

Salt Target Review Stakeholder Meeting

Thursday 20th December 2007, 10:00 am

Conference room A&B AVH

Attending Organisations: See Annex I

Welcome and Presentation

1. Corinne Vaughan welcomed all attendees and explained the outline for the meeting. Alette Addison then gave a presentation detailing some of the background to the salt targets, what the Food Standards Agency (FSA) was doing in relation to salt use in catering and the process and timetable for the review.

Questions

2. Several questions followed this presentation. The first, from Tesco asked whether the revised targets set at the end of 2008 should be met by 2010. In response the FSA indicated that it was committed to working to reduce average salt intakes to not more than 6g/day and work to achieve this may need to extend beyond 2010. The Agency would encourage the industry to meet the targets as quickly as possible, but would consider the deadline for compliance, in light of the targets set and the magnitude of the reductions needed.
3. Consensus Action on Salt and Health (CASH) highlighted that to achieve the 6g/day intake, it considered that an average reduction of 40% was required across the board, which it felt the current targets will not achieve. If targets for some foods were relaxed, others would need to be tightened to compensate.
4. The British Dietetic Association expressed an interest in the FSA's caterers and workplace catering work and questioned what related public awareness work would be carried out. In response the FSA gave a brief overview of how its consumer education work run right across the spectrum including workplace catering and pointed out that the work with caterers was still at an early stage.
5. Following on from this, Dairy UK enquired about the FSA's plan for future publicity campaigns. The FSA recognised the importance of maintaining consumer awareness and indicated that further funding had been sought to ensure the FSA is able to maintain its work in this area.
6. The representative of the British Cheese Board and The Stilton Cheese Makers Association commented on how liberal celebrity chefs were when using salt in cooking. This point was supported by CASH, who suggested the Agency write to them about this. The FSA indicated that this was an option it would consider.

7. Aberdeen Buttery Company asked if there was any likelihood of the targets becoming mandatory. It was clarified that the intention was to pursue a voluntary approach at present.
8. Foodaware raised the importance of labelling in consumer awareness and whilst commending the good work the Agency had done on traffic light labelling, called for the two campaigns to be joined up, so the work on salt could be reflected in the packaging. In response the FSA pointed out the direct links salt has to the front of pack traffic light system and that the labelling legislation was under review with mandatory salt labelling being an area of consideration.
9. The British Dietetic Association enquired about salt levels in bread and highlighted that some wholemeal bread already met the target. CASH also felt there were already store baked breads that met the targets and questioned the validity of industry claims of technical reasons for not being able to reduce salt levels further. In addressing these concerns the FSA explained that it was still in the processing of evaluating the latest data on bread, but had procured research to look at the role of salt in bread matrices and were considering work on yeast strains. The FSA had also engaged independent expert to give advice on technical issues. The Federation of Bakers added that there were significant technical issues with plant baked bread over store baked and that they were working very hard with the Agency to achieve the targets by 2010.
10. To close the meeting, attendees were invited to forward any additional questions or comments to Alette Addison and to confirm attendance at the upcoming sector specific meetings, if they had not done so already.

Nicole Redhead

Annex 1 – Attending Organisations

3663
Allied Bakeries
Allied Technical Centre
Bake Tran
Biscuit, Cake, Chocolate and Confectionery Association
Brakes
British Cheese Board and the Stilton Cheese Makers' Association
British Dietetic Association
British Heart Foundation
British Hospitality Association
British Meat Processors Association
British Medical Association
British Retail Consortium
Co-op
Consensus Action on Salt and Health
Dairy Crest
Dairy UK
Food and Drink Federation
Food and Drink Federation Meat Group
Foodaware
Glenryck Foods Ltd
Greencore
Heinz
Iceland
Kellogg's
KFC
Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services
McCain Foods
Nestle
Nutrition Society
PepsiCo
Pizza Hut UK
Potato Processors Association
Premier Foods
Provision Trade Federation
Sainsbury's
SNACMA
Sodexo
Subway
Tesco
Unilever