UK Front-of-Pack Labelling Evaluation to Begin

Contributed by BMRB
Monday, 25 February 2008

Jan 16,2008-The project has been commissioned by the Food Standards Agency, with backing from the Nutrition Strategy Steering Group, which is jointly chaired by Public Health Minister Dawn Primarolo and FSA Chair, Deirdre Hutton.
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A study to assess the impact that front-of-pack nutritional labelling is having on people's food choices has taken a step forward â€“ with the contract to carry out work being awarded to research company BMRB.

The project has been commissioned by the Food Standards Agency, with backing from the Nutrition Strategy Steering Group, which is jointly chaired by Public Health Minister Dawn Primarolo and FSA Chair, Deirdre Hutton. The work is being managed by an independent Project Management Panel (PMP).

The PMP has selected BMRB to carry out the research, following the completion of a thorough research tendering exercise, which began in May 2007.

Chair of the PMP, Sue Duncan, says: 'After careful evaluation of tenders submitted, and on behalf of the FSA, we have selected BMRB to conduct this research. They will be working in association with the University of Surrey.

'This is a challenging and complex piece of work. The PMP will work closely with BMRB throughout the project to ensure the research delivers results that are robust and relevant.

'The next stage will be to work with BMRB to fine tune the research design and we are looking forward to working together on this exciting and important evaluation.'

Public Health Minister, Dawn Primarolo, says: 'We know that clear, simple front-of-pack labelling helps consumers make healthier choices and make a positive contribution to a healthy diet. This research will go further to show the most effective way of labelling foods, and will be crucial in making the case for a single labelling system.

'We are working closely with industry on labelling, and hope that they will go further and introduce the best way of labelling in line with what this research recommends.'

Chair of the FSA, Deirdre Hutton, says: 'I am very pleased that this study is about to begin and will be extremely interested to see the conclusions that are drawn from it.

'This is a groundbreaking piece of social research and should give us real insight on the way in which consumers approach purchasing decisions. This will be critical if we are to help people make healthier choices.'

The independent research will look at shoppers' understanding of the main types of front-of-pack nutrition labels in use in the UK (traffic lights, monochrome Guideline Daily Amounts (GDAs) and traffic light colour-coded GDAs) and how they use them. It will assess how these labels contribute to healthier eating choices and which elements of the different schemes best help people to correctly interpret nutritional information on food.

The research will consist of qualitative and quantitative elements and will look at how consumers use these labels in the retail environment and at home.

Following comments from stakeholders, the PMP is now working with BMRB to finalise the detail of the project. The fieldwork is expected to commence shortly and the research will be carried out in phases. The final report is expected to be completed by the end of December 2008.