

The Facts

Information from FDF – the voice of the food and drink sector

GDA labels : boosting UK food literacy

UK food and drink manufacturers have long recognised the importance of providing consumers with clear on-pack nutrition information as a powerful tool for helping them make better-informed choices and improving their overall food literacy.

Since the launch of the UK industry's health and wellbeing action plan in 2004, FDF has been encouraging its members to provide a full nutrition declaration on the back of their packs. We estimate that more than 85% of UK-produced, pre-packed foods now carry detailed nutrition labelling.

Increasingly, such labelling features Guideline Daily Amount (GDA) information – a concept developed in the UK under the auspices of the Institute of Grocery Distribution (IGD) with collaboration from the food industry, government, consumer organisations and nutrition experts. The GDA values are based largely on the Committee on Medical Aspects of Food Policy report on dietary reference values. GDAs were first launched in 1998 and now enjoy high levels of consumer awareness.

In 2006, UK industry responded to growing demands for clear nutrition information to be featured on the front of packs. It was a logical move to take the information already presented on the back of many food and drink products for a decade and put it on the front in an at-a-glance format, focusing on the five key nutrients of most interest to UK consumers – calories, sugars, fat, saturated fat and salt.

Since launch, the GDA front-of-pack scheme has gathered critical mass. More than 75 companies of all sizes have now started using GDA labelling on a voluntary basis – and in a consistent way – on the front of more than 20,000 lines. We estimate that the GDA scheme now features on more than 50% of food and drink packs sold by UK retailers.

Companies using GDA front-of-pack labelling

Aarhuskarlshamn UK	A G Barr plc	Albert Bartlett
Aldi	Apetito	Associated British Foods plc
Baker-Bennetts	Berry World	Bird's Eye
Bokomo Foods	Borderfields	Brakes Food Service
Brioche Pasquier UK	Britvic	Burtons Foods
Cadbury	Calypso	Coca-Cola
Cumbria Seafoods	Danone	Discovery Foods
Dorset Cereals	Dr Oetker	Evron Foods
Findus	Fresh Retail	General Mills
Gerber	GlaxoSmithKline	Golden Wonder
Honey Monster Foods	Hormel Foods	Intersnack UK
Kerry Foods	Kestrel Foods	Kellogg's
Kinnterton Confectionary	Kraft Foods UK	Liberation Foods
Lidl	Mars UK	McNeil Nutritionals
Morrisons	Nestle'	Netto
Nichols	Nisa-Today	Northern Foods
Novotel Hotels	O P Chocolate	PepsiCo
Premier	Pro Pak Foods	R & R Ice Cream
Raynor Foods	Ricola	Seabrook Crisps
Shloer	So-Good	Somerfield
Spar	Stuik	Tate & Lyle plc
Tesco	The Real Potato Company	The Speldhurst Sausage Company
Tunnocks	Tryton Foods	Unilever UK
United Biscuits	Villa Soft Drinks	Westler Foods
Warburtons	Woodwin Catering	Youngs Seafood

Mirror readers embrace GDA labelling

91% of Mirror readers are aware of the labels.

84% of Mirror readers found them easy to understand.

62% of Mirror readers are actively using the labels.

Source: research carried out by The Mirror in January 2008
www.fdf.org.uk/gdas

The big number

20,000 lines

Based on research carried out by TNS Worldpanel, it's estimated that GDA labels appear on the front of over 20,000 product lines, which represents a massive 50% of UK retail food and drink packs.

www.fdf.org.uk

If you want information about anything in this newsletter, please call Abigail Cross 020 7420 7127

Food and Drink Federation **FDF**

Making a real difference

Why we don't colour code our labels

The GDA scheme is based on fact and does not demonise foods.

There is a fundamental difference between the GDA and Multiple Traffic Light (MTL) schemes. GDA labels provide nutritional facts about the food in a pack and show how it would contribute to the diet whereas MTLs offer an assessment about whether 100g of the food is high, medium or low for a particular nutrient without reference to the total diet or the actual serving size.

Traffic Light colours on top of GDA labels could confuse consumers.

Traffic light colour coding is applied per 100g, which creates some confusing results when added on top of per portion GDA information. For example a 10g portion of a spread containing 0.2g of salt would have a red label for salt, whilst a ready meal containing 2.2g of salt would have an amber label. Another example is ketchup, which would be labelled red for sugar (based on 100g), but a normal 20g serving would only contain 5% of the sugar GDA and lets face it, who eats 100g of ketchup in one go?

MTLs are for a narrow band of foods

MTL labels are recommended by the Foods Standards Agency for a certain composite foods and they publicly acknowledge that they are not intended for use across all categories.

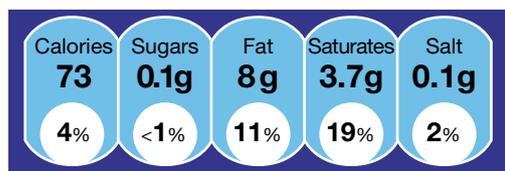
Adding MTLs to GDAs makes them more complex.

We have demonstrated that GDA labels are effective in their current form – adding a further level of complexity by overlaying colours may not serve to simplify them at all. We believe that the key to making consumers more food literate lies in encouraging them to look at what's inside the food they are buying and think about it in the context of their whole diet as a basis for food choice.

How would they work?

The following example shows how adding colour coding on top of GDA labels for spreads doesn't help highlight the healthier option.

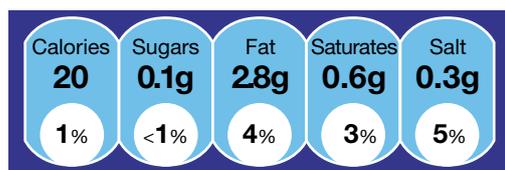
Full fat spread - 10g or one teaspoon contains 19% of your saturates' GDA



Half fat spread - 10g or one teaspoon contains 6% of your saturates' GDA



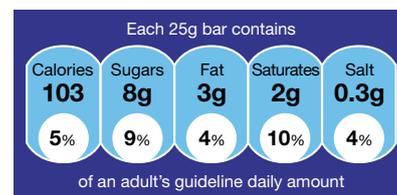
Low fat spread - 10g or one teaspoon contains 3% of your saturates' GDA



So in practical application, the MTL system masks significant differences in the nutritional content of products.

Know What's Going Inside You: www.whatsinsideguide.com

More about GDAs



GDAs were first set in 1998, originally for use on back of pack, following collaboration between UK government, consumer organisations, nutrition experts and the food industry which was overseen by IGD. They were based on the Committee on Medical Aspects of Food Policy report on Dietary Reference Values. This Government report still stands today as the basis for dietary recommendations in the UK and is underpinned by objective, science-based evidence which has not been superseded.

In 2005 a cross-industry technical group, supported by nutrition and academic experts, further developed the GDA concept to include additional GDA values. These included values for children across several age ranges, again primarily based on COMA recommendations. It also revised the salt GDAs based on targets set by the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition. A full set of GDA values, which was endorsed by scientific experts was therefore agreed upon across the food chain.

To begin with, quantitative GDA information was included on food products on the back of pack (and still is on most products in the UK). Research by IGD showed that by 2005 two thirds of the 1,028 respondents had seen the term GDA on food products. Further, of those who claimed to have seen the term GDA on food products, just over two thirds correctly identified the meaning: a "guide to the amount of nutrients a person should be eating in a day".

About FDF

The Food and Drink Federation is the voice of the UK food and drink industry, the largest manufacturing sector in the country. In representing the interests of our members, FDF is focusing on three core priorities:

- Food Safety and Science
- Health and Wellbeing
- Sustainability and Competitiveness

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