Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2013-14, 20 November 2013

Question: E13-183

OUTCOME: 1 – Population Health

Topic: Front-of-Package Labelling

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: McKenzie

Question:

One of the scheme development objectives was to ensure it was consistent with the Australian Dietary Guidelines. The revisions of the algorithm for dairy aimed to ensure that `core' foods, as recognised by the Australian Dietary Guidelines, are rated 3 stars and above[1]. Has this been achieved? How have you ensured the scheme is consistent with the Australian Dietary Guidelines?

Answer:

The Health Star Rating (HSR) Calculator uses six product categories as described in the table below.

Category Name	Category Description
Category 1	Beverages other than dairy beverages
Category 1D	Dairy beverages
Category 2	All other food than those included in Category 1, 1D, 2D, 3, 3D
Category 2D	Dairy foods other than those included in Category 1D or 3D (cheeses < 320mg/100g, yogurt and other fermented milk products)
Category 3	Oils and spreads, defined as follows - edible oil as defined in Standard 2.4.1 - edible oil spreads as defined in Standard 2.4.2 - margarine as defined in Standard 2.4.2 - butter as defined in Standard 2.5.5
Category 3D	Cheese and processed cheese as defined in Standard 2.5.4 (with calcium content >320 mg/100 g)

The creation of three distinct categories for core dairy products resulted in a greater differentiation in scores for these products (milk, cheese and yoghurt and alternatives). Core dairy products generally receive a rating of at least three stars, which is a result of adjusting the HSR Calculator (rather than a base score).

In line with the 2013 Australian Dietary Guidelines and Australian Guide to Healthy Eating recommendation to consume reduced and low fat dairy products, higher star ratings are assigned to core dairy products with reduced saturated fat, with full fat counterparts scoring lower star ratings. Products with added sugar are also assigned lower star ratings than those with no added sugar.

Prior to submitting the HSR Calculator to the Legislative and Governance Forum on Food Regulation in December 2013, the Front-of-Pack Labelling Project Committee and Steering Committee agreed that the HSR Calculator is producing accurate and appropriate star ratings for food products in all categories – including dairy, that reflect the nutritional profile of food products and align with the 2013 Australian Dietary guidelines and the Guide to Healthy Eating.