
> **From:** Paolo Braghin (ESC)

> Sent: jeudi 19 juillet 2001 17:46

> To: 'sanco.foodclaim@cec.eu.int'

> Subject: Comments to nutrition claims

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> Please, find enclosed some short comments which do not represent the > ECOSOC opinion, but my personal opinion.

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> "Nutrition claim" as defined in Directive 90/496/EEC (see point 16) is linked to the energy (calorific value), so it considers only one aspect of nutrients. As a proposal limited to vitamins and minerals has already be presented, it could be useful to discuss now on all other nutrients, including fibre, antioxidants, aminoacid, etc., in order to avoid "gray zones". A general rule should be to describe the level of a nutrient contained in comparison with the same normal kind of food, in order to compare the same aspects and not only a partial similarity.

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> "Functional claim": the Codex Alimentarius Guidelines do not provide an autonomous definition: defining a "nutrient functional claim" as a nutrition claim that describes..." it seems that only calorific value has a functional claims, what is not correct. The physiological role of a nutrient depends on its bioavailability, which is not the same from food to food depending on their composition, and which is not the same in natural products or in food with the addition of chemical nutrients. So functional activity is related to the characteristics of a specific food, and should be demonstrated particularly for comparative claims.

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> The Food Authority should define guidelines for a good and total diet, and for functional claims in order to allow people to make informed and appropriate food choices. This a primary educational task. Only when such framework will be effective, and scientific evidence built up, health claims and/or disease risk reduction can be debated: the consumer cannot judge on the effectiveness of such claims, that can be demonstrated only trough epidemiological long term studies, and often he trusts on theoretically hypothesis, spending a lot of money without any result.

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> Last but not least, a self-regulating system is not working in a market where scientific information is not reliable or not complete, and where irresponsible producers and traders are diffused: regulation should be the first

step, and in a future fair and transparent market self-regulation will work.

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> For all such claims, a notification system to the competent authorities would facilitate monitoring and allow a prompt reaction, without excessive bureaucratic burden and costs for industry and the public authorities. I suppose the mechanism to be safe enough, if the notification system has been approved recently for clinical trials.

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> Yours Faithfully,

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