

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

FHB(FE)139

(Question Serial No. 0178)

Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified
Programme: (4) Public Education and Community Involvement
Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Miss Vivian LAU)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health
This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume I Page 254 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 8):

It is stated that the Department will “continue to promote the use of nutrition information on nutrition labelling”. In this connection, please provide information on the following:

- (a) the plans to promote the use of nutrition information on nutrition labelling, the details of the plans and the estimated expenditure to be involved;
- (b) the numbers of inspections conducted and non-compliance cases detected, with a breakdown by the type of food products and nature of non-compliance, in each of the past three years (i.e. in 2011, 2012 and 2013);
- (c) whether prosecutions have been taken out against non-compliance cases in each of the past three years (i.e. in 2011, 2012 and 2013); if yes, the number of cases in each of these years;
- (d) the number of complaints regarding the labelling of nutrition information received, with a breakdown by the type of food products and nature of complaints, in each of the past three years (i.e. in 2011, 2012 and 2013);
- (e) whether the Department will conduct a review on the existing Nutrition Labelling Scheme; if yes, the details; if not, the reason(s).

Asked by: Hon. MAK Mei-kuen, Alice

Reply:

The information sought is provided as follows –

- (a) Nutrition labelling education has been part and parcel of the Centre for Food Safety's (CFS) food safety and nutritional education efforts. CFS will continue to promote nutrition labelling to the general public in the coming year through a multitude of activities including announcements of public interest, roving exhibitions and talks. On top of that, to enhance consumers' understanding of nutrition labels and assist them to make good use of nutrition information, CFS will launch a new nutrition labelling training kit and conduct training workshops in 2014. CFS is also organising a “Secondary School Food Safety and Nutrition Labelling Quiz Competition” to enhance secondary school students' understanding of nutrition labelling and food safety with a view to helping them develop healthy eating habits and safe food handling practices. The expenditure of these activities will be absorbed within existing resources and cannot be separately identified.

- (b) In 2011, 2012 and 2013, CFS had checked 5 048, 5 277 and 5 151 nutrition labels of prepackaged food products respectively, with 268 found to be non-compliant. A detailed breakdown of the 268 cases by nature of irregularity and type of food is as follows –

Breakdown of non-compliant cases by nature of irregularity

Nature of Non-compliance	No. of cases (2011)	No. of cases (2012)	No. of cases (2013)
No or incomplete 1+7 nutrition label	24	14	16
Inappropriate nutrition label format	3	3	1
Inappropriate nutrient claim	11	7	14
Inappropriate language	3	3	6
Involving more than one type of the abovementioned irregularities	7	8	3
Discrepancy on declared nutrient value confirmed after chemical analysis	29	38	78
Subtotal	77	73	118
Total	268		

Breakdown of non-compliant cases by type of food

Type of food	No. of cases (2011)	No. of cases (2012)	No. of cases (2013)
Bakery and cereal products	12	20	9
Candies and snacks	9	22	19
Drinks	9	15	31
Oils, sauces and condiments	19	7	22
Others	28	9	37
Subtotal	77	73	118
Total	268		

- (c) No prosecution has been made from 2011 to 2013. Upon detection of non-compliance, traders have either withdrawn the product concerned from the shelf or rectified the nutrition labels according to the statutory requirements of the Scheme.
- (d) From 2011 to 2013, CFS received 124 food complaints against nutrition labelling of prepackaged food. A detailed breakdown of the 124 cases by nature of irregularity and type of food is as follows –

Breakdown of complaint cases by nature of irregularity

Nature of complaint	No. of cases (2011)	No. of cases (2012)	No. of cases (2013)
No or incomplete 1+7 nutrition label	10	17	17
Inappropriate declared nutrient value	20	35	12
Others	3	4	6
Subtotal	33	56	35
Total	124		

Breakdown of complaint cases by type of food

Type of food	No. of cases (2011)	No. of cases (2012)	No. of cases (2013)
Bakery and cereal products	13	25	5
Candies and snacks	8	4	8
Drinks	2	8	3
Oils, sauces and condiments	4	5	2
Others	6	14	17
Subtotal	33	56	35
Total	124		

- (e) The existing Nutrition Labelling Scheme does not cover formula products and foods intended for infants and young children under the age of 36 months. To better protect the health of infants and young children, the Administration has put forward a package of legislative proposals relating to the aforesaid products. The legislative proposals comprise requirements on nutritional composition of infant formulae and nutrition labelling of infant formulae, follow-up formulae and other foods for infant and young children. The Administration has completed the public consultation on the legislative proposals and received strong support for them. It has also reported to the Legislative Council Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene on the outcome of the consultation. The Administration is in the process of drafting the legislation for tabling at the Legislative Council within 2014.