

Food Labelling Review

Recommendation 1: That the Food Standards Australia New Zealand Act 1991 be amended to include a **definition of public health to the effect that: ‘Public Health is the organised response by society to protect and promote health, and to prevent illness, injury and disability’.**

Recommendation 2: That food labelling policy be guided by an issues hierarchy in descending order of food safety, preventative health, new technologies and consumer values issues. Regulatory action in relation to food safety, preventative health and new technologies should primarily be initiated by government and referenced in the Food Standards Code. Regulatory action in relation to consumer values issues should generally be initiated by industry and referenced to consumer protection legislation, with the possibility of some specific methods or processes of production being referenced in the Food Standards Code.

The modes of intervention should be mandatory for food safety; a mixture of mandatory and co-regulation for preventative health, the choice dependent on government health priorities and the effectiveness or otherwise of coregulatory measures; and mandatory with time limits for new technologies.

The modes of intervention for consumer values issues should be selfregulatory but subject to more prescriptive forms of intervention in cases of market failure or the ineffectiveness of self-regulatory schemes.

Recommendation 4: That consumer protection concerns be accorded a high priority by the relevant government agencies and complaints be properly processed and resolved.

Recommendation 11: That industry develop in consultation with government, medical authorities and relevant consumer organisations a voluntary code of practice and education initiatives to enable consumers to quickly identify label information relating to additives, colourings and flavourings that are of agreed medical priority for sensitive consumers.

Recommendation 15: That voluntary declaration of potassium content in the Nutrition Information Panel be actively considered by industry. If nutritional policy guidance recommends the reduction in consumption of potassium for at-risk population groups in the future, disclosure of potassium in the Nutrition Information Panel should become mandatory.

Recommendation 29: That only foods or ingredients that have altered characteristics or contain detectable novel DNA or protein be required to declare the presence of genetically modified material on the label.

Recommendation 30: That any detection of an adventitious genetically modified event be followed by a period of monitoring and testing of that food or ingredient.

Recommendation 31: That foods or ingredients with flavours containing detectable novel DNA or protein not be exempt from the requirements to declare the presence of genetically modified material on the label.

Recommendation 34: That the requirement for mandatory labelling of irradiated food be reviewed.

Recommendation 35: That Food Standards Australia New Zealand and other relevant bodies develop as a matter of urgency a standard for

regulating the presence of nanotechnology in the food production chain, consistent with the recommendations in this Report relating to new technologies.

Recommendation 38: That the value of industry-initiated self-regulatory intervention be recognised and that industry in collaboration with special interest groups further develop and apply a responsive and more structured self-regulatory approach to consumer values issues that incorporates:

- a. the role that voluntary codes of practice can play in relation to the evolution of standard definitions for values-based claims;
- b. the role that certification schemes can play in effectively communicating values-based messages; and
- c. the development of agreed standards through existing frameworks such as International Organization for Standardization, Standards Australia or Standards New Zealand.

Recommendation 42: That for foods bearing some form of Australian claim, a consumer-friendly, food-specific country-of-origin labelling framework, based primarily on the ingoing weight of the ingredients and components (excluding water), be developed.

Recommendation 51: That a multiple traffic lights front-of-pack labelling system be introduced. Such a system to be voluntary in the first instance, except where general or high level health claims are made or equivalent endorsements/trade names/marks appear on the label, in which case it should be mandatory.

Recommendation 52: That government advice and support be provided to producers adopting the multiple traffic lights system and that its introduction be accompanied by comprehensive consumer education to explain and support the system.