

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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Nutrition Labeling – Additional Consultation Documents

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Policy and Program Announcements

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Report Highlights:

Health Canada makes available five consultation documents, covering various regulatory proposals on nutrition labeling. Some of the proposed changes include: mandatory declaration of vitamin D and potassium, while vitamins A and C become voluntary; various changes to prescribed reference amounts, such as establishing levels for wine, beer and wine coolers, or creating a new category: “foods for children under two years of age”.

Following up on our earlier report [CA14068](#) (dated July 24, 2014), FAS/Ottawa has learned additional information regarding the various regulatory proposals on nutritional labeling that Health Canada has put forward for consultation.

As a reminder, interested stakeholders should submit their comments to Health Canada **by September 11, 2014**. When comments are submitted electronically, the subject box of the email should clearly indicate which one of the consultation documents is being referred to.

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Reference Amounts

Health Canada proposes a number of changes to the reference amounts set out in Schedule M of the Food and Drug Regulations (FDR). Reference amounts represent the amounts of food typically eaten at one sitting, and are established for 153 categories of food. Presently, reference amounts are primarily used as the criterion to determine whether the package size of a food requires the nutrition information to be shown for the whole package (single serving package), and as a criterion for nutrient content claims and health claims.

According to Health Canada, proposed changes to the reference amounts were developed based on market analysis (including the review of labels found in grocery stores and by searching Mintel Global New Products Database), consumption data from the 2004 Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS), comments received since the introduction of the current nutrition labeling regulations in 2002, and consideration of the [United States Food and Drug Administration Proposed Changes to the Nutrition Facts Label](#).

Here are few examples of the proposed changes:

- adding smoothies in item 50 of Schedule M, within the Dairy Products and Substitutes category
- changing the reference amount of ice cream from 125 mL to 175 mL based on the most current CCHS consumption data
- creating a new item entry under the Bakery Products category, to include bagels, pita, naan and flat bread, with a reference amount of 85 g
- creating a new item entry under the Beverages category to include the following alcoholic beverages: wine (with a reference amount of 175 mL), beer (341 mL) and wine coolers (341 mL); while alcoholic beverages remain exempt from mandatory nutritional labeling, these reference amounts are to be used by manufacturers who make nutrient content claims or who voluntarily provide nutrition information on their products
- adding iced tea, flavored and sweetened, iced coffee and specialty coffee, and energy drinks to various item numbers under the Beverages category of Schedule M
- creating a new food category called Foods for Children under Two Years of Age to include combination dishes, cereals, juices and various snacks intended for young children

Detailed information on all the proposed changes can be found in the following consultation document:

[Health Canada's Technical Consultation on Revising Reference Amounts in Schedule M of the Food and Drug Regulations. Updating reference amounts to support proposed new serving size guidelines.](#)

Core Nutrients

With few exceptions, core nutrients refer to the nutrients whose declaration is mandatory for most Nutrition Facts Tables (NFT). Currently, it is mandatory to declare calories and 13 nutrients: fat, saturated fat, *trans* fat, cholesterol, sodium, carbohydrate, fiber, sugars, protein, vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium and iron. In addition, all micronutrients that have been added to foods during processing or are the subject of a nutrient content claim must be declared.

The changes to the core nutrients proposed by Health Canada focus mostly on micronutrients that are of public health concern related to inadequate intake. Therefore, sodium, which is a micronutrient of public health concern related to excessive intake will continue to be declared in the NFT and will not be discussed.

Intake data from a recent Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) were used to identify inadequate micronutrient intakes, supplemented, when available, by other evidence of signs of deficiency. Based on this examination, with respect to micronutrients subject to mandatory declaration, Health Canada proposes to:

- add vitamin D and potassium
- remove vitamins A and C (however, voluntary declaration remains possible); and
- retain calcium and iron.

With respect to sugar, a core nutrient of growing concern and interest, Health Canada submits for discussion three approaches:

- adding the declaration of "added sugars" to the NFT;
- using a Daily Value (DV) of 100 grams as the basis for the mandatory declaration of the percent (%) DV for total sugars in the NFT; and
- grouping all sugars-based ingredients under one ingredient termed "sugars" in the list of ingredients.

Detailed information on all the proposed changes can be found in the following consultation document:

[Health Canada's Technical Consultation on Proposed Changes to the Core Nutrients Declared in the Canadian Nutrition Facts Table](#)

Other Consultation Areas

As indicated in our previous report, Health Canada is proposing several other regulatory changes to nutrition labeling. These include changes to the format requirements for the display of nutrition information on food labels, changes to the daily values used in nutrition labeling and changes to the serving sizes.

Detailed information on all these proposed changes can be found in these three consultation documents:

[Health Canada's Technical Consultation on Proposed Changes to the Format Requirements for the Display of Nutrition and Other Information on Food Labels](#)

[Health Canada's Technical Consultation on Proposed Changes to the Daily Values \(DVs\) for Use in Nutrition labelling](#)

[Health Canada's Technical Consultation on Proposed New Serving Size Guidance: Standardizing Serving Sizes to Facilitate Consumer Understanding and Use of the Nutrition Facts Table \(NFT\)](#)