Pushing and Pulling: The Caribbean Experience Moving Towards Front-Of-Package Nutrition Labels

Revision of the standard Labelling of Pre-packaged Foods to include FOPL (Update)

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Composition

- RTSC established
- RTSC comprises 11 MS
- Representatives include health personnel, regulators and industry personnel
- Currently being chaired by Barbados
- Committee operates via principally via online meetings
Content of standard

- Scope
- Terms and definitions
- General Principles of food labelling
- Labelling requirements - general and specific
- Additional labelling requirements such as foods for special dietary uses, organically produced foods, etc
- FOPL requirements
• The standard is updated inserting the requirements of the 2018 version of the CODEX Alimentarius Standard for Food labelling

• FOPL Warning label system with criteria for defining Products excessive in the various nutrients.
Process Update

- Working draft developed with FOPL (warning label) included and circulated to RTSC members for review and comments.
- Face-to-face consensus meeting held in Guyana.
- All comments disposed and working draft being amended accordingly.
- Amended draft circulated as a CARICOM Regional Draft Standard (DCRS) to MS for comments.
• Original deadline for comments 11 January, 2019. Comments period extended to 31 March, 2019 upon requests from Member States.
• 113 pages of comments received from 14 Member States.
• Consultant engaged to assist with disposition of comments process.
• Comments disposition commenced with editorial comments at 2 online meetings.
• 2nd. Face-to-Face meeting held in Suriname 14 – 15 May, 2019 to continue comments disposition.
• Time insufficient to address all comments, disposition of comments ongoing via online meetings.
Challenges:

• Availability of RTSC members to attend online meetings for the timely completion of the comments disposition.
• Availability of funding for the face-to-face consensus meeting
• Possibility of shifting FOPL requirements to the Nutritional Labelling standard based on a comment received from two MS.
Next Steps

• Completion of the comments disposition (by July 23, 2019)
• Face-to-face consensus meeting (Last week of July, 2019)
• Update Draft CARICOM Regional Standard (DCRS) to a Final Draft CARICOM Regional Standard (FDCRS)
• Circulate FDCRS to Member States for acceptance (August – October, 2019)
Next Steps Continued

• Submission to CROSQ EC for editing and TMC for validation of the process (September 2019)
• Submission of recommendation to the CROSQ Council (October 2019)
• Submission to COTED for approval (November 2019 or April 2020)
• Upon approval of regional standard:
  – Member States to adopt nationally
  – Administrative provisions to be put in place nationally to give legal effect for mandatory implementation
  – Good regulatory practices to be employed in this regard.
  – Necessary education and awareness campaign develep[ed and implemented.]
Recommendations

• Proposed joint COTED COSHOD Meeting
• Special engagement with the Private Sector in each Member State with presentations on the evidence supporting the “High In” warning label.
• Source resources to host Consensus meeting

• Garner support for the initiative among consumers at the national level through an extensive public education and awareness campaign.
• Meeting at the national level between Health and Commerce/Trade Ministers
THANK YOU

• QUESTIONS?

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