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GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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New Standard for Health Claims after a Nearly 10 Year Process

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Report Highlights:

After almost 10 years, a new standard governing nutrition content claims and health claims on food labels and in advertising became law in Australia and New Zealand in January 2013.

After almost 10 years, a new standard governing nutrition content claims and health claims on food labels and in advertising became law in Australia and New Zealand. Standard 1.2.7 – Nutrition, Health and Related Claims aims to give consumers confidence that nutrition content claims and health claims on food labels and in advertising are supported by scientific evidence. The standard, which became part of the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code in January, is also intended to support industry innovation and to help consumers make informed food choices.

Food businesses have three years to meet the requirements of the new standard, which will address both nutrition content and health claims. Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) and state and territory government agencies will continue to work with the food industry during the implementation period to ensure that the system is operating effectively and that food labels are compliant.

[Nutrition, health and related claims web page](#)

Nutrition content claims are claims about the presence and the amount of certain nutrients or substances in a food, such as ‘low in fat’ or ‘good source of calcium’. These claims will now need to meet certain criteria set out in the new Standard. For example, any food that carries ‘a good source of calcium’ claim will need to contain more than the amount of calcium which is now specified in the Standard.

Health claims refer to a relationship between a food and health rather than a statement of content. There are two types of health claims:

- **General level health claims** refer to a nutrient or substance in a food and its effect on a health function. Under the new standard, health claims must not refer to a serious disease or to a biomarker of a serious disease. For example: ‘**calcium is good for bones and teeth**’ is an **example of an acceptable claim under the new standard**.
- **High level health claims** refer to a nutrient or substance in a food and its relationship to a serious disease or to a biomarker of a serious disease. For example: *Diets high in calcium may reduce the risk of osteoporosis in people 65 years and over*. An example of a biomarker health claim is: *Phytosterols may reduce blood cholesterol*.

Food businesses wanting to make **general level health claims** will be able to base their claims on one of the more than 200 pre-approved food-health relationships in the Standard or self-substantiate a food-health relationship in accordance with detailed requirements set out in the Standard. [Read more about the notification process.](#)

High level health claims must be based on a food-health relationship pre-approved by FSANZ. There are currently 13 pre-approved food-health relationships for high level health claims listed in the Standard.

All health claims are required to be supported by scientific evidence to the same degree of certainty, whether they are pre-approved by FSANZ or self-substantiated by food businesses. Food-health relationships derived from health claims approved in the European Union, Canada and the USA have been considered for inclusion in the Standard.

Health claims will only be permitted on foods that meet the nutrient profiling scoring criterion (NPSC). For example, health claims will not be allowed on foods high in saturated fat, sugar or salt.

Endorsements that are nutrition content claims or health claims will be permitted provided the endorsing body meets requirements set out in the Standard.

Standard 1.2.7 – Nutrition, Health and Related Claims will:

- reduce the risk of misleading and deceptive claims about food
- expand the range of permitted health claims
- encourage industry to innovate, giving consumers a wider range of healthy food choices
- provide clarity for the jurisdictions enforcing the Standard.

More information

- [Nutrition content claims and health claims \(information for industry\)](#)
- [Standard 1.2.7 - Representations about Food](#)
- [The history of the development of the standard](#)
- [Question and answers](#)