

RFK Jr. Pushes to Ban Synthetic Dyes in Food

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- On March 10, 2025, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Robert F. Kennedy Jr., [met with executives](#) at major companies across the food and beverage industry, including PepsiCo, General Mills, and others. He informed industry leaders that eliminating artificial dyes is going to be a top priority for the Secretary. Kennedy also expressed his desire to collaborate with industry but made it clear that he intends to act unless the industry proactively offers solutions.
- The movement to ban synthetic dyes has recently gained momentum, with California and FDA banning FD&C Red No. 3 as we [previously blogged](#), as well and [several states](#) moving to ban foods that contain artificial dyes from school lunches.
- The public discussion regarding food colors has grossly misstated differences in the regulation of [synthetic dyes in food](#), with critiques often pointing to the EU or Canadian markets as examples of regions that are more restrictive with food color regulation.
- However – there are current 15 synthetic dyes approved in the [European Union](#), 10 in Canada, and only 9 approved in the [U.S.](#)
- Additionally, all food colors in the U.S. must submit a Color Additive Petition to FDA.
- While the EU and Canada have premarket requirements for many food colors, naturally derived concentrates and extracts in many cases are exempt from mandatory pre-market review in Canada.
- In the EU, ingredients that are derived from edible sources and are used because of their coloring properties are defined as “coloring foods,” which are not subject to a European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) evaluation prior to use and are not assigned an E number.
- Keller and Heckman will continue to monitor the development of the new administration’s policy priorities and actions related to synthetic dyes and other food additives.

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National Law Review, Volume XV, Number 79

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