



FACTSHEET Nutrient Profiles

What are nutrient profiles?

The term nutrient profile refers to the nutrient composition of a food or diet. The purpose of establishing nutrient profiles is to prevent the use of claims masking the true nature of food products, e.g. a lollipop claiming to be 'low in fat', or a milk bottle claiming to 'boost the immune system'. It aims to prevent consumers from being misled where foods high in saturated fat, sugar or salt may be made to appear healthier than they actually are by being accompanied by a health or nutrition claim.

What are health and nutrient claims?

- A health claim refers to the supposed health benefits the food will bring; e.g. 'Good for your bones', 'Good for your heart'
- A nutrition claim refers to the nutritional composition of a food product, e.g. 'Low in fat', 'High in Fiber'

Why are nutrient profiles important?

The development of nutrient profiles is vital as they will be used to determine which food products are permitted to bear claims that promote the positive aspects of the food. Foods that do not fit the set nutrient profile are not permitted to bear a claim.

Is the setting of nutrient profiles a new concept?

No. Nutrient profiling systems have been developed and are already used for a range of purposes in a number of countries including France, UK, Australia and US. Additionally, many companies use their own forms of profiles (criteria) when, for example, developing 'healthy' ranges of products or when determining what foods can/cannot be marketed to children. One of the issues with companies 'own' profiles is that they are developed in a non-transparent manner and they differ from one company to another.

What is the new EU scheme?

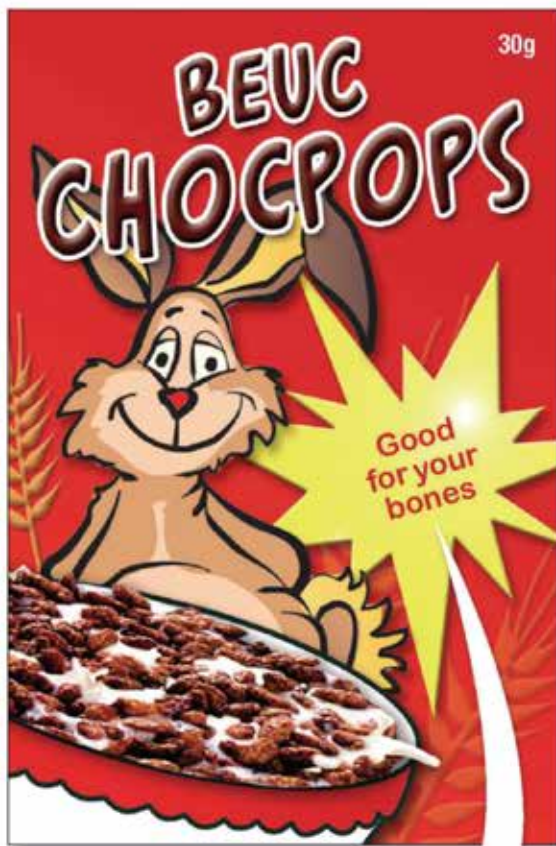
Regulation 1924/2006 foresees that the European Commission should develop nutrient profiles. **These profiles will determine the maximum amounts (thresholds) of saturated fat, salt and sugar that a food product can contain if it is to bear a nutrition or health claim.**

- **Health claim:** If a product contains too much of either saturated fat, sugar or salt, it will not be able to carry a health claim at all
- **Nutrition claim:** If a product is higher than the threshold for one of the three nutrients (saturated fat, salt or sugar), it will be able to carry a nutrition claim, but only if declared, along side this claim, which of these nutrients it is high in. (e.g. a **chocolate snack claim 'source of calcium' accompanied by disclaimer 'high in sugar'**)

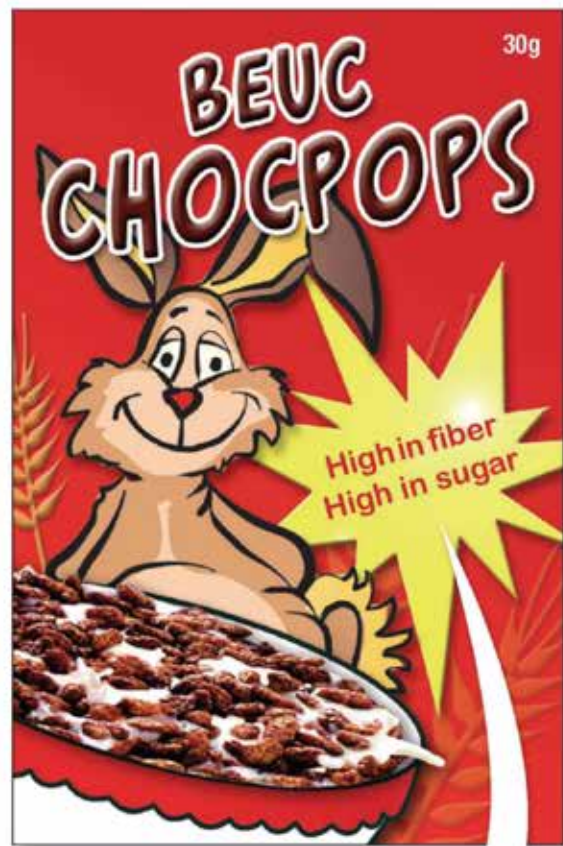


BEUC requests

On the basis of Regulation 1924/2006, these nutrient profiles were due to be developed by the Commission by January 2009. However, almost four years later, we are still awaiting the Commission proposal. Nutrient profiles are a vital and a necessary part of the Health Claims Regulation and will help consumers to make an informed choice. BEUC calls for The European Commission to come forward with its proposal for nutrient profiles as soon as possible. We ask that such profiles be robust and scientific and to be fit for purpose i.e. that they prevent consumers from being misled about the qualities of a food through the use of claims.



With nutrient profiles in place, this health claim would not be allowed for breakfast cereal if the amount of salt, sugar or saturated fat were higher than the defined threshold



With nutrient profiles in place, if the amount of one of the nutrients salt, sugar or saturated fat were higher than the threshold, the nutrition claim 'High in fiber' would still be allowed but only if accompanied by a disclaimer 'High in x nutrient', in this case, sugar