

Gujarat guar gum exports could slide due to EU alert

The export of guar gum, a kind of food additive, from Gujarat could fall by about 20 percent if the European Union (EU) continues with a safety alert on account of its alleged high levels of toxic chemical dioxin.

The EU alert was issued July 30.

Dioxin is a small family of toxic chemicals found sparsely in nature, but commonly manufactured as a by-product of other materials. The EU apprehension is that the gum from India could be contaminated with dioxin.

Guar gum, produced only in India and Pakistan, is extracted from the green vegetable guar bean. It is used as an additive in a wide range of foods as well as dairy products. Its role is that of an emulsifier, thickener and stabilizer.

India's total annual exports of guar gum were around 800,000 tonnes, of which Gujarat exported about 187,000 tonnes, in 2006-07. There are 43 factories in the state that process the bean into gum. It is mostly exported in powdered form.

The All India Guar Gum Manufacturers Association met in [Kolkata](#) a few days ago and decided to take up the matter with the EU.

Mahendra Bansali, president of the Gujarat Guar Gum Millers Association, told IANS that the additive had been exported for more than 50 years and there had been no complaints.

A submission is being made to the EU that it would be inappropriate to target the entire family of suppliers just because the product supplied by one exporter may have contained dioxin.

(© IANS / India eNews)