



Communauté européenne des coopératives de consommateurs
European community of consumer cooperatives

Brussels, 18th July 2006

EURO COOP'S RECOMMENDATIONS ON NUTRITION LABELLING

EURO COOP IS THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY OF CONSUMER COOPERATIVES, WHOSE MEMBERS ARE THE NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS OF CONSUMER COOPERATIVES IN 17 EUROPEAN COUNTRIES. CREATED IN 1957, EURO COOP TODAY REPRESENTS OVER 3,200 LOCAL AND REGIONAL COOPERATIVES, THE MEMBERS OF WHICH AMOUNT TO MORE THAN 22 MILLION CONSUMERS ACROSS EUROPE.

EURO COOP welcomes the CIAA recommendation for a common Nutrition Labelling scheme, as a voluntary initiative from the industry to provide consumers information in a "consumer-friendly" manner.

However, as already pointed out on several occasions, EURO COOP believes that the increased public interest in nutrition and diet requires making nutrition labelling mandatory. EURO COOP member organizations think that nutrition information should be given to consumers, focusing on the "big eight" nutrients, and in the following order: calories; fat; of which saturated; salt; sugar; proteins; carbohydrates and fibre.

EURO COOP agrees on the fact that the labelling of Guideline Daily Amounts (GDAs) for key nutrients may be particularly effective in enabling consumers to make informed choices, by allowing them to put a single food in the context of an overall diet.

In addition to that, EURO COOP estimates that the quantity of single nutrients should be expressed both on 100mg/100ml basis and per serving, in order to allow consumers to make a quick assessment of the nutrition content of the food, and to compare one product with another one.

EURO COOP looks favourably at providing consumers with simplified nutrition messages i.e. food signposting. However, we think there is no actual need of a EU-wide scheme at this stage. Consumers' expectations regarding nutrition greatly vary according to national, regional or even local cultures and dietary habits. We think that this variety needs to be respected at best. Against this background, we would therefore be supportive of the development of voluntary government schemes or guidelines at national level in order to create a level-playing field amongst food operators and, ultimately, make sure consumers benefit from convergent and meaningful messages.

On the whole, we believe that any food signposting should comply, besides having to be based on sound consumer research, with the commonly agreed principle according to which in nutrition there are no bad and good foods, but only bad and good diets. We would therefore favourably look at the development of signposting schemes that do not make inappropriate distinctions between good and bad foods, but rather provide consumers with objective information and, in so doing, enable them to make informed choices.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

EUROCOOP SECRETARIAT

Tel.: +32. (0)2.285.00.70 Fax: +32. (0)2.231.07.57

E-mail: info@eurocoop.coop

Website : <http://www.eurocoop.coop>

