

PRESS INFORMATION



Nutrient Profiles Debate: EU dairy industry wants adequate criteria for setting nutrient profiles

European Dairy Association (EDA) supports EFSA's opinion to introduce separate categories for natural products, asks for adequate criteria for setting nutrient profiles and opposes firmly to the inclusion of imitation products in these categories.

Brussels, 9 March 2009

Within the context of the Commission's Regulation on Nutrient Profiles, the EDA calls for the application of adequate criteria. With the current proposals for the category 'dairy-based products', a very limited number of dairy products will be able to carry nutritional or health claims. In order to avoid this and block further innovation in dairy product development, the EDA proposes a series of adaptations.

Nutrient Profiles: Dairy Products as a category

Following the recommendation of EFSA to create separate categories for food groups with an important dietary role in the traditional diet of many European citizens, a separate category for dairy-based products has been created in the framework of the Commission's Regulation setting nutrient profiles.

The EDA has been very supportive of this recommendation: *'In the nutrient profiling debate, we have always been in favour of separate categories for natural food products. The EU dairy industry indeed believes that nutrient profiles should not exclude whole food categories from carrying a nutritional or health claim. In our view, having a separate category for dairy products is legitimate because of their high nutrient density and their specific, traditional position in the diet of many European citizens,'* says Dr. Joop Kleibeuker, the EDA's Secretary-General.



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Imitation products should not be part of category 'dairy-based products'

For the EDA only milk and milk products (e.g. yoghurts, butters, creams, dairy desserts, and cheeses) can be part of this specific category. All these products fulfil the requirements of Annex XII of Regulation (EC) No 1234/2007.

The EDA therefore strongly opposes the inclusion of imitation products in the category 'dairy-based products'. Dr. Kleibeuker: *'Our opposition is completely in line with EFSA's definitions of specific categories: milk and milk products play an important role in the dietary pattern of many Europeans, providing them a broad range of essential nutrients, such as calcium and protein. In our view, imitation products do not match these criteria; we see therefore no reason not to stick to the existing legal definition of milk and milk products, as stipulated in Annex XII of Regulation (EC) No 1234/2007.'*

The EDA also believes that the inclusion of imitation products will create an unfair competition between dairy and imitation products and will block further innovation in dairy product development.

Claims for the 'more healthy'* and innovative products

Dr. Kleibeuker further insists that the nutrient profile scheme should be such that all more healthy and innovative products in each category are allowed to carry the claim.

'For us, the level of thresholds for the critical nutrients in the scheme is essential for allowing the more healthy and innovative products in each category to carry the claim. We recommend that for the cheese category, the limit for saturated fat should be 20g per 100g of product, and the limit for sodium should be 1000mg per 100g of product. If the Commission adopts the current proposals, hardly any cheeses will be able to make nutritional or health claims, which will block further innovation in the cheese category.'

For the same reasons, the EDA recommends the following adaptations in the milk fats category: maintaining the original threshold for saturated fat to 30g per 100g of product, and level up the limit for sodium to 1000mg per 100g of product.

The EDA has made these points and presented these positions at different occasions to various representatives of the EU Commission. It strongly asks the Commission to take all these points into consideration when finalizing its proposal on the Nutrient Profiles Regulation which will be sent in the coming days to the EU Parliament and the EU Council for approval.

* 'More healthy' as opposed to 'healthiest' – the EDA believes that the current proposals will allow only the healthiest products in each category to carry a health or nutritional claim; in EDA's opinion excluding all the other products of carrying a claim could never have been the Commission's intention



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ABOUT THE EUROPEAN DAIRY ASSOCIATION

The European Dairy Association represents the interests of dairy processors in the European Union. The membership of the EDA consists of the national trade associations for dairy processors in each EU Member State.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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