
From:
Sent: 23 May 2019 19:55
To: Finance Foodsuppl
Subject: VAT on Supplements

Dear Dept,

My argument in favour of retaining the zero VAT rate on food supplements is that they should be treated in the same way as medicines. If they help keep people out of hospital - and in the broader context they do - then they end up saving the State money.

People who take supplements - again generally speaking - are people who are health conscious and who often have quite significant levels of medical knowledge. My feeling is that they should not be penalized for trying to stay healthy. Making life more difficulty for them only increases the drain on the medical system. What might be gained on the tax front would surely be lost to the HSE - and probably by multiples.

Supplements that have a health benefit, and there are a great many of them, should be rendered as inexpensive as possible to people. The arguments in favour of taxing them - and I'd imagine such arguments may also be made by the pharmaceutical lobby because supplements etc are not patentable and are not monetised the way drugs are - are based on dubious financial logic and possibly on self-interest.

There are of course junk supplements and supplements used for all kinds of nefarious reasons. But we should be wary of throwing out the baby with the bathwater. The only ones to gain from a tax on food supplements will be drug companies.

Yours faithfully