

In this issue we focus on:

NEW LABELS = NEW OPPORTUNITIES!

In June 2001, Health Canada proposed new regulations to improve nutrition information on food labels. These proposals will become regulations very soon – and they may impact your business! The notion of nutrition labeling is not new to Canadian food processors or Canadian consumers. However the information is often difficult to find, is inconsistent in its presentation and is sometimes hard to read. The new “Nutrition Facts” panel proposed by Health Canada will deliver a consistent look, promote legibility and readability and make nutrition information easier to find, understand and use. The new regulations will incorporate changes in nutrition labeling, nutrient content claims, and health claims. For the first time, a number of messages about how diet affects health will be permitted on food labels.

Sample of bilingual standard format:

A few examples of key changes:

Nutrition Labeling

- A new title: *Nutrition Facts*.
- More consistency regarding serving size.
- Expanded list of nutrients.
- A standardized format that is bold, clear and easy to read.
- Consistent look from product to product.
- Nutrient information is more clearly identified.
- The Daily Value gives better context to the actual amount. It indicates if there is a lot or a little of the nutrient in a serving of food.

Nutrition Facts		Valeur nutritive	
Per 1 cup (264g) pour 1 tasse (264g)			
Amount Quantité		% Daily Value % valeur quotidienne	
Calories / Calories 260			
Fat / Lipides 13g		20%	
Saturated / saturés 3g + Trans / trans 2g		25%	
Cholesterol / Cholestérol 30mg			
Sodium / Sodium 660mg		28%	
Carbohydrate / Glucides 31g		10%	
Fibre / Fibres 0g		0%	
Sugars / Sucres 5g			
Protein / Protéines 5g			
Vitamin A / Vitamine A		4%	
Vitamin C / Vitamine C		2%	
Calcium / Calcium		15%	
Iron / Fer		4%	

Nutrient Content Claims

- Clearer requirements for claims related to amounts.
- Clearer requirements for comparative claims.
- New claims, e.g., for n-3 and n-6 polyunsaturated fats, *trans* fatty acid content.

Health Claims

- Specified wording for claims.
- Criteria for qualifying to make the claim.
- Goal is to provide more in-depth information to help consumers assess whether the product fits with their health goals.

Some examples of optional health claims that may be used, if criteria are met:

<i>Characteristics of the diet</i>	→ <i>Reduced risk of:</i>
Low in sodium and high in potassium	→ high blood pressure
Adequate in calcium and vitamin D	→ osteoporosis
Low in saturated fat and <i>trans</i> fat	→ heart disease
Rich in fruits and vegetables	→ some types of cancer

For lots more details, visit Health Canada’s website to see a comprehensive presentation about the proposed changes: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/nutrition/labels/>

Is it time you took a critical look at some of your products “through the lens” of these new regulations?

What stories will your products’ Nutrition Facts panels tell?

Can they be improved for a win:win for your customers’ health and for your bottom line?

To discuss innovative product improvements, contact Dr. Margaret Treloar. tpd@treloar.on.ca