

FDA Actions on Synthetic Dyes and Natural Alternatives

Legal Alert
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On April 22, 2025, the Department of Health and Human Services and FDA [announced plans](#) to phase out all petroleum-based synthetic food dyes as part of the MAHA initiative. The FDA intends to set a national timeline for industry to transition to what the agency deems natural alternatives. The agency is taking steps to revoke authorization for synthetic color additives Citrus Red No. 2 and Orange B and is working with food manufacturers to eliminate six remaining synthetic dyes by the end of 2026: FD&C Green No. 3, Red No. 40, Yellow Nos. 5 and 6 and Blue Nos. 1 and 2.

Relatedly, on May 9, 2025, the [FDA announced](#) that it approved natural color additives for various foods, including [Galdieria extract blue](#), [butterfly pea flower extract](#) and [calcium phosphate](#). The FDA has signaled it will accelerate reviews of additional natural color petitions.

Food companies should assess which products use the targeted dyes and identify approved natural replacements. Transitioning will involve reformulation costs and supply-chain adjustments, but switching early can minimize the risk of inventory write-offs when the revocations take effect. Despite the broader trend toward natural dyes, it is important to keep in mind that all color additives, including natural dyes, still require FDA approval before they may be added to foods offered for sale in interstate commerce.

For questions about how these changes may affect your products or reformulation plans, please contact Foster Garvey's [Food & Beverage](#) team.

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This issue is part of a broader wave of state and federal food initiatives. Read the full update [here](#).