



Food Standards Code review (P1025)

September 2014

The Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA) is the national association of the dietetic profession with over 5500 members, and branches in each state and territory. DAA is a leader in nutrition and advocates for better food, better health, and wellbeing for all. DAA appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on the Food Standards Code Review (P1025) by Food Standards Australia New Zealand.

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DAA interest in this consultation

DAA supports in principle the proposed revision of the Food Standards Code (the Code) to improve clarity, legal enforceability and usability by relevant stakeholders.

As experts in nutrition, Accredited Practising Dietitians (APDs) assist the population with the translation of food labels and health claims. APDs also provide nutritional expertise relating to the development of food products that must comply with the current regulatory framework.

Discussion

DAA agrees this consultation has important implications for food regulation enforcement, unifying and clarifying the Code. FSANZ also need to consider how they can support users of the Code to do so accurately, for example providing supporting documents to explain correct application. Please see specific comments below.

- In an effort to improve clarity, it would be useful to spell out the full name of a Standard when referring to different Standards within the Code.

Example one from Standard 1.2.7 - 2:

'average energy content is as defined in Standard 1.2.8' should read as, *'average energy content is as defined in Standard 1.2.8 – Nutrition Information Requirements'*.

Example two from Standard 1.2.7 - 3:

'Infant formula product is standardised in Standard 2.9.1.' should read as, *'Infant formula product is standardised in Standard 2.9.1. – Infant Formula Products'*.

- DAA agrees that a compendium definitions section is to be included at the beginning of the document.
- DAA supports the revision and further clarification of some definitions and would like to address concerns regarding the proposed definitions for the following terms.

Vegetables: Consistency of definitions for vegetables would improve the clarity of the Code.

The draft Code states the following conflicting definitions of 'vegetables' in section 1.1.2.

Section 1.1.2-2 Definitions - general

food group means any of the following groups:

(b) fruit, vegetables, herbs, spices and fungi;

Section 1.1.2-2 Definitions – particular foods

fruit and vegetables means any of fruit, vegetables, nuts, spices, herbs, fungi, legumes and seeds.

There is a discrepancy between these two code entries which should be resolved.

Dietary Fibre: Health effects are listed in the definition of dietary fibre:

Section 1.2.8-5 When nutrition information panel is not required

dietary fibre means that fraction of the edible part of plants or their extracts, or synthetic analogues that:

(b) promote one or more of the following beneficial physiological effects:

- (i) laxation;
- (ii) reduction in blood cholesterol;
- (iii) modulation of blood glucose;

DAA is concerned that this information may be used incorrectly on a food label which is not consistent with the application of the Code with respect to health claims. The description of the physiological effects of dietary fibre is better placed in Standard 1.2.7 – Nutrition, health and related claims.

Legumes: A definition for nuts, legumes and seeds is not included under chapter 1 – definitions whereas there are definitions for other foods e.g. fruit. The definitions of nuts, legumes and seeds should be included in the Code.

In the draft Code, legumes are described as 'dried legumes' under food group section (d):

Section 1.1.2-2 Definitions - general

food group means any of the following groups:

(d) meat, fish, eggs, nuts, seeds and dried legumes;

It is unclear why *dried* legumes are specified and not other forms (e.g. canned) or why they are not simply stated as 'legumes'.