

Australian Branded Food Database

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is FSANZ developing a Branded Food Database?

FSANZ was asked by the then Department of Health to expand its existing food composition data holdings and develop an Australian Branded Food Database (BFD) to support FSANZ standards development work and the development and monitoring of Australian Government public health policy and nutrition initiatives.

Is this a GS1 project or a FSANZ project?

The Branded Food Database is a FSANZ project. FSANZ has contracted GS1 Australia to provide services to support its development.

How will the Branded Food Database be used?

The database will provide a central source of brand-specific information to support our standards development work and the development and monitoring of Australian Government public health policy and nutrition initiatives.

A subset of branded food data will be published with the permission of data providers, to help people make informed decisions about the foods and beverages they buy.

Over time, the BFD could link with other datasets to provide a more comprehensive picture of food and nutrient consumption patterns in the Australian population.

Is participation mandatory?

No. It is not mandatory for companies to provide their data to the Branded Food Database.

What data will be collected for the Branded Food Database?

Data collected will include a range of on-pack information and, where relevant a number of off-pack attributes. For those that choose to participate, there is a required (mandatory) dataset. There are also a number of optional data attributes that if available and provided would also be valuable to FSANZ.

Mandatory data	Optional data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Trade Item Number (GTIN) • Brand owner, brand name and product name • Pack size, serve size and servings per pack • Form of food (as sold, prepared with water etc.) • Nutrition information panel (NIP) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 7 mandatory nutrients ○ Dietary fibre • Ingredient statement • Health Star Rating category • If displayed, Health Star Rating • Fruit, vegetable, nut & legume (FVNL) content and concentrated fruit & vegetable content (%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added sugars (g) • Wholegrain content (%) • Allergen declaration statement/s • Nutrition content and/or health claim/s • Non-mandatory NIP values • Product images

When does FSANZ need the data?

While we encourage companies to submit their data as soon as possible, companies can opt-in at any time.

How can I provide data?

GS1 members can provide data free of charge via the National Product Catalogue (NPC).

Non-members can provide data via the free FSANZ Branded Food Database Portal using a web-based User Interface or Excel template.

Additional options for collecting data are being scoped and consulted on.

Will providing data to the Branded Food Database create more work for industry?

FSANZ are looking to implement systems and processes to minimise the work required from companies to supply and maintain their data.

Our aim is to integrate with existing systems where possible so that companies need only enter their data once and have it available for a range of purposes.

How will participation in the Branded Food Database benefit industry?

The database is expected to deliver industry benefits including:

- regulatory efficiencies, including through assessment of the impacts of proposed changes to the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code, and minimisation of ad-hoc requests for product data
- Corporate Social Responsibility benefits through transparency, accountability and visible support for public health initiatives
- provision of a central source of product data for business purposes e.g. sharing with retailers for online retail activities
- development of a level playing field for publishing of product data across industry.

Will there be any recognition given to companies that participate in this program?

FSANZ will recognise participating companies for their contribution to the BFD by acknowledging them on our website with permission from the company.

Does FSANZ require data for products without a Nutrition Information Panel?

The goal is to collect data for all packaged food and beverage products sold in Australia, including those without a NIP.

Does FSANZ have any specific priority for product categories?

FSANZ will work with companies to ensure the database represents a wide range of packaged food and beverage products available in Australia.

While we are interested in collecting data for meal replacement products, sports foods, and alcoholic beverages, these are currently a secondary focus.

How will the Branded Food Database support the HSR System?

While a monitoring framework for the HSR system is still being developed by the Department of Health and Aged Care, the BFD is expected to be an important element of that framework.

The database will help track HSR uptake by manufacturers as well as changes in the nutritional profile of foods over time. The database will also provide a reliable source of data for modelling any future HSR system changes.

What if my product does not have a Health Star Rating?

FSANZ is collecting a range of branded food information, not just health star ratings so is still interested in collecting data for your product.

Will FSANZ use the data to verify product claims made by companies?

FSANZ will not use the data collected from the BFD for compliance or enforcement purposes or to verify nutrition content or health claims on products.

What about products made in New Zealand and other imported products?

The current focus of the BFD is on branded food products sold in Australia. This includes imported foods, including those from New Zealand.

What are the costs to industry to participate in the Branded Food Database?

The approach for collecting product data from industry has been designed to minimise any cost to industry.

Companies can provide data to FSANZ via the NPC or Portal at no cost.

What about product images? Is there a cost to provide images to FSANZ?

Companies that use the FSANZ Online Portal will be able to share their product images with FSANZ at no cost.

Companies using the NPC that have access to the NPC Digital Module can share their product images with FSANZ at no additional cost.

What about product images that are stored on other platforms not specifically with GS1?

GS1 is planning to support images in other platforms via APIs.

Under this method, companies will be able to use APIs to automatically load product images to their NPC Digital Module.

Specifications and fees for this (future) option are not yet available. Companies interested in exploring this should contact GS1 Australia for details.