

EXPANDING ANALYTICAL CAPABILITIES WITHIN SPIRIT DRINKS AUTHENTICATION

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The spirit drinks sector is important for consumers, producers and the agricultural sector within the European Community. It is the most valuable European agri-food export sector (€10bn in exports, representing a trade surplus close to €9bn). Analytical methods that can ensure the safety and authenticity of European spirit drinks have been developed to meet sector requirements. However, the spirit drinks industry recognises that improvements in the assurance of its products can still be made using available and developing analytical tools. The Spirit Drinks Works Package of the FoodIntegrity project has targeted some of the areas where the industry believes that analytical techniques can be progressed to the benefit of spirit drinks authentication. The use of "in-field" technologies that will allow counterfeit samples to be quickly identified at point of sale or distribution is one target area. The development of laboratory techniques to provide more comprehensive, authoritative and rapid detection of counterfeits is another. Training in appropriate analytical methods and interpretation of analytical data is also an area where improvements are desired. This presentation will consider some of the analytical authentication challenges posed by the FoodIntegrity Spirit Drinks Work Package. Selected analytical solutions being evaluated within the Work Package will be used to help illustrate the problems posed, and the types of techniques that are being developed to address them.

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