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Information document and request for data: Partially hydrogenated oils in the Canadian food supply

May 2016

Bureau of Nutritional Sciences
Food Directorate
Health Products and Food Branch



Canada 

I. Context

The Minister of Health has committed to bring in tougher regulations to eliminate industrially produced *trans* fats in processed foods as per the [mandate letter](#) issued to her by the Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister, in November 2015. Health Canada's Food Directorate is currently analyzing options to achieve this commitment. To facilitate this work, the Food Directorate is issuing a call for data related to the current use of partially hydrogenated oils (PHOs), the primary source of industrially produced *trans* fats, in foods. The information being solicited by this call for data pertains to the amount and *trans* fat content of PHOs used as food ingredients, particularly in products that have faced challenges in transitioning away from PHOs, whether in prepackaged foods, restaurant foods or other food service establishments.

II. Background

There is strong evidence linking *trans* fat intake to coronary heart disease. Since the early 2000s, Health Canada has pursued a multi-faceted approach aimed at reducing the *trans* fat intakes of Canadians, including mandatory *trans* fat labelling, setting voluntary targets for processed foods and establishing an active monitoring and open reporting program to measure industry's progress toward meeting the voluntary targets. These initiatives have generally proven highly successful in reducing *trans* fat levels in the Canadian food supply and bringing the intakes of Canadians closer to the World Health Organization's recommendation of an average *trans* fat intake of less than one percent of total energy. However, despite the significant efforts on the part of industry, research conducted in 2011 indicates that approximately three percent of the food supply did not meet the *trans* fat targets¹. Some of these foods can contribute significant amounts to daily intakes – especially for consumers who consistently choose them. Furthermore, a [risk assessment](#) conducted by Health Canada in 2011 showed that some vulnerable subpopulations, such as children and teens, Canadians living in remote areas and price-sensitive consumers exceed the one percent limit.

The Minister of Health's mandate commitment provides Health Canada the opportunity to address the remaining challenges that are currently preventing the full realization of our public health goal of reducing Canadians' *trans* fat intake to below one percent of total calories. Options through which this commitment can be achieved are currently being analyzed.

¹ Arcand J, Scourboutakos MJ, Au JTC, L'Abbe MR. (2014). *trans* Fatty acids in the Canadian food supply: an updated analysis. Am J Clin Nutr. 100(4):1116-23.

III. Request for scientific data and information

Health Canada's Food Directorate is requesting information from the following industry stakeholders on specific foods in which PHOs are still being used:

- Fats and oils processors
- Manufacturers
- Importers
- Retailers
- Restaurant and foodservice operators
- Restaurant and foodservice distributors

The information being solicited by this call for data pertains to PHOs used as food ingredients (for example, hydrogenated soybean oil) and as components of food ingredients including cooking oils, margarines, salad oils, simulated dairy products, shortening or foods that resemble margarine or shortening. PHOs used as raw materials to synthesize other ingredients are outside the scope of this data call. Further, this data call does not apply to the use of conjugated linoleic acid (CLA) as a food ingredient. On product labels, PHOs are identified as "hydrogenated" oils in the list of ingredients (Section B.01.010, *Food and Drug Regulations* (FDR)).

For each food in which a PHO ingredient is used, the Food Directorate is requesting the information described in items (a) to (e). If certain information is not available, it is requested that this be indicated in the response. Refer to Tables 1 to 3 as examples of how to format the information requested in items (a) to (c). Mock product examples are also included in these tables.

a) General product information (Table 1):

- Universal Product Code (UPC)
- Brand name
- Product name
- Product type
- Indicate whether the product is imported or manufactured by the company who is responding
- Serving size

Table 1: General product information: sample template and examples

General product information						
Example	Universal Product Code (UPC)	Brand name	Product name	Product type	Is the product imported or manufactured by the company responding?	Serving size
1	777777777777	Yummy pies	Original recipe pie crust	Bakery - mix	Yes, manufactured	100 grams
2	555555555555	Margarino	Margarino Smooth Margarine	Margarine	Yes, imported	10 grams
3	N/A	N/A	Oatmeal cookie	Bakery - finished product	No	15 grams

b) Information on the PHO ingredient(s) used in the food described in (a). For each PHO ingredient, please provide (Table 2):

- Name of PHO ingredient
- PHO ingredient supplier
- Amount of *trans* fat in the PHO ingredient (g/100 g PHO)
- Amount of PHO ingredient in the recipe (g/100 g on input basis)
 - For products which are fried in PHO, the PHO is considered a part of the recipe. In this case, provide an estimate of the PHO ingredient absorbed into the final product (product as sold).
- The purpose for adding PHO ingredient(s) to the product
- The reason for continued use of PHO ingredient rather than alternatives
 - The rationale that there is no suitable alternative is insufficient on its own and will require additional support, including references.

Table 2: Partially hydrogenated oil ingredient(s): sample template and examples

Partially hydrogenated oil ingredient(s)						
Example	Name of PHO ingredient	PHO ingredient supplier	Amount of <i>trans</i> fat in the PHO ingredient (g/ 100 g PHO)	Amount of PHO ingredient in the recipe (g/100 g on input basis)	Purpose of PHO ingredient in product	Reason for continued use of PHO ingredient
1	hydrogenated soybean oil	P&J supply	27.0	39.0	texture and shelf life	lower cost
2	hydrogenated canola oil	P&J supply	27.0	35.0	shelf life	lower cost
	hydrogenated soybean oil	P&J supply	12.9	50.0	shelf life	lower cost
3	partially hydrogenated margarine	A&B suppliers	20.0	35.0	texture, mouth-feel	lower cost

c) Information on the finished product (product as sold) (Table 3):

- Amount of *trans* fat (g/100 g finished product)
- Indicate source of information for *trans* fat content as:
 - Calculated: as determined by software used to calculate nutrient values
 - Label data: as listed in the Nutrition Facts Table
 - Laboratory data: as determined by analytical testing
- Include a list of other ingredients in the product recipe which could provide naturally occurring *trans* fat
- Amount of total fat (g/100 g finished product)

Table 3: Finished product (product as sold): sample template and examples

Finished product (product as sold)				
Example	Amount of <i>trans</i> fat in finished product (g/100 g finished product)	Source of information for amount of <i>trans</i> fat	List other sources of naturally occurring <i>trans</i> fat in the product	Amount of total fat (g / 100 g)
1	10.0	laboratory data	milk	30
2	15.9	laboratory data	none	85
3	7.0	calculated	none	29

d) Place of sale

- Provide a list of the stores or restaurants where the food is sold.

e) Demographic information:

- If available, provide information on the demographics of product consumers such as gender, age, ethnicity, province of residence, education and income.

Information provided to the Food Directorate will be used to help develop options to fulfill the Minister's mandate commitment.

IV. Information and data

Information and data may be submitted in writing either by regular mail or electronically at the address indicated below. If you are submitting information or data electronically, please use the words "**Partially Hydrogenated Oils Data and Information**" in the subject box of your e-mail. Company name and contact information should be included with the data submission. Refer to Table 4 in the Appendix for more details.

This call for data will close in 30 days at 11:59 pm EST on June 29, 2016.

In order to facilitate the submission of information and data, a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet containing tables 1 to 4 is available upon request by contacting the email address indicated below.

Mailing address:

Health Canada, Bureau of Nutritional Sciences
251 Sir Frederick Banting Driveway, Postal Locator: 2203C
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0K9

E-mail address: Nut.Labelling-Etiquetage@hc-sc.gc.ca

Confidential and/or unpublished information

Health Canada recognizes that some of the available information and/or relevant data that is being requested may be unpublished or of a confidential nature. If submitted, unpublished information would remain the property of the submitting organization or individual and its confidentiality will be safeguarded in so far as it is possible to do so within current regulations governing such issues. Specific issues relating to confidentiality should be discussed directly between the information owners and Health Canada. For these and other issues please contact the Food Directorate's Bureau of Nutritional Sciences through the contact information provided above.

V. Appendix

Table 4: Contact information

company information	
Company name	
Type of company ¹	
Company address	
City	
Province/state	
Postal code/zip code	
Name of contact person	
Phone number	
Email address	

¹ For example, fats and oils processor, manufacturer, importer, retailer, restaurant and foodservice operator or restaurant and foodservice provider.