Scientific Colloquium Series

EFSA Scientific Colloquium N° 9

Nutrient Profiling for foods bearing Nutrition and Health Claims

11 – 12 October 2007
Parma, Italy

Briefing notes for discussion groups

Objectives of the colloquium

The objectives of the colloquium are to

(i) have an open exchange of views between experts from EU-Member States, non-EU countries, academia, stakeholders and European Commission on nutrient profiling for foods bearing nutrition and health claims

(ii) discuss in detail, and in light of current scientific thinking, key aspects of nutrient profiling that the Panel of Dietetic Products, Nutrition and Allergies (NDA) at EFSA will need to consider when providing scientific advice to the European Commission in setting nutrient profiles

DG 1 - Nutrient profiles across the board or by category of food

1. If nutrient profiles are to be set "by category of food", how can food categories be defined so that all foods consumed in Europe could be assigned to a limited number of categories?

2. If nutrient profiles are to be set "across the board", should special derogations for particular foods or food groups apply? Which special derogations, if any?

3. Lastly, from the perspective of the subject addressed by this working group, please discuss the following:

a. Compatibility of nutrient profile schemes with existing EU legislation
b. Compatibility of nutrient profile schemes with product innovation
c. Compatibility of nutrient profile schemes with consumer food choice behaviour

DG 2 - Identification of critical nutrients

1. Should nutrient profiles be restricted to those nutrients with adverse health effects or also include those nutrients with beneficial health effects?

2. Which criteria should be taken into account when selecting critical nutrients for establishing nutrient profiles?

a. Dietary guidelines and nutrition recommendations;
b. Relationship between nutrients and health or disease outcomes;
c. Ability of control bodies to verify eligibility of a food to bear nutrition/health claims
d. Other
e. A combination of the above.

3. Discuss to what extent such criteria should be population specific (different for foods addressed to children, pregnant women, elderly, etc) or whether they could be used for the European population as a whole.

4. Lastly, from the perspective of the subject addressed by this working group, please discuss the following:

a. Compatibility of nutrient profile schemes with existing EU legislation
b. Compatibility of nutrient profile schemes with product innovation
c. Compatibility of nutrient profile schemes with consumer food choice behaviour

DG 3 - Reference quantity and scoring versus threshold systems

1. Which reference quantity and why? What are the merits of per 100g (or 100ml), per serving, per 100kcal/100kJ?

2. What are the relative advantages/disadvantages of threshold and scoring systems?

3. What should be the basis for setting nutrient thresholds and food scores?

4. Lastly, from the perspective of the subject addressed by this working group, please discuss the following:

a. Compatibility of nutrient profile schemes with existing EU legislation
b. Compatibility of nutrient profile schemes with product innovation
c. Compatibility of nutrient profile schemes with consumer food choice behaviour

DG 4 - Testing methods

1. What methods can be used to test EU-wide nutrient profile schemes?

2. What outcomes should be evaluated and what are the criteria for defining acceptable outcomes?

3. What are the ideal databases (e.g. food composition, food consumption) needed/available for testing EU-wide nutrient profile schemes?

4. Lastly, from the perspective of the subject addressed by this working group, please discuss the following:

a. Compatibility of nutrient profile schemes with existing EU legislation
b. Compatibility of nutrient profile schemes with product innovation
c. Compatibility of nutrient profile schemes with consumer food choice behaviour