

## Food and Beverage Industry Launches Nutrition Keys Front-of-Pack Nutrition Labeling Initiative to Inform Consumers and Combat Obesity



The four basic icons, for calories, saturated fat, sodium and sugars.

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PHOENIX, AZ – America’s leading food and beverage manufacturers and retailers today announced the launch of *Nutrition Keys*, a new voluntary front of pack nutrition labeling system that will help busy consumers make informed choices when they shop. The program represents the most significant modernization of food labels since the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act of 1990.

The Nutrition Keys program was developed in response to a request from First Lady Michelle Obama in March of last year.

“We share First Lady Michelle Obama’s goal of solving childhood obesity within a generation,” said Pamela G. Bailey, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Grocery Manufacturers Association. “Today’s announcement would not have been possible without her leadership. Food and beverage companies have a strong track record of providing consumers with the products, tools and information they need to achieve and maintain a healthy lifestyle, and this program represents a significant milestone in our ongoing effort to help consumers construct a healthy diet.”

“Today’s sophisticated consumer wants more information about their food than ever before,” said Leslie Sarasin, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Food Marketing Institute. “Nutrition Keys, combined with the many innovative nutrition education tools and programs in retail stores, is helping us meet that challenge and exceed consumer expectations.”

The Nutrition Keys program will change the look of the vast majority of the country’s most popular food and beverage products by placing important nutrition information (calories, saturated fat, sodium and total sugars content) on the front of packages. To appeal to busy consumers, the information will be presented in a fact-based, simple and easy-to-use format. The icon will inform consumers about how the key nutrients in each product fit into a balanced and healthy diet as part of the federal government’s daily dietary advice.

In addition, the Nutrition Keys icon on some products will display information about “nutrients to encourage” that are important for a healthy diet, but are under-consumed by the general

population. Nutrients to encourage that may appear on some products as part of the Nutrition Keys icon are: potassium, fiber, vitamin A, vitamin C, vitamin D, calcium, iron and also protein.

The Board of Directors of GMA and FMI adopted a joint resolution in support of the Nutrition Keys initiative at their January 23 joint board meeting. Those companies represent the vast majority of food and beverage products sold in local stores.

“Obesity is a serious and far-reaching problem,” said Ric Jurgens, Chairman and Chief Executive of Hy-Vee, Inc. “As industry leaders, parents and grandparents, we have an obligation – along with government, schools and other stakeholders – to attack our nation’s rising obesity rates. We are proud participants in the Nutrition Keys program.”

“Helping consumers make informed decisions is not just good business sense, it is the right thing to do,” said Gary Rodkin, Chief Executive Officer of ConAgra Foods, and Chairman of the GMA Board of Directors. “Our industry has stepped up to the plate in a big way to help improve public health and combat obesity and this program is a very important step in the right direction.”

Companies will begin to place the icon on their products in 2011 according to seasonality and production schedules. Consumers will begin to see the Nutrition Keys icon on their favorite products in the next few months, and the number of products that carry the icon will continue to grow throughout the year.

To build consumer awareness and promote use of the icon, America’s food and beverage manufacturers and retailers have agreed to support the change to their product labels with an unprecedented consumer education campaign. Participating manufacturers and retailers will initially invest at least \$50 million in an advertising, public relations and in-store marketing campaign aimed at those who serve as the primary shopper for their family.

More information can be found at this web site link: <http://www.gmaonline.org/issues-policy/health-nutrition/providing-innovative-and-healthy-choices/nutrition-keys-front-of-pack-labeling-initiative/>

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*Based in Washington, D.C., the Grocery Manufacturers Association is the voice of more than 300 leading food, beverage and consumer product companies that sustain and enhance the quality of life for hundreds of millions of people in the United States and around the globe. Founded in 1908, GMA is an active, vocal advocate for its member companies and a trusted source of information about the industry and the products consumers rely on and enjoy every day. The association and its member companies are committed to meeting the needs of consumers through product innovation, responsible business practices and effective public policy solutions developed through a genuine partnership with policymakers and other stakeholders. In keeping with its founding principles, GMA helps its members produce safe products through a strong and ongoing commitment to scientific research, testing and evaluation and to providing consumers with the products, tools and information they need to achieve a healthy diet and an active lifestyle. The food, beverage and consumer packaged goods industry in the United States generates sales of \$2.1 trillion annually, employs 14 million workers and contributes \$1 trillion in added value to the economy every year.*

*Food Marketing Institute (FMI) conducts programs in public affairs, food safety, research, education and industry relations on behalf of its 1,500 member companies - food retailers and wholesalers - in the United States and around the world. FMI's U.S. members operate approximately 26,000 retail food stores and 14,000 pharmacies. Their combined annual sales volume of \$680 billion represents three-quarters of all retail food store sales in the United States. FMI's retail membership is composed of large multi-store chains, regional firms and independent supermarkets. Its international membership includes 200 companies from more than 50 countries. FMI's associate members include the supplier partners of its retail and wholesale members.*