

Abstract

Objective: To reduce confusion and help individuals understand current food label claims about how food is grown or processed within a food system.

Target Audience: Consumers and consumer educators.

Theory, Prior Research, Rationale: In a prior research study, 63.7% of respondents in our state (n=1,208) identified food labels as their major food information source. Unfortunately, there is confusion on the meaning of some label claims about how food is grown or processed (i.e. “natural”) within the food system (Consumer Reports National Research Center, 2015; International Food Information Council Foundation, 2017).

Description: A PowerPoint, “What’s on a Food Label?,” was created to address not only food labeling basics (Nutrition Facts Label, ingredient listings, etc.) but also, many current, confusing claims (i.e. claims about natural, hormones, and GMOs). It was available for download from a webpage and could also be viewed as an online slideshow on the webpage and on a separate national slide-hosting service. Additionally, an online quiz focusing on confusing claims was created. These materials were promoted via national and state electronic mailing lists and social media.

Evaluation: After the materials were placed on the Internet, the slideshow was viewed 3,399 times; the quiz webpage, 1,433 times; and the PowerPoint, 1,576 times (October 4 through December 31, 2017). Fifty-four individuals completed a short feedback form on the webpages; 93% learned something new or reinforced something they already knew. Sample comments included: “Thank you for sharing this! I plan to use it in my food science class!” “I will be showing it to consumers!” “Concise and full of info, encouraging one to read the labels and question the advertising.”

Conclusions and Implications: As nutrition educators, part of our programming should include helping people become more knowledgeable about food label claims that address how food is grown or processed within our food systems.

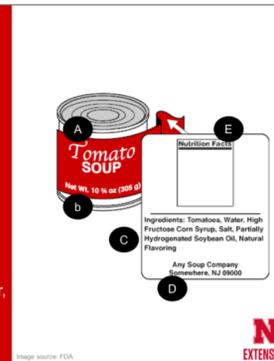
Funded through normal office operating expenses.

Sample PowerPoint Slides



Required Information on All Food Labels

- A. A statement of identity
- B. A net weight or contents statement
- C. An ingredient statement
- D. A statement that gives the name and place of business of the product's manufacturer, packer, or distributor
- E. The Nutrition Facts label



Ingredient Statement & Allergen Labeling

Eight allergens must be identified:

- Eggs
- Milk
- Wheat
- Soy
- Peanuts
- Type of Tree nuts
- Type of Fish
- Type of Shellfish

Nutrient Content Claims

Terms are used to describe nutrients in foods. On labels, these terms have approved definitions.

Nutrient Content Claims

Sugar free	less than 5 calories per serving
Reduced sugar	at least 25% less sugar than regular version
No added sugar	no sugars added during processing or packing, including ingredients that contain sugar such as juice or dry fruit
Sodium free	less than 5 mg of sodium per serving
Reduced sodium	at least 25% less sodium than regular version
Low sodium	140 mg or less sodium per serving
Light/Lite	1/3 fewer calories or 50% less fat than regular version

Hormone Free

- “Free of hormones” or “hormone free” vs. “No hormones added” or “raised without hormones”
- Anything that is or has been alive contains hormones, including plants!

Is there anything in this photo that is “hormone free”?

Pork and Poultry

- Added hormones aren't allowed by USDA in pork and poultry.
- A claim of “no hormones added” on pork or poultry must be followed by the statement, “Federal regulations prohibit the use of hormones.”

We have hormones but no “added” hormones

GMO-Free

- Are you paying extra for a food when none of its ingredients contained GMOs in the first place?
- Which banana is NOT a GMO food?

Sample Participant Comments

“Thank you for sharing this! I plan to use it in my food science class!”

“I will be showing it to consumers!”

“Concise and full of info, encouraging one to read the labels and question the advertising.”

“I particularly liked your attention to GMO labeled foods and what that means (or doesn't mean)!”

“Great conversation starter.”

Download FREE PowerPoint:
<http://bit.ly/food-label-ppt>

50+ Colorful Slides!