

FOOD MINISTERS' MEETING

COMMUNIQUÉ

28 July 2023

The Food Ministers' Meeting (FMM) met on Friday 28 July 2023 in Wellington, New Zealand, to consider food regulation and policy matters. The FMM is chaired by the Hon Ged Kearney MP and comprises all Australian and New Zealand Ministers responsible for food. The Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) CEO attended the meeting as an observer.

Key outcomes from the meeting include:

Priority 3 System Modernisation update

In November 2019 Ministers agreed to reform of the Joint Food Regulation System under Priority 3 - Maintaining a strong, robust and agile food regulation system.

Today Ministers agreed to a number of recommendations on concepts for system reform for further scoping and development.

These reforms will strengthen our already strong Food Regulation System even further and ensure it is contemporary, in line with best practice and continues to be based on the best available independent scientific advice.

Ministers also agreed to Strategic Outcomes for the Joint Food Regulation System which focus on food safety, healthy food supply, informed and empowered consumers and a thriving food economy.

Ministers agreed-in-principle to a draft strategic statement to allow for further stakeholder consultation before final agreement. Stakeholders who are [subscribed](#) to receive updates on food regulatory matters will be updated once the consultation opens.

Ministers also noted proposed concepts for further consideration as part of a review of the Food Regulation Agreement (FRA).

Ministers endorsed amendments to the *Aspirations of the Joint Food Regulation System* to better recognise Indigenous peoples and culture as part of the food system.

The Food Regulation Standing Committee (FRSC) will utilise the agreed Strategic Outcomes, System reform concepts and FRA reform concepts to develop detailed plans for the implementation of the strategic direction for the future consideration of Ministers.

Ministers will be provided an update on the progress of implementation in November 2023.

Use of the Health Star Rating (HSR) system on digital platforms

Following substantial growth in the use of online shopping Food Ministers have endorsed the HSR system to be broadened beyond the front-of-physical packaging to include a range of digital platforms.

Additional guidance on the use of HSR on digital platforms will be included in the *HSR System Style and Calculator Guide* and will be published on the [HSR system website](#).

Ministers also endorsed the Monitoring Framework for monitoring of the HSR system.

Improving the composition of the food supply in relation to industrially-produced trans fats

In November 2020 Food Ministers agreed for FRSC to progress work through the Food Regulation Policy Framework to consider options for improving the composition of the food supply in relation to trans fats.

At today's meeting Ministers approved the Consultation Regulation Impact Statement (RIS) and Consultation Plan.

Stakeholders will be invited to submit feedback on the Consultation RIS via the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care's online Consultation Hub in August 2023. Stakeholders who are [subscribed](#) to receive updates on food regulatory matters will be updated once the consultation opens.

Added Sugars Labelling

In 2020, Ministers endorsed a *Policy Guideline on Food Labelling to Support Consumers to Make Informed Healthy Choices*. This includes:

- ensuring information is easily accessed and understood;
- supports consumers to compare foods;
- does not promote consumption of foods inconsistent with the dietary guidelines; and
- takes into account the nutritional content of the whole food, particularly risk nutrients identified in the dietary guidelines, so as to not mislead consumers.

At today's meeting Ministers noted FSANZ's assessment of the proposed policy option of quantifying added sugars in the nutrition information panel (NIP) as requested by Food Ministers. The assessment to date has identified complexities and challenges with implementing this option which indicate it may not achieve Food Ministers' desired policy outcome.

Ministers discussed alternative approaches to stage the delivery of this work, including incorporating a definition of added sugar into the Food Standards Code as a matter of priority, to ensure added sugar claims align with dietary guidelines and then, through appropriate consumer testing, identifying the best way to incorporate added sugars information into the NIP and on front of package labelling.

Ministers agreed to FSANZ undertaking consumer research on alternative labelling approaches to providing contextual information in addition to added sugars in the NIP.

Food Standards Australia New Zealand Act 1991 (FSANZ Act) Review – Progress Update

Ministers were provided with an update on the progress of the FSANZ Act Review and plans for stakeholder engagement and consultation to inform the Impact Assessment process.

Next Meeting

Ministers with responsibility for food will meet again in November 2023.

Visit the Food Regulation website for further information on food regulation activities – www.foodregulation.gov.au