France Intends to Improve the Identification and Assessment of Manufactured Nanomaterials in Food

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On June 9, 2020, the French National Agency for Food, Environmental, and Occupational Health Safety (ANSES) issued a press release, in French, proposing an inventory of manufactured nanomaterials in food. According to ANSES, manufactured nanomaterials are used in food:

- As additives to improve the appearance and palatability of the product;
- As food contact materials to improve food packaging; and
- As nutrient-oriented ingredients that may be present at the nanoscale.
ANSES used data published in the scientific literature to identify 37 substances used as food additives or ingredients for which it considers that the presence of nanoparticles is proven (seven substances: calcium carbonate, titanium dioxide, iron oxides and hydroxides, calcium silicate, tricalcium phosphates, synthetic amorphous silicas, and organic and composite compounds) or suspected (30 substances, including: aluminum, silver, gold, magnesium phosphates, ferric ammonium citrate, sodium, potassium, and calcium salts of fatty acids). ANSES used food databases to identify nearly 900 food products that incorporate at least one additive or ingredient that meets the classification “substances for which the presence of manufactured nanomaterials is proven.” Based on its research, ANSES created an inventory of the use of nanomaterials in food. According to the press release, its next step will be to study the health risks that these substances could present for consumers. ANSES states that it intends to apply an approach allowing the use of the risk assessment most suitable, either a standard or nano-specific risk assessment. ANSES plans to apply this approach to a selection of substances and to propose a nano-specific risk assessment methodology. It expects the first results by early 2021.

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