UPDATES ON NUTRITION LABELING AND CLAIMS REGULATIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES

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ADOPTION OF CODEX GUIDELINES

*The Philippines has adopted the Codex Guidelines on the Use of Health and Nutrition Claims for Food since 2007.

* These Guidelines shall be used in addition to the existing national laws on labeling and advertisement.
CURRENT NUTRITION LABELING

- Nutrition Information
  - Energy (kcal)
  - Total Fat (g)
  - Fatty Acid (saturated fat and trans fat) - (optional)
  - Cholesterol (optional)
  - Sodium (optional)
  - Carbohydrate (g)
  - Protein (g)
  - Vitamins (expressed in % local RDA)
  - Minerals (expressed in % local RDA)
PROPOSED MANDATORY NUTRITION LABELING:

- Nutrition Information
  - Energy (kcal)
  - Total Fat (g)
  - Saturated Fat (mg)
  - Trans Fat (mg)
  - Cholesterol (mg)
  - Sodium (mg)
  - Total Carbohydrate (g)
  - Dietary Fiber (g)
  - Protein (g)
  - Vitamins (expressed in % RENI)
  - Minerals (expressed in % RENI)
CURRENT NUTRITION LABELING GUIDELINES

- All nutrient quantities shall be declared in relation to average or usual serving size (slices, pieces or specified weight or volume.

- Vitamin and mineral content shall be expressed in percentage of the Philippine Recommended Energy and Nutrient Intake (RENI).

- Nutrients present in amounts less than 2% of the RENI shall be indicated by zero or by the statement “contains less than 2% of the RENI”.

- In the absence of RENI values, nutrients maybe expressed in RDA values of the country of origin of the products or other internationally recognized RDA.
The only nutrition claims allowed are those relating to energy, protein, carbohydrate, fat and its components, fiber, sodium, vitamins and minerals with Nutrient Reference Value (NRV).

The NRV is based on the local reference nutrient intake called Recommended Energy and Nutrient Intake (RENI).
Nutrient content claims should conform with the Table of Conditions for nutrient content

- **Ex. Claim**
  - **Low Sodium**: 120 mg per 100 g
- **Sodium Free**: 5 mg per 100 g

Where a food is by its nature low in or free of the nutrient that is the subject of the claim, the term describing the nutrient should not precede the name of the food but will be expressed as for example. “a low calorie food” or a cholesterol-free food”
CONDITIONS FOR COMPARATIVE CLAIMS:

- Foods being compared are different versions of the same food

- State the amount of difference in the energy value or nutrient content. Indicate the following:
  
a) The amount of difference related to the same quantity (%, fraction or amount). Full details should be given.
  
b) The identity of the food to which the food is being compared.

- Relative difference of at least 25% in the energy value or nutrient content, 10% for micronutrient between the compared foods and a minimum absolute difference in the energy value or nutrient content.

- The criteria for the claims “light” and “reduce” are the same.
Conditions for Claims:
- Must be based on current relevant scientific facts and the level of proof is sufficient to support the claimed effect and the relationship to health.
- Must be acceptable to the competent authority where the food is sold.
- The claimed benefit should arise from the consumption of a reasonable quantity of the food or food constituent.
- If the claimed benefit is attributed to a nutrient with established reference value, the food should be:
  1. source of or high in the nutrient/constituent
  2. low in or reduce in or free of the nutrient/constituent
- Only those essential nutrients for which a Nutrient Reference Value has been established should be the subject of a nutrient function claim.
CONT. CONDITIONS FOR HEALTH CLAIMS

- Should have a clear regulatory framework for qualifying and/or disqualifying conditions for eligibility to use. Claims that increase the risk of disease or adverse health-related conditions are prohibited.

- Must have a validated method to quantify the food constituent that forms the basis of the claim.
Future Trends

- Mandatory Nutrition Labeling is currently being proposed by the Department of Health in the Philippines.

- The Codex Committee on Food Labeling proposes mandatory nutrition labeling.

- The ACCSQ proposes voluntary Nutrition Labeling among ASEAN countries.
UPDATES ON FRONT OF PACK LABELING

Sign Posting or Front of Pack Labeling specific for the Philippines is currently in its pre-implementation stage. The WHO thru DOH commissioned NDAP to come up w/ a specific FOP for food products distributed in the country.
CRITERIA FOR WISE EAT STAMP

The sign posting is called Wise Eat Certification Program. The Wise Eat Stamp shall be conferred to processed food products that meet one or more of the criteria on Table of Nutrients (e.g. criteria for low fat and low sodium) based on the Codex Guidelines on the Use of Health and Nutrition Claims on Food.

Food products must also pass the permissible levels of fat, sugar and sodium per day based on the software developed specifically for this Program as additional criteria.
IMPLEMENTATION PLANS

- The management of the Department of Health will soon decide what agency will implement the Wise Eat Certification Program and will choose among DOH Agencies (National Center for Disease Prevention and Control, National Center for Health Promotion, Food and Drug Administration).

- Local assessment studies will be conducted to determine understanding of the use of Wise Eat Stamp on the part of consumers prior to implementation.
THANK YOU