

This information was presented to IDFA's Joint Boards of Directors at their Spring 2011 meeting by Cary Frye, vice president, regulatory and scientific affairs. It is provided here for informational purposes.

Nutrition Issues

Issue

With nutrition as an important selling point for dairy products, mandatory nutrition regulations or voluntary nutrition labeling programs can potentially have a significant impact on dairy foods. It is important that the healthy reputation of dairy be preserved in federal programs and on product labels.

Impact on Dairy

2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans

The Dietary Guidelines document released in January will be used as the basis for the federal government's nutrition programs and food recommendations. The school meal programs, Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program, and Child and Adult Care Food Program are all required to align with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. This means that there will be an emphasis in these programs on low-fat and fat-free dairy. There could also be an increased effort to reduce added sugars and milkfat in dairy products.

Proposed Rule on School Meals

Fluid milk, yogurt and cheese have long been important core foods in the school nutrition programs, both in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP). This role must be preserved and the types of dairy foods that children enjoy eating must continue to be included in the school meal programs.

Front-of-Pack Labeling

Since most consumers identify retail as an important place to get nutrition information, many believe this type of information is particularly important when presented on the front panel of the label. For many dairy products, it is important to be able to present the full nutrient profile of a product, not only including nutrients to limit but also nutrients to encourage. Undue emphasis on nutrients to limit could overlook the benefits of consuming dairy products, making them less competitive against other foods and beverages.

Background

2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans

In January 2011, USDA and the Department of Health and Human Services released the newly updated 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The new Dietary Guidelines identify low-fat and fat-free milk and milk products as a food group to encourage. The intake recommendations stayed the same for individuals 9 years of age and older, at 3 servings per day, and for children ages 2 and 3 years old, at 2 servings per day. An additional half serving was recommended for children 4 to 8 years old, bringing the recommendation for that group to 2.5 servings per day. Dairy products are the primary source of three of the four nutrients of concern identified by the

Guidelines: calcium, vitamin D and potassium. The Guidelines overall focused on weight control and calorie balance, particularly through limiting calories from added sugars and solid fats, including milkfat. Detailed information from IDFA's News Update and the USDA Executive Summary of the 2010 Dietary Guidelines policy report are attached.

Proposed Rule on School Meals

In 2009 an expert committee of the Institute of Medicine (IOM) released a report that recommended changes to the foods and beverages served in the school meal programs. On January 13, 2010, USDA released a proposed rule updating the nutrition standards, as required by the 2004 Child Nutrition Reauthorization. This proposed rule closely followed the recommendations of the IOM report.

The proposed changes would go into effect for the 2012-2013 school year. Fluid milk would still be required to be offered with every school breakfast and lunch, but would be limited to low-fat and fat-free white milk and fat-free flavored milk. Yogurt and cheese would still be allowed as meat alternates for breakfast and lunch. In order to control childhood obesity and the consumption of nutrients to limit, the proposed rule would also set new calorie ranges and would significantly lower the sodium limit for meals. The saturated fat limit would remain the same at 10% of total calories.

Front-of-Pack Labeling

Front-of-Pack labeling efforts continue on multiple fronts, both public and private. A committee of the Institute of Medicine (IOM), acting on behalf of FDA, is partway through a multiple year study of existing and recommended front-of-pack nutrition symbols. The committee's Phase I report summarized the current front-of-pack symbol programs currently in use in the United States and made recommendations about which criteria should be included in a front-of-pack icon. The IOM's initial report stated that calories, saturated fat, trans fats, and sodium present the most serious diet-related risks to people's health. The Committee concluded that given the limited space on package fronts and the information already available in the Nutrition Facts panel on the backs of all products, it would not be crucial for these rating systems and symbols to focus on other components, such as cholesterol, fiber, added sugars, or vitamins. A press release of the IOM's Phase I report is attached. The Phase II report is expected to be released by the end of 2011 and will make specific recommendations about a front-of-pack symbol that could be recommended for use by FDA.

The Grocery Manufacturers Association (GMA) and the Food Marketing Institute (FMI) recently announced an industry-driven, voluntary front-of-pack labeling system, called "Nutrition Keys." The symbol would declare calories, saturated fat, total sugars and sodium per serving of the food or beverage. In addition to these nutrients to limit, companies could also choose to declare up to two "nutrients to encourage" from the following list: protein, potassium, calcium, vitamin A, vitamin D, vitamin C, iron, and fiber. Their system also allows beverages and small packages the option of showing a sole icon indicating calories only. This system is being used extensively by the soft drink industry. More information about this voluntary system can be found in the

attached press release and graphics of the icons that can be used on packages are provided at the end of this report.

Actions

IDFA has been actively monitoring these and other nutrition issues. IDFA submitted written and oral comments to USDA and the Department of Health and Human Services following the release of the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee report. IDFA staff also met with USDA staff to discuss the translation of the report into the final Dietary Guidelines. We will continue to follow the use of the Dietary Guidelines as the basis for other programs and will provide information to our members once consumer information and graphics are released later this spring. It is believed that the My Pyramid graphic will be revised to more easily convey to consumers healthy eating habits, such as a plate of various foods groups to encourage and a glass of milk.

IDFA, along with the members of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Nutrition, is currently developing comments on the proposed rule regarding school meals, which are due on April 13, 2011. A draft of these comments is attached.

IDFA provided oral and written comments to the IOM committee exploring front-of-pack symbols. We have also received briefings from GMA and FMI staff on the development of their labeling initiative.

For further information, you may contact Cary Frye (cfrye@idfa.org, (202) 220-3543), or Michelle Matto (amfoodnutrition@gmail.com, (202) 431-6864.)