



The EU Nutrition and Health Claims Regulation is unlikely to stifle innovation within the food industry as many fear, according to a member of the European Food Safety Authority's NDA panel speaking in London yesterday.

Presenting a paper at a conference organised by the Food & Health Forum of the Royal Society of Medicine, Professor Hans Verhagen, who is also head of the Centre for Nutrition and Health at the National Institute for Public Health and Environment (RIVM) in The Netherlands, dismissed a suggestion that the new rules, which govern the claims that can appear on foods, would impede companies from successfully marketing new products.

"I do not agree that it will stifle innovation," Verhagen replied to a question about the likelihood of the regulation stopping manufacturers coming up with new products because the approvals process was too tortuous and insufficiently cost effective.

"Consumers do not make a real distinction in their perception between a simple nutrition claim, a general function claim or a disease risk reduction claim. For consumers all they say is, 'is it good for me, yes or no?'" said Verhagen.

Verhagen added: *"There are about two dozen nutrition claims that are allowed via the regulation. You can take any nutrition claim [from the approved list] that you want to make and put it on your product, provided that a product is there [which meets the conditions of the claim]. You can also use the accepted list of generally based health claims."*