

AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND MINISTERIAL FORUM ON FOOD REGULATION COMMUNIQUÉ

17 July 2020

The Australia and New Zealand Ministerial Forum on Food Regulation (the Forum) met today via video conference to consider a range of food regulation and policy matters. The Forum comprises all Australian and New Zealand Ministers responsible for food, and the Australian Local Government Association, and is chaired by Senator the Hon. Richard Colbeck.

Key outcomes from the meeting include:

Proposal P1050 - Pregnancy warning labels on alcoholic beverages

The Forum confirmed its ongoing commitment to mandatory pregnancy warning labels on alcohol to ensure women are appropriately informed about the advice to not consume alcohol while pregnant.

The Forum considered the review report for Proposal P1050 completed by Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) since the 14th Forum meeting held 20 March 2020. As requested by the Forum, the FSANZ review focussed on the colours and signal wording in the draft pregnancy warning label design.

The FSANZ review re-affirmed Proposal P1050, subject to two amendments: a change to the signal words from 'HEALTH WARNING' to 'PREGNANCY WARNING', and an extended transition period for implementation, from two years to three years.

The Australian Government proposed an amendment to remove the colour prescriptions for the label and instead to prescribe the pregnancy warning label to have contrasting colours in accordance with the general legibility requirements outlined in the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (1.2.1-24). This was not agreed but was supported by South Australia, New South Wales and Queensland.

The Forum accepted the proposed draft standard for pregnancy warning labels. The standard for pregnancy warning labels will now be gazetted and included in the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code. An implementation period of three years will apply from the date of gazettal.

Health Star Rating (HSR) Five Year Review

On 19 December 2019, the Forum published a response to the recommendations of the HSR Five-Year Review. The response included a request for FSANZ to undertake a peer review of the modelling that underpinned the Review, and a request that the Food Regulation Standing Committee (FRSC), supported by FSANZ, provide further advice in relation to:

- definitions for minimally processed fruits and vegetables, and unsweetened flavoured water;

- sugars and sodium levels in the HSR Calculator; and
- interim uptake targets.

Ministers also requested that FRSC develop a Review Implementation Plan, and consider the way edible oils are treated under the HSR system.

At today's meeting Ministers endorsed the Review Implementation Plan and an implementation start date of 15 November 2020; and finalised a response to the outstanding decision points. These are detailed in the attached addendum.

The Forum also agreed that:

- the minimum calcium content for dairy substitute beverages to be considered within HSR would be increased from its current level to $\geq 100\text{mg}/100\text{ml}$, and
- FSANZ's Peer Review, relevant FRSC advice and the Review Implementation Plan will be published on the HSR website in the coming weeks.

The Forum considered a proposal from the Australian Government that 100% fresh fruit and vegetable juice (no added sugar) should receive an automatic HSR score of 5 stars, or be included within the definition of a 'minimally processed fruit and vegetables'. However this was not supported and the status quo (Review recommendations) will be maintained. The Forum requested FRSC consider and provide further advice on the treatment of artificially-sweetened beverages and 100% vegetable and fruit juice beverages at the November Forum meeting.

Application A1155 – 2'FL and LNnT in infant formula and other products

On 17 February 2020, the Forum requested a review of the draft variation to the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code for Application A1155 noting a range of concerns outlined in the formal publication on the [Food Regulation website](#).

Ministers were provided with an update on how FSANZ is addressing the Forum's concerns in relation to Application A1155, particularly the assessment of safety and benefit, the economic benefits of food manufacturing innovation and for infant formula sector exports. Due to the complex nature of the request for review, further work is required. A final review report will be considered by the Forum at its November 2020 Forum meeting.

Next Meeting

The next Forum meeting will be held in November 2020.

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