

AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND MINISTERIAL FORUM ON FOOD REGULATION

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MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICES WITH HEALTH STAR RATING

Independent monitoring of the Health Star Rating system has found it is increasingly popular with the nation's food shoppers.

The Chair of the Australia and New Zealand Ministerial Forum on Food Regulation, the Assistant Minister for Health, Dr David Gillespie, today said the monitoring, conducted by the National Heart Foundation of Australia, showed Australians trust the Health Star Rating to inform healthy food choices.

"They understand it. And, more and more, they're using it to inform their choice of food products when they walk along the supermarket aisle," Minister Gillespie said.

The Heart Foundation found that more than three in five Australians who bought a product with the Health Star Rating reported that it had influenced their product choice. One in two bought a product they wouldn't normally buy due to the Health Star Rating. Further, close to nine in 10 of these shoppers said they would continue to buy the product.

At least 150 companies have now adopted the Health Star Rating. More than 8,400 products on supermarket shelves are displaying the Health Star Rating logo.

Excluding brand names, the Health Star Rating remains the third most recognised food logo in the supermarket, with two thirds of Australians having high confidence in it.

With more than 2,500 shoppers responding to its online survey, the Heart Foundation reported a significant increase in the number of shoppers who correctly understand the Health Star Rating. Increasingly, they understand that a product with one star is unhealthy or has little nutritious value, and that a product with five stars is a healthier choice.

Most Australians view the Health Star Rating as easy to understand (74 per cent) and easy to use (75 per cent), and relevant to them and their family.

The Heart Foundation's findings show that, three years on from its introduction, the Health Star Rating is being adopted as a natural part of Australians' food buying behaviour. The findings also indicate the food industry's uptake of and adherence to the system and its guidance documents.

The implementation of the Health Star Rating system to date has been progressing well but there is always room for improvement.

The formal five year review of the Health Star Rating system is currently underway. The Ministerial Forum encourages stakeholders to participate in consultations and looks forward to receiving the report of the independent review in 2019.

The Health Star Rating is clearly helping people to be more discerning about what they eat. Healthy eating is a crucial factor in preventive health, which the Australian Government has made a key priority in its long term national health plan.

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