

Transforming Health in Scotland... trans fat panel discussion

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Food and Drink Federation**

FDF is the voice of manufacturers

- Biggest UK manufacturing sector
- Mostly SMEs
- 50,000 employees in Scotland
- Innovative – 8,000 new lines a year launched in UK
- Very important to Scotland's economy
- Scottish sales worth £7.6bn
- Scottish exports worth £3.6bn

Support a British
success story



Industry's priority?

To provide consumers with food
that is safe, nutritious and affordable
– with the lowest possible
environmental impacts

How industry makes a difference

- Reformulation
- New products
- Clearer front-of-pack information
- Workplace wellbeing
- Education – Change4Life



UK industry – leading the world

“UK manufacturers and retailers are now leading the field and setting trends with others around the world are following”

Tim Smith, CEO
Food Standards Agency



Reformulation to enable healthy choice

- Since January 2008, 700 reformulated lines launched
- Reducing salt
- Reducing sugar
- Reducing saturated fat
- Reducing trans fat



Industry in action | Recipe for change

Trans fat – a genuine success story

- Voluntary reductions by industry have seen average intake levels reduce to approx 1% daily energy, as recommended by the World Health Organization.
- This is less than ½ the max intake recommended by the UK government.
- Industry is maintaining its commitment to reduce the levels of TFA to 1% where this does not cause a resultant increase in saturated fat levels.
- Ongoing monitoring agreement with the FSA.

Food Industry data

- ***Margarine and fat spreads*** - now contain less than 1g trans fat/100g.
- ***Biscuits, cakes and pastries*** - the majority now contain less than 1g trans fat/100g. A handful of products contained slightly higher levels due to the presence of butter.
- ***Ice cream***: average trans fat level in ice cream across a representative range of products was 0.2 g/100g.
- ***Crisps and savoury snacks***: majority contain less than 0.35g trans fat/100g in the finished product.
- ***Chips and processed potatoes***: less than 2%.
- ***Chocolate confectionery***: vast majority contain no more than 1g trans fat/100 g.

Trans fat – UK average intakes very low

- 2007 - FSA Board concluded legislation was not necessary because of the excellent work already undertaken by the industry and low intake levels
- July 2009 - FSA Board reconfirmed its decision and *“unanimously agreed that mandatory restrictions [on TFA levels] are unnecessary because voluntary measures taken by the UK food industry has been successful in reducing consumers dietary intakes to low levels (half the maximum recommended average intakes)”*

<http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/consultation/consultationsatfat.pdf>

Trans fat – Scottish intakes

- NDNS data (national diet and nutrition survey) 2001-2002
- LIDNS (low income diet and nutrition survey) 2003-2005
- Yes... individuals on a low incomes tend to have poorer diets.
- LIDNS data did not demonstrate that Scottish from deprived areas consume a higher level of trans fats (1.3% E men; 1.2% E women – thought to be even lower figs now due to further reformulation).
- LIDNS data showed slightly lower levels of TFA intakes in Scotland than the NDNS data.

Trans fat – low income intakes

- Estimated that only 3% of the general adult population consume more than 2% food energy as *trans* FA (Henderson *et al*, 2003), with the figure rising to 9% of males and 6% of females in the low income cohort (Nelson *et al*, 2007)
- Likely to be from fat spreads with relatively high TFA BUT the level of *trans* FA within such sources has been reduced due to action taken by the food industry since these estimates of intakes in LIDNS (Nelson *et al*, 2007) were made.

Trans fat – EU recommendation

- The most recent review of intake data has been undertaken by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA draft Opinion on Dietary Reference Values for Fat, Aug 2009). The Panel recommends that “**there is a limit to which the intake of TFA can be lowered without compromising the adequacy of intake of essential nutrients.** *Therefore TFA intake should be as low as possible within the context of a nutritionally adequate diet.... The Panel also notes that the average intake of TFA in adults in the EU has decreased considerably over recent years’.*

Trans fat – Scottish proposed ban 2009

- FDF opposes the necessity of legislation to limit TFA to <1% ingredient fat level because:
 - food manufacturers have already virtually met the level of 1% ingredient level, where technically possible and do not compromise food safety
 - average intakes data does not support need for legislation – is this is a disproportionate response to the address the problem of poor dietary choices in a minority number?
 - need to look at consumer education, improving whole diet, reduce fast food consumption

Alternatives to legislation

- Voluntary measures are often more achievable, realistic and quicker to implement
- Monitoring challenges with legislation
- Allows for minor variations at the 1% level
- Less burdensome, especially for SMEs, which may go out of business if they can't consistently achieve the 1%
- Supports the local economy
- British Nutrition Foundation suggests targeted work with suppliers in Scotland, especially SME's and fast food outlets – educate and support them to achieve reductions in TFA

Conclusions

- The UK food industry is a genuine success story in trans fat reductions
- This work should be supported and encouraged
- Only a successful industry can meet future challenges and maintain current achievements

