

News concerning Benzophenone and 4-Methyl-Benzophenone

The recent concern about 4 Methyl Benzophenone, Hydroxybenzophenone and Benzophenone is the result of a discovery in Germany relating to one specific product in February 2009. The incident occurred as a result of an uncured UV process causing migration of the chemical substance into the food product.

At this time it is considered to be a food quality issue rather than a food health issue.

After the recent incident, the European Ink Association published on the 17th February 2009 that 4 Methyl Benzophenone is not harmful, although they now advise not to use in food packaging.

The UK Food Standards Authority in 2006 tested 350 food products and found benzophenone in 61 of them. However, the FSA stressed that the level of the chemical substance found in the 61 samples was below the maximum toxicological standard set by the Commission and did not pose a health risk. The European Food Safety Authority is not issuing a statement until Tuesday 3rd March 2009 (a full **11 days** after we became aware of the problem); the re-assessment of benzophenone will not be ready until the end of May 2009.

Despite the fact that many of the packaging chemicals are not considered by scientists to be dangerous at the trace amounts found, consumer concern and general fears still exist.

Townsend's have been using UV products in label manufacture for approximately 20 years. We ensure all our UV inks and coatings are as fully cured as they can be by changing our UV lamps and reflectors used in the process 25% sooner than the manufacturers guaranteed operating period. As a company, we have been fully analysing our many UV inks and coatings and are also waiting for the results of the British Coating Industry meeting that took place on Wednesday 25th February 2009, as well as statements to be published by the major ink and coatings organisations.

Our suppliers have been working towards eliminating 4 methyl benzophenone from their products, and all Ultra Violet coatings are free of the 3 photo initiators currently being discussed. **Since mid 2008, James Townsend's Ultra Violet inks have not contained any of these photo initiators.**

We feel we do all that is possible to ensure the products sent out conform to any current legislation and Best Practice Guidelines.

We continue to work with our suppliers and customers to provide the best possible products, including the monitoring of innovations in label and ink technology, whilst observing all current guidelines and legislation.