Nutritional Labeling

Global Trends and Regulations ***in Dairy***

Nutritional labeling has become increasingly important across the globe, providing consumers with information about what is in their food, enabling them to make educated and **healthier decisions.**

While some countries already have regulations in place, others are only starting to develop a statutory framework for nutritional labeling.

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

INTERNATIONAL

There is a global trend towards fortifying staple foods with essential nutrients in order to address certain public health needs. Key to this, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) publishes scientific advice about nutrient requirements, which their member countries and international bodies use to develop policies and programs around nutrition.

The Codex Alimentarius Commission is the central part of the joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme. It was established by FAO and WHO to protect consumer health and promote fair practices in food trade. Since 2012, it has recommended mandatory nutritional labeling - even in the absence of health claims.

UNITED STATES

While the nutrients themselves in milk, cheese and yogurt aren't changing, the FDA has updated how dairy must be labeled. The revisions reflect the current understanding of nutrition science as well as how people eat and drink today.

Depending on their annual sales, producers have until 2020 and 2021 to comply with these new regulations.

- Updating serving sizes
- Displaying calories more prominently
- Introducing amounts of added sugars
- Revised % daily values
- Quantity of Vitamin D and Potassium now required
- Quantity of Vitamin A and C no longer required
- Actual amounts (mg/mcg) of nutrients declared
- Shorter and simpler footnote

CANADA

Health Canada is responsible for setting the standards and providing information regarding food safety and nutritional value. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency enforces these standards.

In December 2016, amendments to nutritional labeling requirements within the Food and Drug Regulations of Canada were published. Regulated parties must meet the new labeling requirements by 2021.

- Making the serving size more consistent and realistic, meaning it is easier to compare similar foods and better reflects eating habits
- Making the information on serving size and calories easier to find and read
- Revising the % daily values based on updated science
- Adding a new % daily value for total sugars
- Adding potassium and removing vitamin A and vitamin C
- Adding the amounts in milligrams (mg) for potassium, calcium and iron
- Adding a footnote at the bottom of the table about % daily value to help consumers understand how much sugar and other nutrients (like sodium) are in their food

Canada has mandatory fortification of milk with vitamin D and as part of its multi-phased strategy to expand vitamin D fortification, has proposed to increase the mandatory level of vitamin D addition in milk (cow and goat) and margarine.

EUROPE

In 2011, the EU's Food Information to Consumer Regulation (FICR) united the individual countries' rules on nutritional labeling into a single cohesive EU legislation, enabling easier compliance for food companies. As of 2016, several significant changes were enacted to ensure that labels are clearer for consumers.

- Mandatory nutrition information for most pre-packaged foods
- Mandatory 'back of pack' nutrition labeling, comprising energy value (in both kJ and kcal) plus amounts (in grams) of fat, saturates, carbohydrate, sugars, protein and salt
- The term "salt" must be used since it is more readily comprehensible to consumers than "sodium"
- Fiber is no longer a mandatory nutrient, although it can be declared on a voluntary basis
- Information must be presented in the following order: energy, fat, saturates, carbohydrate, sugars, protein and salt
- Nutrition information must be expressed per 100g, per 100ml or per portion of food

This regulation also had an influence far beyond Europe, with countries such as Turkey and Morocco adjusting their own regulations to suit the FICR.

CHINA

Aligning with other countries, China is moving towards the standardization of labeling regulations. The country recently revised its national nutritional labeling standards, expanding the scope of nutrients requiring mandatory declaration.

Nutrition labeling requirements:

- The scope of nutrients subject to mandatory declaration will be expanded from the current inclusion of protein, fat, carbohydrate and sodium to include vitamin A, calcium, sugar and saturated fat
- A new 'healthy choice' logo will be introduced
- Updates to the measure of nutrients and requirements of nutrient content claims

AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

Nutritional labeling is, for the most part, still voluntary in Australia and New Zealand. Vitamins and minerals can be added to food in response to an actual or potential consumer health need, as long as certain labeling disclosures are made.

- Added minerals or vitamins must be included in the ingredient list
- The specified amount must be included when a health claim is made
- The calcium content of cheese must be declared if health claims are made
- Any lactose or fatty acid claims must be backed up by content information

INDIA

In June 2019, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) updated their Food Safety and Standards Regulations for packaging and labeling. This gives consumers better information about the composition of food products so they can make informed decisions.

New labeling regulations:

- Mandatory salt declaration on pre-packaged foods
- Mandatory declaration of added sugar
- A mandatory per serve % contribution to recommended dietary allowance (RDA)
- Inclusion of serving size and number of servings, standardized within the product category
- Suggestion to include labeling of ingredients Front-of-Pack (FoP)
- Red color-coding for foods high in fat, sugar or salt
- Ingredients shall be listed in descending order of their composition by weight or volume

To fight malnutrition, fortifying milk with certain micronutrients is a good strategy as this staple is consumed by all population groups. Therefore, due to a high burden of vitamin A and D deficiencies across the country, India has made the fortification of milk with these vitamins mandatory.

References

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