



STEVIOL GLYCOSIDES

Steviol glycosides (E 960) are natural sweet tasting constituents of *Stevia rebaudiana* a plant native to South America, belonging to the *Compositae* family. Steviol glycoside preparations are obtained by extraction from the leaves of the plant, followed by further concentration, purification and (usually) spray-drying.

Steviol glycoside preparations usually contain as the major components the glycosides Stevioside and Rebaudioside A, in various amounts, along with smaller amounts of other Steviol glycosides, such as Rebaudiosides B and C, Dulcoside A, Rubusoside and Steviolbioside.

Steviol glycoside preparations (min. 95% Steviol glycosides) are approximately 200 to 300 times sweeter than sucrose.

Upon digestion, steviol glycosides are broken down to steviol in the gut. Steviol is excreted in the urine as steviol glucuronide.

In June 2008 the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA) evaluated the safety of steviol glycosides and established an Acceptable Daily Intake (ADI) of 4 mg/kg body weight (expressed as steviol). In 2010, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) conducted a general safety assessment for the approval of Steviol glycosides as a sweetener in foodstuffs and for use as a flavour enhancer. EFSA also set an ADI of 4 mg/kg body weight.

In Europe, steviol glycosides are approved for a variety of uses in foods, beverages and tabletop sweeteners in the EU under Annex II of Regulation 1333/2008.

In the United States, stevia containing a minimum of 95% Rebaudioside A is Generally Recognised As Safe (GRAS) by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use as a general purpose sweetener in foods and beverages.

Steviol glycosides are approved in many countries worldwide including Switzerland, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, China, Korea and Brazil.