

## **IFST response to 'Building on the success of front-of-pack nutrition labelling in the UK: a public consultation'**

The provision of clear and easy to understand food nutrition labelling on pack or at point of sale can positively assist wise food choices by making the nutritional composition of food products transparent for consumers.

We would strongly support consistency in presentation and format across all products and across all four nations to aid understanding and facilitate implementation.

Effective public health messaging relating to diet and health is challenged by poor levels of understanding of food, nutrition and healthy diet in the UK population.

Reinstating statutory provision of food education in schools as part of both science education and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education would help to address this gap. Providing education on diet and healthy eating patterns, as well as on food hygiene, safe food preparation and storage in the home, and on food labels as a source of guidance on food safety and nutrition, will build a core set of skills and improve understanding in children and young people as well as their families.

This will enable them to apply nutrition label information more effectively.

Nutrition labelling aims to reflect metabolically relevant levels of various macro and micro nutrients to support healthy diet choices by consumers.

It can be particularly useful when comparing similar types of products with each other or selecting a products for the first time.

The current FOPNL system flags up individual nutrients and although this can be helpful in highlighting high sugar, salt and fat levels it does not give an indication of the overall nutritional value of a food.

However, FOPNL can assist consumers to make choices more easily and quickly at point of sale.

Consumer do not fully understand portion size or reference intakes, and there is a need for further consumer education to address this lack of understanding.

Portion sizes seen on some products are not always clear, especially where a product is sold as one pack to be consumed by one person yet the portion size declaration suggests eating half a pack.

IFST would recommend the inclusion of fibre in a FOPNL to drive awareness.

Using the term 'total sugars' accurately reflects the amount of sugars present nutritionally and metabolically. Declaring 'free sugars' would risk confusing consumers.

The Nutri-Score system suggested would be an acceptable alternative to the MTL used currently in UK.

The principle of colours appears to be well understood by the consumer and is similar to that used in other consumer good schemes such as energy efficiency ratings.

Nutrition labelling using negative warnings which identify 'unhealthy foods' standalone without details on the breakdown of nutrient specific information or display reference intakes is not considered helpful in advising balanced diet decision making.

This approach could weaken the principal message that it is overall diet that impacts health, rather than individual foods.

This approach also doesn't take into account that there are appropriate ways/times to be eating high fat, high sugar foods as part as a balanced diet.



IFST would recommend that the UK government maintain the current scheme recommended by Government but alter the content to include fibre.

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