

## Using EuroFIR food composition data to address current public health issues: a focus on the European Nutrition and Health Claims Regulation

Anna Denny, Bridget Benelam & Prof Judith Buttriss

British Nutrition Foundation

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### Overview

- Background to Regulation 24/2006/EC on Nutrition & Health Claims
- Current Public Health Nutrition Issues
- Overview of Nutrition & Health Claims Regulation
- Nutrient profiling and the role of food composition data



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## Background to the Regulation

- Television
- Radio
- Magazines
- Internet
- Newspapers
- Celebrity chefs
- Hollywood trends
- Diet books
- Health Advice
- Travel

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## Nutrition and health claims – confusion?

**Sensible eating for a healthy lifestyle!**  
Nowadays, we are all trying to make healthier food choices. While you'll know that all Kellogg's cereals are nutritious - and tasty of course - they all have something different to offer and it's sometimes difficult to decide which cereals have the benefits you want.

That's why Kellogg's have designed a brand new set of symbols to show you, in an instant, which cereals are just right for you. You'll find these symbols on the front of each packet, with an explanation of the benefits on the side, allowing you to make the right Kellogg's choice for your health.


- Heart Health**  
Diets low in saturated fat can reduce blood cholesterol, which may help to keep your heart healthy. Kellogg's Crunchy Nut Corn Flakes is low in saturated fat.
- Concentration**  
Your brain needs energy to help you concentrate. Cereals high in carbohydrates containing B vitamins and iron can help keep concentration at its best.
- Physical Energy**  
Your body needs energy to help you perform at your best. Kellogg's Crunchy Nut Corn Flakes is high in carbohydrates and a good source of B vitamins and iron - a great combination for your body's energy needs.

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## Current Public Health Nutrition Issues




**DIABETES  
THREAT TO  
COUCH  
POTATO  
CHILDREN**

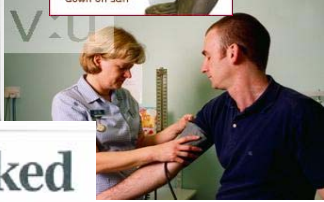
**Salt - Watch it**



Everything you need to know to cut down on salt



**Red meat linked to increased risk of bowel cancer**



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## Reasoning for the Regulation

- Previously no regulation on nutrition or health claims at an EU level
- Various national schemes developed e.g. UK's JHCI
- Regulation 1924/2006/EC developed in order to:
  - Protect consumers from misleading claims
  - Encourage innovation in the food industry
  - Harmonise rules on claims in the EU allowing free trade
- Applied from July 2007
- Covers any message or representation including pictures and symbols that states, suggests or implies that a food has particular characteristics.

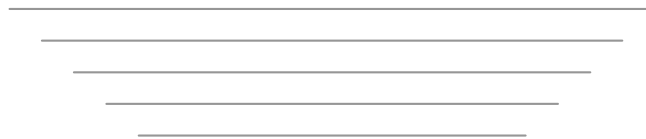
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## Overview of Regulation - Nutrition Claims

- Any claim that states, suggests or implies that a food has particular beneficial nutritional properties due to:
  - The energy it
    - provides
    - provides at a reduced or increased rate – **only 200kcal per bar**
    - does not provide, *and/or*
  - The nutrients or other substances it
    - contains – **source of calcium**
    - contains in reduced or increased proportions
    - does not contain – **no added sugar**
- Permitted nutrition claims and their conditions of use are stated in an Annex to the regulation.
- Examples: 'source of fibre', 'low in fat', 'source of vitamin C'

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## Overview of Regulation - Health claims

- Any claim that states, suggests or implies that a relationship exists between a food category, a food or one of its constituents, and health.
- **Article 13 health claims**
  - based on 'generally accepted scientific evidence' AND is 'well understood by the average consumer'
  - do not refer to child health or reduction of disease risk.
  - may refer to:
    - the role of a nutrient or other substance in growth, development and the functions of the body
    - behavioural and psychological functions
    - slimming or weight control, reduced sense of hunger or increased sensation of satiety, or the reduction in available energy from the diet.
- **Article 13.5 health claims** – as Article 13 but where evidence is new
- **Article 14 health claims** - refer to children's development or reduction of disease risk

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## But still a lot of confusion!

Less than.....

Only....

Wholemeal goodness..

Implies a benefit

Any statement that implies that the product is low in any nutrient or energy

These turn a statement of fact into a nutrition claim or a health claim

Natural, naturally sourced, not artificial

Depiction of ingredients – must be representative of the fruit content, not just the fruit flavouring

All expressions are likely to be interpreted as “natural” by Trading Stds

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## The role of food composition data

Access to accurate up-to-date food composition data is an essential prerequisite of making, verifying and standardising nutrition and health claims

- Food composition data play an important role in **helping consumers to make healthy choices when shopping**
- EC tasked with establishing **nutrient profiles** that foods or certain groups of foods must comply with in order to bear nutrition and health claims
- EuroFIR's work in harmonising the calculation and presentation of food composition data has fed into this process.

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## Nutrient profiles

- Designed to prevent claims on foods that have an overall 'less healthy' profile
- Thresholds for saturates, sodium and sugar (March 2009)
- Exceed 1 threshold?
  - No health claims allowed
  - Nutrition claim with derogation (e.g. "high sugar content")
- Exceed >1 threshold?
  - No health OR nutrition claim allowed

## Recipe for Nutrient Profiling

4 Simple Steps!

1. Design profiling tool, agree thresholds for saturates, sodium and sugar (EC)
2. Take one complete, international European food composition database (EFSA)
3. Develop a representative food basket of European foods (EFSA)
4. Apply nutrient profiling thresholds and test foods for their eligibility to bear claims

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## Not such an easy process of course!

- Thresholds for saturates, sodium and sugar (March 2009 version)
  - Still considerable debate about the detail
  - Expected January 2009 .....
- Where to find a complete, international European food composition database?
  - EuroFIR work in food categorisation and harmonisation of calculation and presentation of food composition data facilitated EFSA process
- Which foods to test the profiling tool on?

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## Which foods currently pass the 'draft' nutrient profiles? (March 2009)

Product	Sodium (mg/100g)	Saturated fat (g/100g)	Sugar (g/100g)	Health claim?
Plain biscuit	500	10	16.6	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Standard Crisps	600	2.6	0.5	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Chocolate bar	85	18.3	56.9	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Full fat cheese	700	21.7	0.1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Reduced fat cheese	700	14.9	0.1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Full fat flavoured yoghurt	60	4.5	16.5	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Reduced fat flavoured yoghurt	40	1.2	12.4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Butter	606	52.1	tr	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Spread	600	12.1	tr	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Reduced fat spread	500	9.3	tr	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Beef burger	400	5	4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
White bread	461	0.3	3.4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Wholemeal bread	487	0.5	2.8	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Plain cereal	700	0.2	8.2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Sweetened cereal	450	0.1	38	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
muesli	380	6.4	26.2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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## Conclusions

- From a public health perspective, it is hoped that the incentive of being able to display a nutrition or health claim on a product will drive reformulation of foods in Europe
  - Either to increase the content of beneficial constituents (e.g. fibre)
  - Or to comply with a specified nutrient profile, to bring about changes in the composition of foods (e.g. reductions in the sodium content of foods).
- The links that EuroFIR is building with the food industry to share food composition data with compilers will help to ensure that available data keep up with these changes in food composition.
- Going forwards, EuroFIR AISBL will offer a single and unique food information resource to industry and regulators for data access and the verification of nutrition and health claims throughout Europe and beyond.

Thank you for your attention

[www.eurofir.net](http://www.eurofir.net)

[www.nutrition.org.uk](http://www.nutrition.org.uk)