

**Food and Environmental Hygiene Department**

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**Minutes of a Technical Meeting with Trade on  
the Labelling Scheme on Nutrition Information (Food Retailers' Subgroup)  
held on 11 October 2007 at 2:30 p.m.  
in Conference Hall, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Edinburgh Place, Central**

**PRESENT:**

**Government Representatives**

Dr HO Yuk-yin	Consultant (Community Medicine), FEHD	(Chairman)
Dr Anna WONG	Head (Risk Assessment Section), FEHD	
Dr Stephen CHUNG	Senior Chemist (Food Research laboratory), FEHD	
Mr LEUNG Sui-sum	Superintendent (Risk Assessment), FEHD	
Mr CHUNG Kwok-wah	Chief Health Inspector (Food Labelling), FEHD	
Ms Jacqueline FUNG	Scientific Officer (Risk Assessment), FEHD	(Note-taker)

**Trade Representatives**

Mr. Wayne CHU	A P Tecnotrade Co. Ltd
Mr. Peter Johnson	A S Watson Group (HK) Ltd
Ms. Lina LIM	A S Watson Industrial
Mr. Ben TSE	Aeon Stroes (HK) Co., Ltd
Mr. Daniel POON	Aeon Stroes (HK) Co., Ltd
Mr. Edward CHAK	Aeon Stroes (HK) Co., Ltd
Ms. MO Dick Yee	Aeon Stroes (HK) Co., Ltd
Mr. Ricky PANG	Aeon Stroes (HK) Co., Ltd
Ms. Lilian TANG	AIC Merchandising (Japan) Ltd
Ms. HO Hoi-ching	B & S Company
Mr. LAU Kwong-choi	Banyan Group
Ms. LO Yi-wah	C R Vanguard H.K Co Ltd
Ms. Carmen TSANG	Circle K - Li & Fung Group
Ms. FONG Lan Yu	Circle K - Li & Fung Group
Ms. LO Suk-ying	Circle K - Li & Fung Group
Ms. Wendi CHAN	Dah Chong Hong Ltd
Ms. YIP Sau-fong	Health works (Food Production ) Company Ltd
Ms. Elaine HAU	Hong Kong Gold Coast Hotel

Ms. Joanne CHEUNG	Hong Kong Retail Management Association
Mr. LEUNG Yiu-hung	Hong Kong Yamazaki Baking Co., Ltd
Mr. LAM Wai-cheong	Kai Fat Food Company Limited
Mr. YIP Szu-kwong	Koon Wah Food & Preserved Fruit Fty., Ltd
Ms. Michelle KWAN	Mannings
Ms. Fenny LAM	Marks & Spencer (Asia Pacific) Ltd
Ms. Julite Stohler	Nutrasource International Ltd
Mr. LAI Sin-man	Parknshop
Mr. Michael KWOK	Tai Pan Bread & Cakes Co Ltd
Ms. Eunice MOK	The Chinese Manufacturers' Association of Hong Kong
Mr. Allen HO	The Dairy Farm Group
Ms. Athere LI	The Hong Kong Food Council Ltd
Ms. Anglea LAU	The Hong Kong Health Food Association
Mr. Perry SIT	The Hong Kong Health Food Association

### **Welcoming Remarks**

1. The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming the trade representatives. He stressed that the proposal presented at the meeting was for discussion and the content had not been finalized. He urged the trade representatives to actively participate in the discussion.

### **Agenda Item 1**

#### **Confirmation of Minutes**

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 2September 2005 were confirmed without amendments.

### **Agenda Item 2**

#### **Revised Proposal on the Labelling Scheme on Nutrition Information**

3. Ms FUNG briefed the meeting on the revised proposal of the Labelling Scheme on Nutrition Information. She remarked that the presentation provided a framework for discussion and the contents were subject to revision. After the presentation, the Chairman invited comments and questions from the trade representatives.

### Core Nutrients

4. A representative indicated that the Administration should consider the mandatory nutrition labelling for prepackaged foods with claims and require only energy + three core nutrients (i.e., protein, carbohydrate and fat), which was the same approach as the Mainland's proposal or the Singaporean nutrition labelling regulations. He stressed that the market in Singapore was very similar to the one in Hong Kong. He also opined that lessening the requirement on core nutrients would not make much difference on the impact. He urged the Administration to consider low volume exemption, in case of not having similar requirements as the Mainland's proposal or the Singaporean nutrition labelling regulations.

5. Another participant expressed that there would be changes on most of the overseas nutrition labels regardless of the core nutrients requirement. The Chairman remarked that according to the Regulatory Impact Assessment, more than 90% of the prepackaged foods would require re-labelling under the previous proposal on "Energy+9 Core nutrients". However, he also stressed that the eventual impact would depend on the requirements of the final proposal.

### Expression of Nutrient Contents on Nutrition Labels

6. A trade representative opined that voluntary nutrient listing should be allowed on nutrition labels when not declared in accordance with the mandatory nutrient content expression (e.g., allowed for not providing absolute amount of energy in kcal or nutrients in g/mg, etc.). The Chairman told the meeting that consumers in general would prefer nutrition information in standardized format as it would be more user friendly and in turn could assist them in making informed choices. The trade representative then expressed that from the retailers' perspective, they were most concerned about the impact of the requirements, i.e., the number of products that would require re-labelling.

### Phased Approach and Grace Period

7. Several trade representatives commented that a two-year grace period was considered too short. One participant said they carried more than 9,000 products and therefore time would be needed for assessment and making changes.

### Low Volume Exemption

8. Several trade representatives stressed that the proposed Scheme would greatly affect low volume products. They urged the Administration to seriously consider the low volume exemption, despite the possible administrative difficulties. The Chairman reiterated that an exempt item would lose its exemption status if it

carried any nutrition information (i.e., nutrient-related claims and/or nutrition label). He indicated that only USA had a low volume exemption scheme, anyhow the Administration would continue to explore various administrative options.

#### Compliance

9. A participant enquired about the way of determining the compliance of food samples. The Chairman replied that CFS would conduct laboratory testing on the final products in order to determine the compliance of samples. However, both results from laboratory testing and calculated figures based on food composition data (i.e., indirect analysis) would be acceptable as sources of information for nutrition labels.

#### Timeframe

10. The Chairman informed the meeting that the current food labelling regulations would be amended by adding schedules on nutrition labelling. The process would be a negative vetting process, which in general lasted for 28 days. However, LegCo would have an option to extend the process for another 21 days, if necessary. In other words, the whole legislative process would last for a maximum of 49 days.

### **Agenda Item 3 Technical Issues on Nutrition Labelling**

#### **Technical Guidance Notes (Draft)**

11. Ms FUNG introduced the overview of the draft of the Technical Guidance Note with details of the rounding rules and tolerance limits presented (Annex I).

12. The Chairman told the meeting that the draft of the Technical Guidance Note would be made available at the upcoming technical meeting. He urged the trade representatives to offer comments so that the draft could be more comprehensive and be of use to the trade. He added that in addition to the Technical Guidance Note, the Administration would conduct workshops for the trade after the enactment of the regulations.

### **Agenda Item 4**

#### **Any Other Business**

13. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:00 PM.