

[Home North America](#)
[Home Europe](#)

Search

OK

since

All

**News Headlines**
[Research](#)
[Industry](#)
[Regulation](#)
[Consumer Trends](#)
**All news articles**
[September 2007](#)
[August 2007](#)
[Previous months](#)
**Products & Markets**
[Product & Supplier News](#)
[Health Conditions News](#)
[Market Reports](#)
[Events](#)
**Business Tools**
[Free Newsletters](#)
[All Newsletters](#)
[All Sites](#)
[Corporate News Service](#)
[News Syndication](#)
**Free Newsletter**

Your email

OK

[All newsletters](#)
**News Headlines** Industry

[Homepage](#) > [Industry](#) > [Soft drinks industry...](#)
[Email this page](#) | [Print in friendly format](#) | [News by email](#) | [Your comments](#)

## Soft drinks industry pledges to tackle benzene in drinks

By Chris Mercer

2/27/2006 - **America's soft drinks association said it would have to look again at benzene in drinks, after new tests revealed to BeverageDaily.com suggest it and food safety authorities failed to stamp out a problem.**

The American Beverage Association (ABA) pledged to "use every means necessary" to make all [soft drinks](#) makers aware that two common ingredients can react together to form [benzene](#) in drinks.

The [ABA](#) has been forced to re-visit the issue after America's Food and Drug Administration (FDA) revealed to **BeverageDaily.com** two weeks ago that it had found some soft drinks containing benzene above the legal limit for drinking water.

Benzene is listed by health authorities as a known carcinogen.

The news indicates a communication breakdown. Both the US soft drinks association and FDA knew 15 years ago that two ingredients - sodium benzoate and ascorbic acid (vitamin C) - could react together to form benzene in drinks, according to an internal FDA memo dated January 1991.

"15 years ago it was under control, but this is a fast-growing industry. There are a lot of new companies, a lot of new brands and things have changed," said ABA spokesperson Kevin Keane.

"A number of brands may not be aware of this," he said, adding there was, in any case, little health risk involved.

The FDA was re-alerted to the benzene issue in recent weeks by independent laboratory tests in New York.

The lawyer who commissioned the tests also told the ABA some of the results before Christmas. The association said Thursday it was not testing drinks itself "at this point".

The New York lab found some soft drinks with benzene levels several times above the World Health Organisation's 10 parts per billion (ppb) limit for drinking water. The FDA water limit is half that, while safety bodies in the EU use a limit of just 1ppb.

Perrier sparkling water and Britvic drinks were recalled at lower benzene levels in the 1990s.

The industry, however, has repeatedly argued that such levels posed little health risk to consumers. The ABA said people could get more benzene from the air they breathed.


**Get the latest Market Reports on**
[benzene](#)
[soft drinks](#)
[ABA](#)
**Related News**
[UK, Germany checking soft drinks for benzene](#)
[FDA re-opens probe into benzene contamination of soft drinks](#)
[First soft drinks obesity lawsuit set for Massachusetts](#)
[Still drinks market growing faster than carbonates](#)
[Emerging markets lift PepsiCo sales](#)
[Innovation drive hits Coca-Cola profits](#)
[Europe's soft drinks firms ban adverts to children](#)

Michael Knowles, director of scientific and regulatory affairs at Coca-Cola Europe, said soft drinks makers had learnt to control benzene formation in drinks containing ascorbic acid and sodium benzoate. *"We know how it is formed and we know how we can minimise the formation."*

## News Archives

[All news for September 2007](#)

[All news for August 2007](#)

Knowles said soft drinks companies made a value judgement to use sodium benzoate because of its strong ability to kill off bacteria in drinks. He said the preservative's benefits outweighed the risks and consumers needed to understand this.

Debate, nevertheless, has begun to focus on the effect of heat and light on the amount of benzene that could form from a reaction between sodium benzoate and ascorbic acid.

*"Heat is a major factor,"* according to Mike Redman, an ABA scientist who also represented the industry in meetings with the FDA on benzene back in 1990/1991.

He said benzene levels would not rise significantly at room temperature, but could rise under extreme conditions.

It is thought that Cadbury Schweppes exposes drinks to heat in an incubator for a set period of time to monitor formulations. The group was unable to confirm this before publication.

Cadbury, alongside Australian drinks group Koala Springs, originally alerted the industry and FDA to a problem with sodium benzoate and ascorbic acid back in 1990. It also then led industry testing for benzene, before it and others reformulated some of their drinks.

The ABA's Mike Redman said the industry would now re-trace its steps. *"We will review the 1990 reformulations to see if there's anything we have learnt since that time."*

He said benzene formation could be best controlled by adjusting levels of sodium benzoate and ascorbic acid in the drinks.

Diet and sugar-free drinks are considered more at risk because sugar has been found to help block the reaction.

Glen Lawrence, another scientist who helped the FDA work out the problem with ascorbic acid and sodium benzoate in 1990, took a firmer stance:

*"There is no good reason to add ascorbic acid (vitamin C) to soft drinks, and those that may have ascorbic acid naturally in them (juices) should not use sodium benzoate as a preservative. So it is really very easy to avoid the problem."*

More than 1,500 soft drinks containing sodium benzoate and ascorbic acid or citric acid have been launched across Europe, North America and Latin America since January 2002.

[E-mail this page to a colleague](#)

[Print in friendly format](#)

[Market reports, buy online now!](#)

### Alerts on Product & Market Innovations ! **NEW**

Please indicate below your research interests and receive email alerts on relevant product and market innovations - This service is free of charge.

#### Product Categories

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Antioxidants, carotenoids   | <input type="checkbox"/> Phytochemicals, plant extracts  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dairy-based ingredients     | <input type="checkbox"/> Probiotics and prebiotics       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dosage forms                | <input type="checkbox"/> Proteins, peptides, amino acids |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fibres and carbohydrates    | <input type="checkbox"/> Soy-based ingredients           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Minerals                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Vitamins & premixes             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nutritional lipids and oils |  |

#### Health Conditions

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bone & joint health   | <input type="checkbox"/> Gut health               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cancer risk reduction | <input type="checkbox"/> Immune system            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cardiovascular health | <input type="checkbox"/> Maternal & infant health |

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cognitive and mental function | <input type="checkbox"/> Respiratory health |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diabetes                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Skin health        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy & endurance            | <input type="checkbox"/> Weight management  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eye health                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Women's health     |

[> Subscribe <](#)

**Copyright** - Unless otherwise stated all contents of this web site are © 2000/2007 - Decision News Media SAS - All Rights Reserved.  
For permission to reproduce any contents of this web site, please email our Syndication department: [Administration & Finance](#) .  
Full details for the use of materials on this site can be found in the [Terms & Conditions](#).

### Subscribe to Other Decision News Media E-newsletters - Food, Beverage & Nutrition

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food & Beverage Development - Europe         | <input type="checkbox"/> Supplements & Nutrition - Europe        | <input type="checkbox"/> Top 100 food & beverage companies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food & Beverage Development - North America  | <input type="checkbox"/> Supplements & Nutrition - North America | <input type="checkbox"/> Food and Beverage in Asia Pacific |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food Processing & Packaging - Europe         | <input type="checkbox"/> Dairy Processing & Markets              | <input type="checkbox"/> Food in Central & Eastern Europe  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food Processing & Packaging - North America  | <input type="checkbox"/> Confectionery & Biscuit Processing      | <input type="checkbox"/> Packaging Technologies & Markets  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food Safety & Quality Control                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial Baking & Snacks              | <input type="checkbox"/> Decision News Media Newsletter    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Science & Nutrition Research                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Prepared Food and Meat Processing       |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food legislation                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Beverage Technology & Markets           |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Innovations in Food Ingredients              | <input type="checkbox"/> Food Marketing and Retailing            |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Innovations in Food Processing and Packaging | <input type="checkbox"/> Food Finance                            |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Innovations in Food Safety & Instrumentation | <input type="checkbox"/> Food Industry & Consumer TRENDS         |  |

[Confirm registration](#)
[E-newsletters for pharmaceuticals & cosmetics](#)

### All Decision News Media sites

Food & Beverage Development - Europe - Supplements & Nutrition - Europe - Food Processing & Packaging - Europe - Food Marketing and Retailing - Supplements & Nutrition - North America - Beverage Technology & Markets - Dairy Processing & Markets - Food Safety & Quality Control - Industrial Baking & Snacks - Confectionery & Biscuit Processing - Prepared Food and Meat Processing - Food in Central & Eastern Europe - Food and Beverage in Asia Pacific - Food & Beverage Development - North America - Packaging Technologies & Markets - Food Processing & Packaging - North America - Pharmaceutical Technology - Europe - Drug Discovery - Laboratory Equipment - Biopharmaceutical Science and Business - Outsourcing Pharma - Pharmaceutical Technology - North America - Cosmetics Formulation & Packaging - North America - Cosmetics Formulation & Packaging - Europe

[About us](#) - [Site map](#) - [Recommend this Site](#) - [Advertise](#) - [Contact the Editor](#) - [Terms & conditions](#) - [Privacy policy](#)

Decisionnewsmedia

© 2002/2007 - Decision News Media SAS - All Rights Reserved.

Traffic audited by:

