

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 10 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)
Ms Iona SHAM	Administrative Officer, 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 (Nutrition Labelling), FEHD	(Note-taker)

Trade Representatives

Mr. LEE Chi-fai	A S Watson Industries
Mr. Peter JOHNSTON	A.S. Watson Group (HK) Ltd
Ms. LAI Sin-man	A.S. Watson Group (HK) Ltd
Mr. Edward CHAK	AEON Stores (HK) Co., Ltd
Ms. CHO Siu-yung	AEON Stores (HK) Co Ltd
Mr. Ricky PANG	AEON Stores (HK) Co., Ltd
Ms. Lilian TANG	AIC Merchandising (Japan) Ltd
Mr. Wayne CHU	AP Technotrade Co. Ltd
Ms. Lowell LO	Circle K Convenience stores (HK) Ltd
Ms. Virginia LEE	Circle K HK Ltd
Mr. Dennis CHAN	City Super Ltd
Ms. Karen CHIU	City Super Ltd
Ms. CHO Ka-yuk	City Super Ltd
Ms. Michelle HAU	City Super Ltd
Mr. Marco KWOK	City Super Ltd

Ms.	Grace YEE	City Super Ltd
Mr.	Covington LEUNG	CK Life Sciences Intl., Inc.
Ms.	LO Yi-wah	CR Vanguard
Ms.	CHAN Sze-yeg, Wendi	Dah Chong Hong, Ltd
Mr.	Leo YUEN	Data Insight Group
Ms.	Elaine HAU	HK Gold Coast Hotel
Mr.	LEUNG Yiu-hung	HK Yamazaki Baking Co Ltd
Mr.	Charlie WOOD	Hong Kong Retail Mgt Asso
Ms.	Ryth YU	Hong Kong Retail Mgt Asso
Mr.	LAM Wai-cheong	Kai Fat Food Co., Ltd
Mr.	Vincent YIP	Koon Wah Food & Preserved Fruit Fty. Ltd.
Ms.	Michelle KWAN	Mannings
Ms.	Fenny LAM	Marks and Spencer (AP) Ltd
Ms.	Gloria YUEN	Marks and Spencer (AP) Ltd
Ms.	Julie STOHLER	NutraSource Intl Ltd
Mr.	Allen HO	The Dairy Farm Group
Ms.	LO Kar-man, May	The Dairy Farm Group
Mr.	Perry SIT	The Hong Kong Health Food Association
Mr.	Philip SHULL	US Agricultural Trade Office
Ms.	Caroline YUEN	US Agricultural Trade Office
Mr.	CHAN Wai-choi	Wing Wah Food Manufactory Ltd
Ms.	SHUM Hau-lee	Wing Wah Food Manufactory 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 30 November 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 30 November 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 purposes. Nevertheless, the principles remained the same. As for the small volume exemption, the annual quota for each SKU would be set at 30,000 units. Details of the exemption list would be further discussed at the next technical meeting. HKRMA urged the Administration to consider having no requirement on nutrition label for small volume products even with claims.

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.

Nutrient Reference Value (NRV)

7. 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.

Definition of Sugar

8. A trade representative enquired about the definition of sugars. Dr CHUNG informed the meeting that the proposed Scheme adopted the Codex definition of sugars – “Sugars means all mono-saccharides and di-saccharides present in food.”

MUFA and PUFA Declaration with Claims Related to Fat and/or Cholesterol

9. A trade representative suggested removing the requirement on the declaration of monounsaturated fatty acid (MUFA) and polyunsaturated fatty acid (PUFA) in case the nutrient content claims were on “Fat free” as the amounts of MUFA and PUFA declared would be zero and therefore deemed not necessary. The Chairman said FHB had received their letter and was considering the suggestion.

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, such as low trans fat, trans fat free, high omega-3 fatty acids, etc. Ms FUNG told the meeting that some of these claims were allowed in only one or two countries and the claims conditions were not the same. 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.

11. The Chairman also remarked that the proposed regulations on nutrition claims would also be applicable to advertisements, including promotional materials. Therefore, claims in advertisements should meet the conditions as set out in the proposed regulations and provide nutrition labels accordingly.

Synonyms on Nutrient Content Claims and Nutrient Comparative Claims

12. Comments were received on the list of synonyms in the earlier sub-group technical meeting, such as “超低” and “超高”. Also, a participant was concerned about the use of the words “light” and “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

13. 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. Ms FUNG reminded the trade that when performing indirect analysis, the trade should pay special attention to the testing methods used.

Method Guideline on Nutrition Information (Draft)

14. 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

15. 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

16. 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.

17. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:00 PM.