

criticisms, question how effects on a few people in a laboratory setting can be applied to the general population in manufacturers' claims.

Gender bias

They also say it is "curious" that EFSA now cites a systematic review done in 2011 - after its Opinion - to support one of its approved claims and that none of the included studies were "apparently submitted to EFSA".

The authors say the review that EFSA cites found a strong gender bias towards men aged 18-35 and trained or highly trained participants, meaning the results might not apply to, for example, older women or untrained individuals.

"EFSA's position is therefore puzzling: the one large systematic review, based on laboratory studies, many of which were undertaken on fasted individuals, reports that most the research does not apply to the population at large, particularly those who eat and drink normally."

Other scientists, including Michael Sawka, say the article contained many inaccuracies and that his work for the American military, the biggest customer of Gatorade, does not mean he has conflicts of interest.

He says he has never had any financial links with the industry.

Mark Hargreaves, of the University of Melbourne, rejected many of the claims made about him in the article and said the investigations editor, Deborah Cohen, had not contacted him to ask about payments he had received from Gatorade.

But Ms Cohen says the article did not make any conspiracy theories and merely said that the evidence for many claims and recommendations made by drinks companies was poor.

"The article also highlights that manufacturers have developed close links with sports scientists who have gone on to develop hydration guidelines for all manner of organisations. Hargreaves and Sawka reiterate their ties with Gatorade."

Ludger Fischer leaves UEAPME

One of the few lobbyists for small and medium-sized food businesses in Brussels has lost his job because of the tight financial situation.

Ludger Fischer, left UEAPME suddenly last month after 11 years of campaigning tirelessly against nutritional profiles, salt targets, and fees for food business inspections.

Mr Fischer, who has run UEAPME's food group, has fought for less "red tape" for SMEs, demanding practical hygiene requirements, no general country of origin labelling and fewer declarations on food labels.

He has represented SMEs in many of the forums in Brussels, including EFSA's Stakeholder Platform and the European Commission's Advisory Group on the Food Chain and Animal Health.

He told *EU Food Policy* that his contract had been terminated for financial reasons at UEAPME and that he is seeking another role in food lobbying.

Dutch firm bids for Cranberry claim

A Dutch firm, Zambon, has made an application for a urinary tract claim on its cranberry product Monurelle, shortly after a French company submitted a similar application.

The claim is for proanthocyanidins from Monurelle cranberry and the wording requested by the company is "may help to support defence against bacterial pathogens in the lower urinary tract".

The French company, Pharmatoka, last month made a similar application for a urinary tract claim on proanthocyanidins sold under the brand name Urell.

The Dutch application is for a new science Article 13.5 claim with a dossier. EFSA has not yet registered the claim or started work on the application.

So far, EFSA has found no evidence of cranberries having a beneficial effect on the urinary tract. Its negative Opinion on Ocean Spray was one of the first of several rejections.

Cholesterol claim application

The Dutch firm, Sylvan Bio, has applied for a health claim on maintaining cholesterol levels to be used on its red yeast rice product.

The Article 13.5 health claim is about contributing "to maintenance of normal blood LDL cholesterol". EFSA has yet to register the application or begin work on it.

On the Article 13 list of generic claims, EFSA has already issued a positive Opinion for a claim about maintaining normal blood cholesterol levels which is related to Monacolin K.

The NDA panel said that 10mg a day of Monacolin K from fermented red yeast rice preparations was needed for the claimed effect.

The panel said that red yeast rice itself was not sufficiently characterised but that monacolin K was.

The European Commission and member states approved the claim that "monacolin K from red yeast rice contributes to the maintenance of normal blood cholesterol levels".