

Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

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**Minutes of a Technical Meeting with Trade on
the Labelling Scheme on Nutrition Information (Manufacturers' Subgroup)
held on 11 January 2008 at 2:30 p.m.
in Conference Hall, 3rd Floor, Edinburgh Place, Central**

PRESENT:

Government Representatives

Dr HO Yuk-yin	Consultant (Community Medicine), FEHD	(Chairman)
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 (Nutrition Labelling), FEHD	(Note-taker)

Trade Representatives

Mr. CHENG Chun-yick	Cents Company Ltd.
Ms. THUNG Man-li, Anna	Federation of Hong Kong Industries
Ms. LING Pui-yee	Golden Resources Development International Ltd.
Mr. WU Wen-hui	Healthworks (Food Production) Company Ltd.
Ms. YIP Sau-fong	Healthworks (Food Production) Company Ltd.
Ms. Corine LIU	Hong Kong Yakult Co., Ltd.
Mr. Gary LO	Hong Kong Yakult Co., Ltd.
Mr. NG Yat-ming	Hong Kong Yakult Co., Ltd.
Mr. CHAN Chi-ming	Hop Hing Oil Factory Limited
Ms. Jessica Chui	Kjeldsens & Co. (HK) Ltd.
Mr. LEE Kwok Lam	Kowloon Chamber of Commerce
Mr. Stephen CHOI	Lee Kam Kee International Holdings Ltd.
Mr. Alan LAU	Master Kong (HK) Trading Company Limited
Mr. HUI Yiu-kai	Nissin Foods Co., Ltd.
Mr. LAM Tsz-mau	Nissin Foods Co., Ltd.
Ms. Stephanie SHUM	Saint Honore Cake Shop Ltd.

Mr.	TANG Kwok-fai	San Miguel Brewery HK Ltd.
Ms.	YEUNG Tze-lai	Tai Pan Bread & Cake Co., Ltd.
Mr.	Samuel CHAN	The Garden Co., Ltd
Mr.	LAW Chi-sang	The Garden Co., Ltd
Mr.	Ivan CHAN	Vitasoy International Holdings Ltd.
Mr.	NG Chun-fung, Paul	Vitasoy International Holdings Ltd.
Mr.	TANG Hi, Billy	Vitasoy International Holdings Ltd.
Mr.	CHOI Wai-lun	Winner Food Products Ltd.
Ms.	LAM Siu-ping	Winner Food Products Ltd.

Welcoming Remarks

1. The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming the trade representatives.

Agenda Item 1

Confirmation of Minutes

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2007 were tabled. The Chairman suggested if no comments were received in a week's time, the minutes of last meeting would be confirmed.

[Post-meeting note: No comments were received and thus the minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2007 were confirmed.]

Agenda Item 2

Matters Arising

3. With regard to the exemption list, the Chairman informed the meeting that the Administration was rephrasing the wording to achieve its intended purpose. Nevertheless, the principles remained the same. Details of the exemption list would be further discussed at the next technical meeting.

Agenda Item 3

Technical Guidance Note on the Labelling Scheme on Nutrition Information (Draft)

4. The Chairman told the meeting that the Secretary for Food and Health committed at the LegCo meeting that the Technical Guidance Note would be issued at the same time as the passage of the regulations. However, as time would be needed to make changes and to seek legal advice/comment on the final draft of the Technical Guidance Note, the Administration planned to issue the final draft of the document with the passage of the amendment regulation. The final guidance note, with comments from the trade incorporated, would be made available within 2-3 months after the passage of the regulations.

5. Ms FUNG briefed the participants on the draft of the Technical Guidance Note (Annex I). She stressed that the Technical Guidance Note should be used as a reference document. The trade should refer to the Food and Drugs (Composition and Labelling) Regulations for detailed legal provisions.

6. The Chairman remarked that although some of the requirements previous suggested would not be included in the proposed Amendment Regulations, the Administration encouraged the trade to follow the recommended labelling format detailed in the Technical Guidance Note as standardized nutrition labels would be easier for consumers to use

Abbreviations and Common Names of Nutrients

7. A participant suggested including “carb” and “cholst” as abbreviations for “carbohydrate” and “cholesterol”, respectively. The Chairman said the Administration would consider the suggestions. He then told the meeting that the list would not be an exhaustive list and it was intended for reference purpose.

Nutrient Reference Value (NRV)

8. It was stressed that the Chinese NRV should be applied when determining conditions for selected nutrient content claims. The Chairman reiterated that the development of NRVs involved local experts and experts from the Mainland and therefore would not be changed easily.

Simplified Format

9. A participant enquired about whether simplified format would be allowed in the proposed regulation. Ms FUNG remarked that simplified format was provided

under the previous proposed version of core nutrient list (i.e., energy + 9 core nutrients). However, with less number of core nutrients, the Administration considered that simplified format would not save space on packages because the simplified format label must include the following information (i) the amounts of energy, carbohydrate, fat, protein and claimed nutrients; (ii) any core nutrients that were present in the food in more than zero amount; and (iii) the statement “Not a significant source of (naming of the core nutrients that were omitted from the nutrient declaration). As a result, simplified format would not be included in the latest proposal.

Nutrition Claims

10. Several participants urged the Administration to extend the permitted list of nutrient content claims to cover claims not on the Codex Guidelines. The Chairman indicated that the Administration remained open to other claims and would consider adopting them if they were widely adopted internationally. Nevertheless, he suggested the trade to provide information for the Administration’s consideration.

Synonyms on Nutrient Content Claims and Nutrient Comparative Claims

11. Comments were received on the list of synonyms in the earlier sub-group technical meetings, such as “超低” and “超高”. Also, a participant was concerned about the use of the words “light” or “lite”. Ms FUNG explained that according to Codex, “light” or “lite” should be used in the context of nutrient comparative claims.

Reference on Food Composition Database

12. A participant suggested that a list of reference databases to be included in Technical Guidance Note. The Chairman said such information could be incorporated for the trade’s reference. Dr CHUNG reminded that trade that when performing indirect analysis, the trade should pay special attention to the definitions/testing methods used, such as crude fibre analysis method vs Englyst method vs AOAC methods for dietary fibres.

Method Guideline on Nutrition Information (Draft)

13. The Chairman told the meeting that along with the Technical Guidance Notes, the Administration would issue a Method Guideline on Nutrition Information. The draft document would be discussed at a separate technical meeting with laboratory services providers.

Agenda 4

Technical Workshop on Nutrition Labelling

14. To further facilitate the trade in making changes, the Administration would conduct technical workshop on nutrition labelling. Depending on the demand of the workshop, initially the Administration would plan to conduct two sessions of the workshop and members of the trade were encouraged to attend.

Agenda Item 5

Any Other Business

15. The Chairman told the meeting that the Administration planned to table the amendment regulation at the LegCo between February and April 2008. Before then, there would be another technical meeting covering the proposed exemption list, small volume exemption and the revised Technical Guidance Notes. Furthermore, as the discussion on the proposed Scheme was approaching the final stage, different sectors of the trade had very similar concerns, thus instead of having three separate sessions of technical meetings (i.e., separate meetings for manufacturers, importer/suppliers and retailers), the Administration would organize one meeting for the trade.

16. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:30 PM.