



CARRAGEENAN TALKING POINTS

The following talking points are for distribution to Marinalg members in response to questions regarding the safety of carrageenan. Partners can also be directed to the [Marinalg website](#) for additional information. It should be noted that highly scientific questions should be deferred to toxicologists. Questions from media should be referred to Kate Allison (215) 790-7816 or media@marinalg.org.

About Carrageenan

- Carrageenan is a soluble fiber from red seaweed and a natural food ingredient that has been used for hundreds of years in the West and probably hundreds of years earlier in Asia.
- Carrageenan comes from several kinds of red seaweeds. Its gel-type texture, which makes it an effective thickener, as well as its utility to create shelf stability make it ideal for use in food products.
- Red seaweed is a naturally occurring, sustainable aquaculture grown and harvested in warm waters by an estimated more than 30,000 family farms on five continents. Most of the seaweed used by global carrageenan producers is sourced from family farms in Southeast Asia (including Indonesia and the Philippines) and Tanzania in East Africa.
- Seaweed farming provides the primary economic base for thousands of coastal communities and family-owned farms around the globe and plays an important role in sustaining their families and communities.

Carrageenan is safe

- Overwhelming data from dietary studies, particularly long-term oral feeding studies, on the consumption of carrageenan for the past 40 years has shown carrageenan is a safe ingredient.
- Regulatory authorities in every region of the world including the United States, Europe, China, Japan and Brazil have found carrageenan safe for use in food.
- These groups have determined there is no need to set an upper limit on the amount of carrageenan a human can safely consume when carrageenan is used at the level needed to achieve its intended effect in food (i.e. stabilizer, thickener).
- The Internal Agency for Research on Cancer has found carrageenan to be non-carcinogenic.
- Carrageenan and poligeenan are not the same. Poligeenan is not a food additive and has no functionality in food.
- Carrageenan does not turn into poligeenan during digestion, as the conditions necessary for production (low pH, temperatures in excess of 175°F, extended timeframe) do not occur in the human digestive tract. The Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA) concluded that if carrageenan did turn into poligeenan during digestion, "This would be detected in (animal) feeding studies" – yet no such effect has been detected.

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- Carrageenan does not cause inflammation of the digestive tract (colitis, Crohn's disease, etc.), and studies that assert a connection between ingesting carrageenan and gastrointestinal inflammation have been misinterpreted due to flawed methodology and comparisons.

Food-Grade Carrageenan

- Carrageenan is a high molecular weight polysaccharide consisting of galactose sulfate and anhydrogalactose sulfate units. It is a naturally occurring, non-synthetic substance.
- There are three types of carrageenan, identified by the number and distribution of sulfate groups on the macromolecule, which confer a large variety of properties in terms of solubility and texture.

Benefits & the Global Food Supply

- Carrageenan is a product of red seaweed and requires no fresh water or arable land to cultivate, does not require fertilizers or pesticides and contributes to fish habitats.
- Carrageenan's minimal processing and sustainable raw materials make it an ideal ingredient for organic foods.
- Carrageenan enables organic food producers to take advantage of the economic benefits of a safe and efficient stabilizer to make organic foods more available to people of all income levels.
- When carrageenan is added to foods, it safely and efficiently stabilizes food. It enables organic food producers to leverage technology and increase availability of their products.
- Carrageenan enables the export of countless products by preserving their texture, structure and stability.
- Used for more than 600 years, carrageenan is essential to meeting the global demand for nutritious food.
- Carrageenan has a long history as a safe food stabilizer that thickens and extends shelf-life efficiency, helping to provide healthy and nutritious food to a hungry world.