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The use of Nutrition and Health Claims on Yoghurts on the Irish Market

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Abstract

The use of nutrition and health claims on food is legislated for in Commission Regulation 1924/2006 and SI No. 11 of 2014. This legislation ensures that any claim made on a food label is clear, accurate and substantiated, enabling consumers to make informed choices. A study undertaken by the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) in 2009 found that yoghurts were the food category with the highest use of nutrition and health claims on the Irish market.

In 2018, the FSAI undertook a nutrition label verification study to verify the accuracy of declared nutrition information on yoghurts. The aims of this study were to measure the use of nutrition and health claims on a sample of yoghurts available on the Irish market in 2018 and assess their compliance with Regulation 1924/2006 Nutrition and Health Claims made on Food.

Yoghurts identified in a 2016 market scan (*n*578) were weighted based on categorisation of manufacturer type (branded, own brand), product category (natural, flavoured and luxury) and declared nutrition content. Samples (*n*200) were randomly selected from these weighted groups for the 2018 nutrition label verification study. A subsample (*n*100) was randomly sampled and checked for presence of nutrition and health claims. Presence of nutrition and health claims was recorded in Microsoft Excel and checked for compliance with Regulation 1924/2006.

Of the yoghurts reviewed, 67% (*n*67) made at least one nutrition claim and 34% (*n*34) made at least one health claim. Of these, 29% (*n*29) made a nutrition and a health claim. Branded yoghurts were more likely to make nutrition and health claims than own brand yoghurts (78% (*n*49) vs. 48% (*n*18)). Of yoghurts with a health claim, 88% (*n*30) were branded and 12% (*n*4) were own brand. Of yoghurts with a nutrition claim, 1.5% (*n*1) made a nutrition claim which was potentially non-compliant with Regulation 1924/2006. Of yoghurts with a health claim, 74% (*n*23) made a health claim which was potentially non-compliant with Regulation 1924/2006. The majority of potentially non-compliant health claims were in relation to probiotic strains and 'live cultures'.

In conclusion, yoghurts continue to be a food category which often uses nutrition and health claims. Nutrition and health claims are more frequently used by branded than own brand products. Potentially non-compliant health claims are an issue amongst this food category which will be further investigated and followed up.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest.