

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2013-14, 20 November 2013

Question: E13-181

OUTCOME: 1 – Population Health

Topic: Front-of-Package Labelling

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: McKenzie

Question:

Will the algorithm be amended to better represent the nutritional profile of a product? e.g. How would a product be rated that is high in added sugar (due to the tart taste of the base fruit of a fruit drink), but has compensatory health and nutritional benefits?

Answer:

The Health Star Rating (HSR) system is multidimensional. The underpinning algorithm, known as the HSR Calculator, takes into account four aspects of a food associated with increasing the risk factors for chronic diseases; energy, saturated fat, sodium and total sugars content along with certain ‘positive’ aspects of a food such as fruit and vegetable content, and in some instances, dietary fibre and protein content.

Other nutrients are not taken into consideration in the HSR Calculator, however there are other avenues within the food labelling system that allow appropriately qualified statements to be made on food products, such as the Nutrition, Health and Related Claims standard

Generally, products with added sugar are assigned lower star ratings than those with no added sugar. However, due to the interplay of other nutrients (such as whole fruit), it is not possible to comment on the specific star rating of a product without knowing specific product details.