



The Australian Industry Group

Submission to

**Food Standards Australia New Zealand
Consultation Paper – Labelling Review
Recommendation 17 : Per serving declarations
in the nutrition information panel**

February 2015

Australian Industry Group response to the Food Standards Australia New Zealand Consultation Paper – Labelling Review Recommendation 17 : Per serve declarations in the nutrition information panel

Introduction

This submission is made on behalf of The Australian Industry Group (Ai Group) Confectionery Sector representing manufacturers of chocolate, sugar and gum confectionery; suppliers of ingredients, machinery, packaging materials; and services to the industry, and wholesaler and distributor firms.

Ai Group has approximately 130 confectionery sector members operating in Australia and New Zealand.

Major confectionery manufacturing plants are principally located in New South Wales, Tasmania and Victoria, including in a number of regional locations (eg Ballarat and Lithgow) and to a lesser extent South Australia, Queensland, Western Australia and New Zealand where small to medium size business are based.

General comments

The Ai Group Confectionery Sector welcomes the opportunity to provide comments in response to the Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) *Consultation Paper – Labelling Review Recommendation 17: Per serving declarations in the nutrition information panel*.

Recommendation 17: *That the declaration in the nutrition information panel of amount of nutrients per serve be no longer mandatory unless a daily intake claim is made.*

The Ai Group Confectionery Sector considers the *per serve* column information in the nutrition information panel (NIP) an important way nutrition and energy information can to be communicated.

However, the Ai Group Confectionery Sector considers both the *per serve* and *per 100g* column data in the NIP to be relevant and useful to inform consumers on the nutrition content of foods.

Serve information provides valuable guidance to consumers, particularly relevant in the context of confectionery. This information enables the consumer to be informed about the energy and nutrition contribution of a treat food portion they are consuming in one eating occasion.

Whereas, *per 100g* column information allows consumers to understand product energy and nutrient composition and make product comparisons.

In the context of the confectionery industry's commitment to consumer information requirements, its widespread uptake of percentage daily intake (%DI) in the NIP in conjunction with the industry's *Be treatwise®* program, food industry Daily Intake Guide (DIG) and progressive adoption of the new Health Star Rating (HSR) System – the confectionery industry is likely to retain the *per serve* column in the NIP whether it is required or not.

Provision of only *per 100g* information would require consumers to have numeracy skills sufficient to determine the amount of nutrients in a serving of food/confectionery. This will make it more difficult and confusing for consumers who want this information when making informed food choices.

The confectionery industry supports retention of the current status quo, however acknowledges that there are opportunities for considered reform and not simple removal of the *per serve* information in the context of minimum effective regulation and reduction of regulatory burden. The role and need for consumer nutrition and dietary education should also be considered in the context of the nutrition and health reform agenda.

Specific comments

Q1 How do you or your organisation use per serving information in the nutrition information panel on food labels?

The Australasian confectionery industry values both *per serve* information as a consumer information tool combined with *per 100g* information in the NIP.

The *per serve* information, on confectionery labels in the NIP, combines with serve size to provide consumers with portion guidance about the quantity, energy and nutrients available in a serve as consumed.

Per serve nutrition and energy information is often used in conjunction with the %DI column in the NIP. Although voluntary, %DI *per serve* is optionally used by many in the confectionery industry to help consumers better understand the energy and nutrient contribution of a serve in the context of their daily dietary needs.

Per serve information is prescribed in relation to various nutrition content claims on small packages, when the NIP exemption is adopted.

Per serve information in the NIP is also linked to voluntary front of pack labelling options adopted by the confectionery industry, including Health Star Rating (HSR) System (where the system displays information on a single consumption portion or *per serve* basis) and with the Daily Intake Guide (DIG).

Per serve information in the NIP is also important to support the confectionery industry's *Be treatwise®* responsible consumption initiative. *Be treatwise®* provides consumers with information to help explain the place of confectionery as part of a balanced diet. The *Be treatwise®* on pack visual cue is complemented by the declaration of energy per defined portion/serve size, with optional %DI information, on front of pack as part of the HSR or DIG systems.

Whilst evolving, the original *Be treatwise®* logo (Figure 1) calls consumers to 'Get to know your %DIs' thus triggering the %DI intake *per serve* column in the NIP. Although a revised *Be treatwise®* graphic (Figure 2) is rolling into market, industry will likely retain use of %DI in the NIP and/or in conjunction with the HSR energy icon or DIG.

Figure 1:



Figure 2:



Q2 Are there any particular food categories or types of food packages (eg single serve packages) for which per serving information is particularly useful? If so, what are they? Explain why the information is useful.

The confectionery industry encourages responsible consumption of confectionery. As a treat food, confectionery may be enjoyed in moderation – occasionally and in small amounts – as part of a balanced diet and active lifestyle.

As such, *per serve* information expressed in the NIP, is particularly valuable and useful for retail confectionery packs – to explain portion guidance to consumers in a practical and useful manner.

Provision of *per serve* information in the NIP, alongside *per 100g* information, means energy and nutrient information per serve is readily available to the consumer without difficult and manual calculations. This is particularly useful for confectionery, including where sold in single serve packages, as it is consumed in portions less than 100g (compared to ingredients intended for further processing).

Per serve information on single serve confectionery packages also enables easy and useful product comparison, ie the *per serve* information allows the consumer easy comparison between nutrients in a 300g snack/discretionary food, for example, and a 55g confectionery bar. Both are single portion packs. However, the nutrients available per 100g of the snack/discretionary food may be lower than the 55g confectionery bar and therefore the overall nutrients as consumed in the 300g item may be higher as the portion is larger.

Q3 The Labelling Review recommendation suggests that per serving information be voluntary unless a daily intake claim is made.

Do you support this approach? That is, do you think declaration of per serving information in the nutrition information panel should be mandatory if a daily intake claim is made (e.g. %DI or %RDI)? Give reasons for your answer.

The Australasian confectionery industry believes that *per serve* information in the NIP is useful for confectionery, regardless of a %DI claim being made.

Per serve information in the NIP is complementary to %DI information and in situations where %DI information is provided in the NIP per serve information should be mandatory.

Q4 *As noted in Section 4, there is currently variation in the format of NIPs on food labels because of voluntary permissions for the use of %DI labelling and the option to include a third column for foods intended to be prepared or consumed with at least one other food. If per serving information in the NIP was voluntary this would result in more variability in the format of NIPs across the food supply. Do you think this would be a problem? Why/why not?*

Although variability currently exists in the layout of NIPs, this recommendation has the potential to contribute further variability. Maintaining a prescribed format encompassing the options will be important standardisation.

Despite proposed future variability in the NIP, the proposed review of literature, information and consumer research being undertaken on consumer use and understanding of per serve information in the NIP as part of this consultation, will also address this point.

Q5 *If per serving information in the nutrition information panel was voluntary, do you think the inclusion of per serving information in the nutrition information panel should be mandatory when a nutrition content claim about vitamins, minerals, protein, omega-3-fatty acids or dietary fibre is made? Give reasons for your answer.*

The inclusion of per serving information in the NIP should be mandatory when a claim is made, that is based on per serve amount as the qualifying criteria, so that the consumer understands the quantities available from that serve size. This information is also important for verification and enforcement purposes.

Q6 *If per serving information in the nutrition information panel was voluntary, do you think the inclusion of per serving information in the NIP should be mandatory in any other specific regulatory situations? Explain your answer*

Q7 *What additional studies examine consumer use and understanding of per serving information in the nutrition information panel on food labels? Please provide a copy of studies where possible.*

Q8 *From your perspective, what are the advantages and disadvantages of per serving information in the nutrition information panel being voluntary? Please provide evidence where possible.*

The per serve column information provides consumers with information and important guidance around confectionery serve size consumption.

Serve size information provides a necessary link to voluntary front of pack labelling schemes such as HSR and DIG, for confectionery products, as well as the %DI column in the NIP.

It supports product comparison, enforcement and offers quantity information about the food which is not provided elsewhere, including through the new HSR System for the most part.

Per serve information is particularly useful for consumer retail items, where the product has a defined serve size and the portion size is less than 100g, as for confectionery. Provision of *per serve* information eases the burden on consumers having to make difficult calculations as this information is readily available.

Q9 *Do you think the declaration of the amount of energy and nutrients per serving in the NIP should be voluntary? YES/NO/UNCERTAIN*

From a confectionery perspective, the declaration of the amount of energy and nutrients in the NIP per serving column, should make little difference whether it is required or not. The confectionery industry supports current status quo as *per serve* information in the NIP is providing useful, relevant, necessary consumer information. The status quo will more effectively and transparently provide effective consumer information, than under a voluntary scheme where the possibility exists that some manufacturers may only quote per 100g figures – potentially in cases of perceived benefit. However, the industry acknowledges that there are opportunities for considered reform.