Nutrition Labeling in China

Nutrition Labeling

The provision of information about the nutritional content of individual food products. It is most commonly applied to pre-packaged food and beverage products, but comes in a variety of format.

• In 2007, “Norm of Food Nutrition Label management” was released and implemented in 2008 voluntarily.
In 2011, General Rule of Food Nutrition Labelling Management (GB28050-2011) was released. As a national food safety standard, it was mandatorily executed since January 1\textsuperscript{st}, 2013.

The standard is applied to pre-packaged foods.

The standard should not be applied to health foods and food for special purpose.

The food label could include three sections:

1) Nutrients information panel
2) Nutrients content declaration
3) Nutritional function declaration

The mandatory requirement for nutrients in the standard is “4+1”,

“1” is referred to energy

“4” is referred to four key nutrients: protein, fat, carbohydrate and sodium.

In addition, if hydrated oil is used as raw materials, the content of trans fatty acids must be labelled.

If other nutrients are labeled as well, the energy and four key nutrients should be highlighted.
• Nutrients content declaration

Could declare “High”, “Low”, ‘Non” for some special nutrients according to the regulation.

• Nutritional function declaration

Could claim physiological function of nutrients according to the regulations. (listed energy and 22 nutrients)

Advantages of Nutrition Label

There has a relatively similar format for food labeling due to guidance of CAC and long time application. Consumers from different countries and regions can get the similar nutritional information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nutritional Facts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Serving Size: 20g (0.7oz)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount Per Serving:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calories: 230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calories from Fat: 13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Fat: 5g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturated Fat: 1g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trans Fat: 0g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cholesterol: 0mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium: 100mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Carbohydrate: 37g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dietary Fiber: 1g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Sugars: 17g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protein: 3g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin A: 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin C: 9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calcium: 2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron: 4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Clearly and objectively indicate the nutrients, their content and the percentage of NRV or DV.
For food manufactures

To get nutrients content of their products by

1) Calculation the based on food composition table and the amount of raw materials.
   Simple, short time, low cost
   Fixed manufacturing process
   Raw materials: secured simple sources

2) According to results of lab analysis.

   More accurate
   Suitable for many kinds of raw materials and sources.

   Disadvantage: high cost

Achievements and problems since implementation of GB 28050

For enterprise

For staff members in enterprises, nearly 90% know about the standard.

For those large enterprises which have more than 500 employees, this rate is more than 94%.

• One survey contains 3,104 samples from market showed that 93.7% of the samples contain the nutrients labeled items and nearly 90% are in the correct format.
People being asked say they are concerned about the nutrition label.

People say they can understand the meaning of the nutrient label.

A survey conducted in 2012 which included more 1000 subjects

- The major reasons
  ~80% of those surveyed do not know the meaning of NRV%.
  ~70% cannot tell the difference between the content of per 100g(or ml) and per serving.
  Almost all consumers think, “0” means that the content is “none”.

- Front-of-pack labeling, FOP
  Provide nutrition information or a summarized overall nutritional quality of a packaged food in a relatively simple, directly perceived way.

FOP was first introduced in late 1980s by non-profit organizations and government agencies, now developed by food industry, retailers, non-industry experts, non-profit organizations, and government agencies.

It can be characterized as two types.

A) informative FOP which concentrates on the content of energy and several key nutrients such as fat, sugar, sodium. Stand-out showing the relative content of key nutrients using GDA% or NRV%.
B) Interpretive FOP which is based on the nutrient profiling (NP) evaluation.

**Nutrient profiling:**
The science of classifying or ranking foods according to their nutritional composition for reasons related to preventing disease and promoting health

*Source: WHO, Guiding Principles and Framework Manual for the development or adaptation of nutrient profile models. in press.*

**For Nutrient Profiling, it is still in the stage of research and discussion in China.**

It has been used for new products development and evaluation in several large foods manufactures.

**Questions for FOP**

1) There are many NP models and logos with different criteria. This caused frustration in consumers and even many nutritionists.
2) For Informative FOP: as it is voluntarily now, there is no unified requirement for content and format. In most cases, it is decided by enterprises. So consumers often feel puzzled when they face different FOP.

3) In order to meet the limits or increase the score, some nutrients are intensified. It seems that such practice was encouraged by NP systems.

4) For some consumers, they concerned more about several specific nutrients. So they do not know what determines the difference between high score and low score products if only an overall evaluation being on the front of packed food. Even be taken as the advertisement. Reject!

5) The health efficacy of nutrients is quite different for people with different dietary model. The most important for dietary balance is the appropriate intake of varieties of foods. So it seems imprudent to judge the health value of food by a simple score or a logo without considering its intake amount.
Suggestions

1. Making more efforts to promote the application of General Rule of Food Nutrition Labeling Management (GB28050-2011).

Basic nutrition concept education, practical use of nutrition labeling to have balanced diet.

2. Encourage enterprises to label informative FOP. Monitoring the effects.

3. Do more research work on NP.

Thank you for attention!