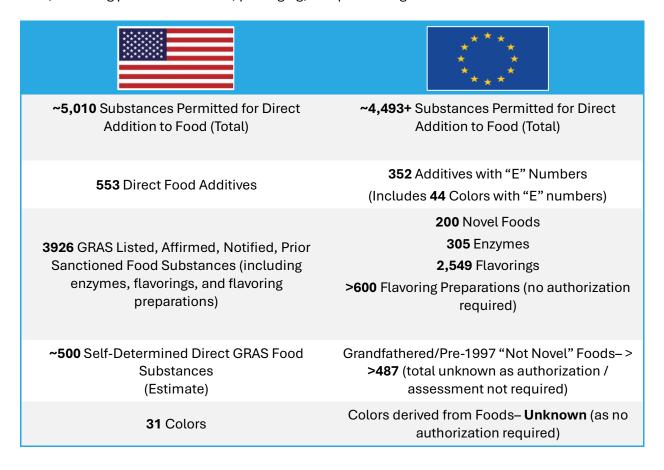
DEBUNKING THE U.S.-EU "ADDITIVE" DIVIDE: 10,000 FALSEHOODS

A common refrain in the press has been that there are 10,000 food additives used in the U.S. and only 400 in Europe. This statement is false. EU permits virtually all of the same food additives and inputs as the U.S. The "10,000" number is based on a publication that included everything that could touch food, including pesticide residues, packaging, and processing aids.



The "400" number reflects a regulatory designed class of food additives in the EU used for specific product needs, like adding color, antioxidants, and thickener purposes, that have an associated code called an "E Number" (short for European number). Numbered additives in the EU reflect only a fraction (less than 10%) of the total substances permitted for use in food in Europe.



Does the EU really use fewer ingredients and food additives than the U.S.?

The discrepancy arises from differences in regulations. E-numbers in the EU don't include packaging materials, flavorings, processing aids, novel foods, or grandfathered ingredients, which are counted in the U.S. numbers. Thus, a simple count of E-numbers isn't a direct comparison to the U.S. regulations.

Are There Other Differences?

The EU doesn't require regulatory approval for foods that had been "consumed to a significant degree" in the EU before 1997, when the novel food regulation came into force. The EU also requires no review or approval for flavoring preparations derived from foods, or colors derived from foods—both of which undergo approvals in the United States.

Facts Matter:

The U.S. boasts the most comprehensive food additive regulatory review system in the world. FDA reviews and authorizes many categories of substances that do not require review and authorization in the EU, a reflection of the comprehensive U.S. food regulatory framework.

Spotlight on Colors: More Misinformation



It is commonly reported that the EU has banned many of the food colors authorized for use in the U.S. This is false.

The EU permits nearly all the colors authorized in the U.S. and also permits almost twice as many synthetic colors for use as compared with the U.S.

Of the six food colors that require a "warning" in Europe, only three are approved in the U.S. Quinoline Yellow (E104), Ponceau 4R (E124), and Carmoisine (E122) have never been approved or used in the U.S.

