

INEC Statement in response to the ethylene oxide contamination of carob (locust) bean gum (E 410)

The Association of Producers of Carob Bean Gum (INEC) is fully aware of the incident concerning the presence of ethylene oxide above the limit of quantification in certain batches of locust (carob) bean gum (E410) reported via the RASFF system.¹

INEC is very concerned about this incident and its members are undertaking additional and comprehensive analyses and controls to ensure that no carob bean kernels or pods entering the EU were treated with ethylene oxide (e.g., for fumigation).

Whilst the use of ethylene oxide as a pesticide,² fumigant or sterilising agent is not permitted in the EU, it is allowed in some countries outside of the EU. INEC would like to stress that all imported products placed on the EU market must fulfil the same high EU standards as products of EU origin.

INEC represents the interests of the industrial sector of carob bean gum (E410), its derivatives and functionally related products.

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Transparency Register No.: 072692941225-13

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¹ https://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/rasff-food-and-feed-safety-alerts/ethylene-oxide-incident-food-additive_cs

² Locust bean gum is extracted from the seeds of carob trees which are grown in the Mediterranean region and which have traditionally not been treated with pesticides.