

Submission - Proposal P293 - Nutrition, Health & Related Claims

Revised Draft Standard 1.2.7

Fat-free and % fat-free claims

Submitter:

Niki Bezzant
Editor, Healthy Food Guide magazine
Healthy Life Media Limited
PO Box 47177, Ponsonby, Auckland, New Zealand
editor@healthyfood.co.nz

Submission:

On behalf of *Healthy Food Guide* magazine and our readers, I would like to make a submission on the above Revised Draft Standard 1.2.7. regarding Fat-free and % fat-free claims.

We are in favour of Option 3(a) as described in Consultation Paper 17 Feb 2012, part II section 8.3.1. This option "would permit fat-free and %-fat-free claims only on foods that meet the nutrient profiling scoring criterion (NPSC)."

We consider this to be the most fair and ultimately least misleading and confusing of the options available for fat-free or % fat free claims.

Healthy Food Guide is New Zealand's number 1 selling food magazine. The magazine has an audited circulation of 53,000 and readership of 382,000. The readership is broadly reflective of the New Zealand population, with approximately 76% being the main shopper for their household.

In a February 2012 survey, 62% of readers say they have started reading nutrition labels as a result of reading *Healthy Food Guide* magazine. In the same survey, 45% of respondents said they are eating and cooking with less fat as a result of reading *Healthy Food Guide*, and 34% of respondents said they are looking for reduced-fat options when shopping. This suggests a high level of interest in information about fat on product packaging.

Our readers frequently express frustration and confusion over labels on food products when they are shopping. Based on reader feedback, I can state that readers typically feel that 'marketing' style claims on food packaging (such as "x% fat free") are likely to be misleading. In our own research for product guides published in the magazine, we frequently encounter products which include 'fat-free' claims on their packaging, but which we would not recommend to readers as they also contain excessive amounts of sodium or sugar.

If fat-free claims were also subject to the nutrient profiling scoring criterion, consumers would know the product they were buying at least had some other

acceptable nutrition qualities, and is more likely to be a healthier choice. Products which didn't meet the NPSC would not be able to carry 'fat free' claims, and this would also give consumers some guidance; they would be less likely to mistakenly choose a product on the basis of a 'fat free' claim believing the product to be a healthier choice when in fact it is not.

ENDS