

## Rosemary extracts: beware of misleading promises of neutral-flavour antioxidants declarable as natural flavourings

*Further to the publication of some press releases promoting so-called antioxidant rosemary extracts “approved in the European Union under the flavourings directive”, Naturex finds it necessary to remind the industry of the legal requirements ruling the production, the use and the labelling of rosemary extracts in Europe.*

**Avignon – France, 19<sup>th</sup> May.** Since rosemary extracts have been approved as food antioxidants in Europe, several companies offering deodorized rosemary extracts for preservation purposes have unfortunately been giving out misleading advice to food processors regarding labelling requirements.

Directives 2010/67/EU and 2010/69/EU, which are applicable in every European Member State since April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011, clarified the legal status of rosemary extracts and established criteria to ensure their consistency and safety.

Deodorized rosemary extracts containing carnosic acid and carnosol, the reference antioxidant compounds considered by the legislation, are categorized as food antioxidants and must be labelled as such. They must be produced using one of the 4 approved extraction methods, meet the relevant purity criteria and can be used in the pre-established list of food categories in compliance with Directive 2010/69/EU.

These alternatives to chemical antioxidants benefit from a consumer-friendly labelling (*antioxidant: extract of rosemary*) and meet the requirements for the use of “natural” claims in food products established by food safety agencies in various European countries.

Contrary to what is being claimed by some companies, no deodorized rosemary extract containing carnosic acid and carnosol, contributing no rosemary flavour into the end product can be labelled as a natural flavouring in the European Union. Moreover, if such extracts are not produced using one of the approved methods or do not meet the purity criteria, their use is forbidden.

The only rosemary extracts which can still be declared as natural rosemary flavourings are those which are not deodorized, given that their content of reference antioxidant compounds is lower than 15 times their content in key volatiles - the reference flavouring components listed in Directive 2010/67/EU.

Such rosemary extracts are actually flavourful and impart rosemary aroma to foods. Consequently they can be used only in a limited number of products where the rosemary flavour is desirable. The ratio of antioxidant components to flavouring components was established by the European legislation to distinguish antioxidant rosemary extracts from flavouring rosemary extracts.

As the market leader, Naturex would like to draw to the food industry’s attention on how important it is to be aware of the regulatory requirements now applicable to rosemary extracts. By advising to use and label antioxidant rosemary extracts improperly, some suppliers can get food processors into troubles with the food safety authorities.



**About Naturex:** Naturex manufactures natural speciality ingredients for the Food & Beverage, Nutrition & Health and Personal Care industries. Headquartered in France, Naturex employs 950 staff and has 11 production units located in Europe (France, Italy, Spain, Switzerland and England), the United States (New Jersey and California), Brazil, Australia and Morocco. In addition, the group has several sales offices worldwide. **[www.naturex.com](http://www.naturex.com)**

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