

Two-Thirds of U.S. Consumers Claim to ,ÄúMostly,Äù Understand Nutritional Information

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Schaumburg, IL, July 31, 2008-Nearly two-thirds (65 percent) of U.S. consumers say they noticeÄ nutritional information on food packaging more often now compared to two years ago, according to a new global online survey by The Nielsen Company.Ä Ä Nielsen also finds that while two-thirds (67 percent) of U.S. consumers claim to ,ÄæmostlyÄæ• understand the nutritional information on food packaging, less than half (44 percent) of global consumers say they do.

,ÄæAs obesity rates continue to rise globally and with lifestyle-related heart disease the number one killer worldwide today, there is increasing pressure on the food industry to play a greater role in educating consumers about what theyÄ™re eating,Äæ• said Deepak Varma, senior vice president, Nielsen Customized Research.Ä ææGiven that so many consumers are taking time to read nutrition labels, there is also a marketing opportunity for food manufacturers to provide consumer-friendly information on labels that may entice shoppers to switch brands at the point of purchase.Äæ•

U.S. Consumers Label-Conscious at Diet Time

For some U.S. shoppers, scanning food labels appears to be routine behavior with 25 percent checking the nutritional information while trying to lose weight, compared to only 15 percent of global consumers.Ä Ä NielsenÄ™s research shows that more than half of U.S. consumers (51 percent) always check the fat content on nutrition labels, while nearly half check food labeling for calories (48 percent) and trans fats (43 percent).Ä

,ÄæThe relationship between consumers and nutritional information and labeling provides unmistakable insight into health and diet concerns,Äæ• said Varma.Ä ææWithout question, nutritional labeling can be a powerful marketing tool for savvy food manufacturers.Ä For example, food marketers can make relatively low investments in pack and labeling changes compared to advertising and promotions and drive significant sales.Äæ•

Other key findings include:

While less than a quarter (21 percent) of U.S. consumers always check the nutritional information on food packaging, nearly half (42 percent) check when thinking of buying a product for the first time.

Eight percent of U.S. consumers never check the nutritional information, consistent with the global average.

Sixty-seven percent of U.S. consumers say they understand the distinct difference between saturated fat and unsaturated fat, slightly higher than the global average (60 percent).

Globally, almost half (42 percent) of consumers check food labels for preservatives, while only 24 percent of U.S. consumers say they do.