



**EU farmers and their cooperatives' views on the use of FOP
schemes and ongoing developments**

*Joint meeting on front-of-pack nutrition labelling
Brussels, October 2018*

Presentation outline

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V. Our way forward



I. Who are Copa and Cogeca?

Who are Copa and Cogeca?

- Copa: Created in 1958, Copa represents **14 million** European farmers and family members.
- Cogeca: Created in 1959, Cogeca represents **22,000** European agricultural cooperatives.

Our mission?

- To ensure a sustainable, innovative and competitive EU agriculture and an agri-food sector capable of meeting current and future challenges.

How?

- By promoting EU farmers and agri-cooperatives' views to EU decision-makers, the media and the general public.



II. Introduction

- Lifestyle-related health issues, including health inequalities, have increased considerably in recent years.
- Factors that influence how we live our lives include: sedentary lifestyles, poor eating habits and physical inactivity, just to name a few.
- EU farmers and their cooperatives want to help consumers to know more about their food.
- **What is the purpose of FoP nutrition labelling systems?**
 - To guide consumers to healthier options?
 - To help to improve the nutritional quality of diets?
 - To help consumers to interpret the nutrition declaration?
 - To encourage better eating habits and improve diets that are poor due to inadequate intake of some food categories?

III. The essential role of dietary recommendations



- Agricultural products form the **basis of dietary recommendations.**
- Agricultural products are an **essential source of different nutrients needed for good health. They are much more than just energy, salt, sugar or fat.**
- Agricultural products include many different **essential vitamins, fibre, amino acids, essential fatty acids, and minerals.**
- **This needs to be reflected in FoP** if a nutritional assessment about the product is going to be made.



IV. Reflection on the development of FoP nutrition labelling systems in the EU in recent years

Healthy eating logos: e.g. Keyhole or healthy choice logo

- They are **not discriminatory** and help to meet dietary guidelines by **highlighting** healthier alternatives within the different food groups. ✓
- Developed on the basis of **dietary recommendations** and the main food categories of a healthy diet. ✓
- The healthy choice logo **distinguishes between basic and non-basic food groups** (from dietary recommendations). ✓
- With Keyhole, some products that change their recipes do not necessarily qualify if they do not feature in dietary recommendations. ✓

IV. Reflection on the development of FoP nutrition labelling systems in the EU in recent years (cont.)

The traffic light labelling system:

- It is **discriminatory** and tends to draw consumers' attention to what should not be eaten based only on particular nutrients. ❌
- It does not take into account the fact that primary products provide consumers with many **essential nutrients**. ❌
- It can “demonise” some nutrients by **oversimplifying** – e.g. there are different types of fats, some of which are very important for us, e.g. monounsaturated fats present in olive oil or nuts, or polyunsaturated fats present in oilseeds. ❌
- The red light can have a strong negative influence on consumers. It can penalise products which creates a false sense of security by promoting the unlimited consumption of “green” foods. ❌
- It can have **unintended consequences on products that do not carry a label** (e.g. fresh products) or on **products that cannot be reformulated**. ❌
- The system is not compatible with some EU policies, such as the EU agricultural product quality policy, as it penalises high-quality products (Geographical Indications cannot be reformulated). ❌

IV. Reflection on the development of FoP nutrition labelling systems in the EU in recent years (cont.)

Nutriscore:

- It is **less discriminatory** than nutrient-specific schemes as it takes into account the **overall nutritional contribution** of a product by weighting the prevalence of the different nutrients. ✓
- When looking into specific nutrients it makes the distinction between the different types (e.g. it only takes into account saturated fats among the fats). ✓
- It also **gives positive points** to other aspects when weighting the prevalence of the different nutrients: e.g. presence of vegetables, pulses and nuts, fibre and proteins. ✓
- It can have **unintended consequences, in terms of consumer perception, on products that do not carry a label** (e.g. fresh products) or on **products that cannot be reformulated**. ✗
- It is not clear how it is going to work for some food categories (e.g. single ingredient products) ?

V. Our way forward

- Consumers are increasingly interested in knowing more about their food.
- Copa and Cogeca **welcome** the discussions on Front of Pack nutritional labelling.
- Initiatives should aim at **improving the nutritional quality of EU consumer diets.**
- The complexity of the exercise lies in the **consumers' understanding** of these different systems -> an overly simplified approach will result in the consumer misinterpreting the nutrition declaration.
- The development of FoP systems should be **science-based** and **meaningful** for all consumers.
- **Dietary recommendations** are essential and should be reflected in the system – no system should positively promote products that do not feature dietary recommendations or discriminate against agricultural products that are rich in essential nutrients.
- **Education** is key and has a profound impact on dietary choices and eating habits -> it is also important to address all these initiatives in the wider context of **balanced diet, physical activity** and **overall lifestyle.**



V. Our way forward (cont.)

- We need to avoid systems that negatively focus on certain nutrients and that thereby limit and ignore the **overall nutritional contribution** of agricultural products to our diet.
- It is essential to help people to improve the nutritional quality of their diets without making **people feel guilty without due cause** when making certain choices.
- We need to ensure that the **collateral impact of some of these simplistic systems on products that do not carry a label** (e.g. fresh products) or products that **cannot be reformulated**, is avoided.
- **Primary products composed of nutrients that occur naturally are not in a position to reformulate** and therefore there is a risk that this may impact consumer perception.
- This is why we believe that it is important to promote food product improvement. However, this must not be achieved at the expense of or by discriminating agricultural products.
- Developments of these systems should generally be submitted to **public consultation** and for **official scrutiny**.





Thank you



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