

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2013-14, 20 November 2013

Question: E13-184

OUTCOME: 1 – Population Health

Topic: Front-of-Package Labelling

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: McKenzie

Question:

What star rating is suggested as an appropriate outcome for core foods under the Australian Dietary Guidelines?

Answer:

The nutrient profiling system used in the Health Star Rating Calculator (HSRC) is consistent with the 2013 Australian Dietary Guidelines in that foods low in saturated fat, total sugars, sodium and/or energy are assigned higher star ratings than similar foods with an appreciably higher content of these nutrients; foods with a high fibre content are assigned a higher star rating than similar foods with an appreciably lower fibre content.

Star ratings are generated by taking into account the four aspects of a food associated with increasing the risk factors for chronic diseases; energy, saturated fat, sodium and total sugars content of a food along with certain ‘positive’ aspects of a food such as fruit and vegetable content, and in some instances, dietary fibre and protein content.

There are some foods within the five food groups (previously referred to as core foods) defined in the 2013 Australian Dietary Guidelines that are not appropriate for inclusion in the HSRC system, such as fresh unpackaged fruit and vegetables.