

Implementation of the Nutri-Score, a front-of-pack label, in France



TYPE STATUS	Implemented action In progress	LAST UPDATE September 2021	FRANCE • NATIONAL Cancer Prevention • Diet & Nutrition
------------------------------	--	--------------------------------------	--

PROBLEM & OBJECTIVE

PROBLEM The Nutri-Score is a front-of-pack nutrition label (FOPL) to be affixed on pre-packed food products. The Nutri-Score was developed by an independent academic research group, and takes into account the main nutritional elements of concern from a public health perspective (energy density, saturated fatty acids, sugars, salt, fibers, proteins (as a proxy for iron and calcium) and fruit, vegetables, pulses, nuts and favourable vegetable oils).

OBJECTIVE Improving consumer information at the point of purchase so that they can make healthier food choices. Modifying the food environment by encouraging manufacturers to improve their food products towards healthier compositions through reformulation and innovation and helping health professionals to provide nutritional advices.

CONTACT

Ministère des solidarités et de la santé
Jean Christophe Comboroure jean-christophe.comboroure@sante.gouv.fr
Isabelle de GUIDO-VINCENT-GENOD -
Isabelle.DE-GUIDO@sante.gouv.fr

Santé publique France (French national public health agency)
Anne-Juliette Serry anne-juliette.serry@santepubliquefrance.fr
Pauline Ducrot pauline.ducrot@santepubliquefrance.fr

Nutritional epidemiology research team
Paris 13 University
Pr Serge Hercberg s.hercberg@eren.smbh.univ-paris13.fr
Pr Chantal Julia c.julia@eren.smbh.univ-paris13.fr

KEY COMPONENTS / STEPS

- The Nutri-Score was developed by an independent research team expert in nutritional epidemiology, the Nutritional Epidemiology Research Team (Inserm). The validation of the Nutri-Score led to more than 40 scientific publications in international peer-review journals, covering various dimensions of the intervention.
- A large concertation process for two years under the umbrella of the Health ministry involved all interested stakeholders in an advisory group to select the final format of the front-of-pack nutrition label: industry officials, research groups, consumers associations, health authorities, etc. As no agreement could be reached during the concertation period, a large scale trial was conducted for several weeks to test the various FOPL options proposed by stakeholders, at the end of which the Nutri-Score was selected as the most efficient format.
- The Nutri-Score was adopted officially by the Ministries of health, agriculture and economy in France in October 2017. After its adoption, a large communication campaign was conducted by Santé publique France.
- As of June 2020, more than 415 companies have adopted the Nutri-Score, including large corporations (Danone, Nestlé and retailers). In March 2021, it was more than 600 companies who committed to the label.
- Following France, several countries in the EU region have now adopted the Nutri-Score: Belgium, Germany, Switzerland and Luxembourg. Spain and the Netherlands have announced their intention to adopt it. These 7 countries are now included in a transnational governance of the Nutri-Score to ensure a coordinated implementation of the system.

KEY CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

- France has developed a national program to tackle nutrition-related NCDs, the French National Nutrition and Health Program, which develops interventions and regulations to improve the nutritional status of the population.
- Health authorities (Ministry of Health, Santé publique France) are in charge of the national strategies to promote the Nutri-Score to manufacturers and the population.
- Santé publique France, who owns the trademark "Nutri-Score" ensures the dissemination of information on the label to the population and regularly survey the population's perception, understanding and use of the Nutri-Score. Santé publique France also provides support to help manufacturers and retailers to implement the Nutri-Score. Oqali is responsible for monitoring the uptake from manufacturers (<https://www.oqali.fr/>) and the effects on food reformulation.

MAIN IMPACTS / ADDED VALUE

- The adoption of an official FoPL limits the development of competitor labels. Industry resistance is however still strong in certain food sectors in which uptake is therefore limited. The EU regulation which stipulates that FOPLs can only be voluntary is a key limitation to the effectiveness of the Nutri-Score.
- The Nutri-Score provides simplified information on the nutritional quality of food products, allowing making informed choices at the point of purchase and improve the nutritional quality of the diet. It also encourages product reformulation, leading to an improved food offer, which could benefit to all people.
- The Nutri-Score participates in the prevention of nutrition-related non-communicable diseases with a specific aim at reducing social inequalities in nutrition and health.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Large consultation process involving all interested stakeholders to select the final and more effective format of the front-of-pack nutrition label (industry officials, research groups, consumers associations, health authorities, etc.) and including an evaluation of the impact of different front-of-pack labels on consumption behaviors in supermarket.
- High uptake by manufacturers, including both small businesses and large corporations: >600 manufacturers and retailers have adopted the Nutri-Score in March 2021.
- Large support among consumer associations.
- Dissemination of the measure outside of France, with several EU countries having adopted the Nutri-Score.

REFERENCES & DOCUMENTATION

- All studies (more than 40 publications, to date) have been published in international peer-reviewed journals

More over
[IPAAC](#)
[Roadmap](#)