

SYNTHETIC DYE SCRUTINY & INDUSTRY IMPLICATIONS

April 2025

As a product developer, staying up to date on evolving regulatory changes can be a challenge. Our regulatory experts are keeping a pulse on the latest trends and their implications to keep you informed. Here's the latest you need to know regarding the increased scrutiny of synthetic colors.



Q. Synthetic colors are a hot topic. What do developers need to know?

A. Alex Brewer, Director of Regulatory Affairs.

An increasing number of U.S. states have pending bills banning, restricting, or requiring labeling for certain food additives, including

Food, Drug & Cosmetic (FD&C) dyes. The situation is very dynamic, and bills are being added weekly (as of early April there are over 100 bills in 33 states). On March 24th, the Governor of West Virginia signed a bill into law banning all FD&C dyes in foods starting in Jan 2028. He also banned FD&C colors in school foods starting August 2025. California and Virginia have banned FD&C dyes in school meals as well, but their bans do not come into effect until 2027.

At a federal level, the FDA revoked authorization for the use of red no. 3 in food and ingested drugs with a ban starting Jan. 15, 2027.¹ The 'Make America Health Again' (MAHA) commission is planning to place food additives like preservatives, emulsifiers, and flavors under scrutiny. On March 12th, Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. told food executives that removing artificial food dyes is an urgent priority.²

Q. What are the implications of these bans?

A. Alex Brewer, Director of Regulatory Affairs.

If and when these regulations take effect, CPG companies using those colors will need to reformulate their products to eliminate Red 3 along with other synthetic dyes (Blue 1, Blue 2, Green 3, Red 40, Yellow 5 and Yellow 6). Renovation will likely be a focus for manufacturers over the next few years to meet the deadlines of the bans. Categories that will be most impacted include confections, gummies, baking supplies, desserts, and beverages.³

Natural extracts from fruits and vegetables or other non-synthetic sources will receive attention as replacements; however, they tend to be more expensive, may have taste off-notes, and have other functional challenges depending on the application. From a regulatory perspective, some of these replacements have restrictions on the types of foods they can be used in. To maintain consumer interest, reformulation will need to take taste, function, and regulatory restriction implications into consideration.

Changing formulations can leave your brand with complex challenges. How do you ensure your product not only looks great, but also tastes great?

Understand which color replacements are available and the impact they may have on your claims and label. Rely on your flavor solution partners to help navigate your options from taste modifications to regulatory guidance.

Our team of informed regulatory experts paired with robust taste solutions can be put to work for your exact needs. We understand how color ingredients will impact taste and have solutions like taste modifiers to mask or block unpleasant off-notes. Our consumer insights and sensory experts can also help you understand your consumers' taste and label expectations.



Let's get started.
Reach out to discuss.

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¹ CNBC.com, RFK Jr. pressures Big Food to remove artificial dyes in meeting with CEOs, 3.12.25

² FDA.gov, FDA to Revoke Authorization for the Use of Red No. 3 in Food and Ingested Drugs, 1.15.25

³ Food Processing.com, Here Are Replacements for Banned Color Additives, 1.30.25