

**Written submission on the labeling scheme on nutrition information to Legco  
Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene by Hong Kong Food Science  
and Technology Association (HKFSTA)**

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Our Association considers that the main goals of governmental regulation of foods is ensuring that consumers are given complete and useful information about the food products they purchase and such information allows value comparisons to be made among competing products. Recently, there has been growing scientific evidence that the kinds and amounts of food eaten affect the risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease and cancer. Specifically, diets low in fat and high in fiber and fresh fruits and vegetables are believed to reduce these risks. In order for this scientific knowledge to be used, consumers must understand both what type of diet reduces risk and the nutritional content of foods in order to choose healthier diets.

In principle, our Association agrees that the proposed labeling scheme on nutrition information is necessary and beneficial to the Hong Kong people. Therefore, we would support the Government to introduce a mandatory nutrition labeling scheme. However, we have some concerns (as listed below) that the Government should consider when making the legislation and implementing the labeling scheme.

Our concerns are:

- Exemptions of food products that have already carried food labels with sufficient nutrition information in their Country of Origin but not completely matching our local labeling laws. This would allow the sale of these products in Hong Kong without the need to produce costly special packs only for the Hong Kong market
- When establishing the local Nutrient Reference Values (NRVs) for nutrition labeling purpose, it would be less troublesome if other existing references such as the Daily Values (DVs) used in the U.S. are adopted
- Overall impact to the food manufacturing industry and food trading business should be carefully assessed
- Education of the consumers to the awareness of a healthy diet and understanding the meaning and significance of the nutrition labels should be promoted

Our Association believes that the enactment of the proposed legislation on nutrition labeling should keep a balance between benefiting the consumers without a significant increase in the cost of food items and be economical feasible for the food industry people to compile with the new legislation.

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Chairman of HKFSTA, 2004-2005