

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2012-2013, 30 & 31 May and 1 June 2012

Question: E12-138

OUTCOME 1: Population Health

Topic: Health Claims

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Number of pages: 2

Senator: Senator McKenzie

Question:

- a) Could you detail the types of evidence FSANZ uses to develop food standards and regulations?
- b) Can you please outline the scientific evidence used in the decision to label sugar an “at risk” nutrient in proposal P293? Please describe the policy alternatives considered, such as self-substantiation of low-level health claims.
- c) Has the Nutrient Profiling Score Criteria (NPSC) been included in the scope of your stakeholder consultation in the last 5 years? If yes, please confirm when and detail how industry feedback has been incorporated into any revisions of the NPSC.
- d) With respect to P293, has a regulatory impact statement and economic analysis on changes to the food industry been prepared? If yes, could you please detail the findings and recommendations.

Answer:

- a) Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ) has a legislative requirement to develop food standards having regard to risk analysis using the best available scientific evidence. In addition to scientific literature, FSANZ uses a range of information sources, including information provided through broad public consultation.
- b) The current National Health and Medical Research Council’s *Dietary Guidelines for Australians Adults* recommend that sugar and foods containing added sugars be consumed in moderate amounts.

FSANZ has considered a number of policy alternatives for the substantiation of health claims over a number of years, including taking account of policy guidance from the Ministerial Council on Food Regulation (now known as the Legislative and Governance Forum on Food Regulation).

- c) No, there has not been any stakeholder consultation specifically on the nutrient profile scoring criteria (NPSC) in the last 5 years. The structure and detail of the NPSC was settled when the draft Standard was notified to Ministers in 2008.

Prior to 2008, FSANZ consulted extensively with all stakeholder groups on the construct of the nutrient profile scoring criteria (NPSC). Feedback from stakeholder consultation was used to refine the NPSC model. For example, changes to the scoring of protein and sugar were made to accommodate the eligibility of certain foods to carry health claims.

- d) FSANZ commissioned the Centre for International Economics (CIE) to undertake a cost-benefit analysis of the impact of the draft nutrition and health claim Standard. In 2008, CIE estimated the benefit of the Standard, at net present value, was A\$95 million. More recently, an updated cost-benefit analysis by CIE estimated the net benefit at 2012 prices to be A\$83.8 million. FSANZ is revising the regulation impact statement in light of the updated cost-benefit analysis.