FSA itself does not hold a record of numbers of businesses which produce edible insects.

The FSA has not conducted specific research on the numbers of consumers who have consumed insect products or the insects they consume. Businesses may do consumer research as part of their market research prior to launching their products but are not required to provide the FSA with this type of information.

**Q2:** I am not aware of any documents that the FSA has on the edible insect market in the UK which will provide information on demonstrating the human consumption of edible insects to a significant degree. Woven Network CIC is a trade body for businesses marketing insects and may be able to provide information. Individual companies provide information on their products on their websites.

The information usually requested by Competent Authorities when establishing a history of consumption is invoices, sales figures or shipping documents. Old catalogues can also be submitted as supporting information. Between 2014 and 2015 the FSA carried out a consultation exercise to establish which insects were on sale in the UK prior to 15 May 1997. Food businesses were unable to provide any evidence that insects had been on the market prior to 15 May 1997.

We do not hold a complete list of insect species that were on the market which can benefit from the transition measures. The consultation exercise in 2014 – 2015 involved a limited number of food businesses marketing insects in the UK, and established which insects were on the market in the UK from 2000 to 2017. These were:

1. Chinese yellow scorpion (*Buthus marpensi*).
2. Mealworm (*Tenebrio molitor*).
3. Domestic cricket (*Acheta domestica*).
4. Giant toasted ants (leaf cutter ants) *Attalaevigata* sp.
5. Eggs of giant toasted ants (leaf cutter ants) *Attalaevigata* sp

6. Black Asian Tarantula (*Halopelma nigra*).
7. Mopani worms (*Imbrasia bellina*).
8. Locusts. (*Schistocerca gregaria*)

#### Background information:

Novel Foods are foods which have not been consumed to a significant degree within the European Union (EU) before 15 May 1997. All novel foods are required to undergo a mandatory pre-market safety assessment and authorisation under the Novel Foods Regulation ([Regulation \(EU\) No 2015/2283](#)) before they can be legally marketed in the EU. New novel foods regulations came into effect on 1 January 2018. Under the previous regulation (EC 258/97) whole insects (including cricket powder if produced from the whole insect) could be placed on the market in the UK but all other forms of insects were considered novel and needed to be authorised. Under the new regulations (EU) 2015/2283 all insects are considered to be novel foods unless they are one of a very limited number of species that have been commonly consumed within the EU prior to 1997. Therefore, an authorisation is needed for most insects.

In the UK the species of whole insect that were marketed in the EU before the end of 2017 can continue to be placed on the market until 1 January 2020 subject to an application for these foods being submitted by the 1 January 2019. This is due to transition measures in the new novel foods regulation that allow foods that have been legally marketed in the EU prior to the new regulation, to continue to be placed on the market. The transition measures end on 1 January 2020 and all insects marketed in the UK are likely to need authorisation from this date.