



the tomato foundation

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## Research results

**Research results from the Tomato Foundation's recent tomato products samples study clearly highlight additional nutritional values the industry can use to support market growth in the sector.**

The sample study included over 100 samples, each in triplicate, from all categories of factory and consumer products, from 18 companies in 12 countries.

The purpose of the study was to establish the levels of bioactive compounds in the aqueous fraction of tomato. These compounds are already known to contribute to improved blood health, especially blood flow. The Tomato Foundation's research is aimed at gaining a health claim through EFSA, the European Food Safety Authority. If successful, an FDA Structure/Function claim will automatically be usable in the US and additional health claims may become accessible in other territories.

The Tomato Foundation's work is based on the existence of a tomato-based nutritional supplement called Fruitflow™ (a natural Aspirin alternative, sold in capsule form) which is a simple extract made from cold break tomato paste. Essentially a tomato product, Fruitflow™ gained an EFSA health claim for improved blood flow back in 2009. The Foundation's research aims to prove the same effect can be derived from standard servings of everyday tomato products. Their focus is blood health, anti-thrombosis, which protects against the risk of stroke or heart attack and may have a protective effect against thrombotic events in early stage COVID-19 patients.

Gaining an EFSA/FDA health claim for an anti-thrombotic protective effect therefore has great potential for processed tomato products across all categories. The universal consumer recognition of tomato products connects to the global standards set by Codex. This means that products within a category are very similar. The Foundation's study findings show that normal servings or quantified portions of tomato products contain higher levels of these bioactive compounds than a single, daily dose of the Fruitflow™ supplement.

There are multiple benefits to consumers and suppliers alike. EU consumers will benefit directly from an EFSA health claim, meaning a lift to the EU supply chain. The US will gain an FDA Structure/Function claim, which has huge potential for the entire N. American territory. Industrial and retail customers in all markets will have opportunities to exploit the value of the health claim, from labelling to POS to generic storytelling, to grow the categories and the sector overall.

The effect of connecting independent research data from The Tomato Foundation, a Non-Governmental Organisation, validates the science to consumers everywhere. That validation in turn connects to the universal recognition of tomato products by consumers. The research therefore brings a positive effect to all tomato products across all categories based on a single set of research findings. This generic marketing effect grows the sector globally and therefore everyone's share of the market grows too.

The next steps for the Foundation are to immediately begin collaboration with the scientists to publish papers in peer-reviewed journals. Initially, 2 strong, potential titles have been identified.

- *Does a comparison of water-soluble bioactive compounds in Water Soluble Tomato Extract (Fruitflow™) to a range of tomato products establish sufficiency for antiplatelet health effects validated by the existing EFSA health claim (Q-2009-00229/Q-2010-00809)?*
- *Blood clotting in COVID-19: Does the aqueous fraction in tomato products represent a natural, dietary, anti-thrombotic therapy?*

The Foundation has indicated that it aims to leverage the abstracts for each paper to kickstart a communications campaign, to inform industry and consumers alike of the potential benefits for personal health and market growth.

The Foundation further cited an interesting parallel with the effect of the pandemic on consumer home cooking and food shopping habits. Tomato products from all categories have been selling well above national annual averages in all markets globally as more people cook at home. The pandemic is a singular event with far reaching consequences.

The ongoing research of the Tomato Foundation aims to provide a singular reference, which triggers consumer buying motivation for all tomato product categories in all market territories backed by public health agency qualification. The aim of the Foundation is essentially to change the way humble tomato products are currently viewed as staples and commodities, to superfood functional ingredients that match pharmaceutical efficacy. There is rising interest in natural alternatives to medicines.

Which would we all prefer? A glass of tomato juice or a pill?

By utilising highly relevant and above all new research, the Foundation clearly aims to target consumer groups of special interest while keeping industry informed and involved.

A key target group enjoying stellar growth and influence in recent years, the global whole food, plant-based diet community has championed tomato products as essential ingredients for all the right reasons, for being healthy, tasty, versatile and having a long shelf life. Market analysis shows the plant-based sector will grow by over 1000% in 5 years. As early adopters, this community is hungry for compelling independent research.

The Foundation will leverage the study results to gain EU funding to continue the work. Ongoing industrial collaboration remains key to that success.

## **Vitamin E and Potassium**

The Foundation's sample study included a screen for potassium, which was found at high concentrations in almost all the samples. Potassium has 3 existing EFSA health claims in Europe (for normal function of muscle, the nervous system and maintenance of normal blood pressure) and 1 FDA health claim (for blood pressure and reduced risk of stroke).

A second screen was added for Vitamin E as there is also an existing EFSA health claim for cell protection against oxidative stress. A number of products were above the threshold for usage and many more samples were very close.

This represents a historic outcome, providing scientific evidence that supports the first ever EFSA health claims for normal servings of many, everyday tomato products.

David Sutherland, Tomato Foundation founder, announced last week they are preparing a document for industry partners explaining the usage parameters of these health claims as they relate to labelling, POS and communications.

### **About the Tomato Foundation**

The Tomato Foundation is an NGO who's primary aim is to initiate scientific research studies which provide credible, supportive evidence focussed on key health effects of common plant-based ingredients.

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