



24 December 2014

Food Standards Australia New Zealand
Boeing House
55 Blackall Street
BARTON ACT 2600

Attention: Standards Management Officer

Proposal P1035: Gluten Claims about Foods containing Alcohol

The Food & Beverage Importers Association (“FBIA”) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Call for Submissions in relation to Proposal P1035: Gluten Claims about Foods containing Alcohol. By way of background, the FBIA is an industry association that represents importers of food and beverages, both retail ready and ingredients for further processing, into Australia.

The FBIA supports (1) the amendment to Standard 1.2.7 proposed by Proposal P1035 and (2) the request by the Australian Food & Grocery Council (“the AFGC”) that FSANZ consider an additional amendment to paragraph 3(b) of Standard 1.2.7 so that nutrition content claims about salt or sodium can also continue to be made in relation to food containing more than 1.15% alcohol by volume.

Gluten Content Claims

Proposal P1035 will permit nutrition content claims about gluten content in relation to food containing more than 1.15% alcohol by volume (including beverages) to be made after 18 January 2016. In other words, claims that were permitted under Standard 1.2.8 – Nutrition Information Requirements and may still continue to be made under the transitional arrangements for the implementation of Standard 1.2.7 will remain permitted at the end of the transitional period in January 2016.

The Proposal therefore simply continues the current provision of information to consumers with coeliac disease that assists them in making appropriate choices within the range of alcoholic beverages and other food containing alcohol.

Food & Beverage Importers Association

Email: fbia@fbia.org.au

Telephone: (03) 9639 3644

Facsimile: (03) 9639 0638

181 Drummond Street,

Carlton, Victoria 3053

ABN 53 932 472 760



Salt/Sodium Claims

The AFGC request is that FSANZ consider a further amendment to the Code under P1035 to permit nutrition content claims about salt or sodium in food containing more than 1.15% alcohol by volume.

Clause 3 of Standard 1.2.7 – Nutrition, Health and Related Claims prohibits nutrition content claims in relation to a food that contains more than 1.15% alcohol by volume (except for nutrition content claims about energy or carbohydrate content). The consequence is that salt claims, such as “reduced salt”, will not be permitted on foods containing more than 1.15% alcohol by volume after the transitional period for implementation of Standard 1.2.7 ends in January 2016.

There are, however, products currently available in the market that do contain more than 1.15% alcohol and about which salt claims such as “reduced salt” are made. Such products are naturally brewed or fermented soy sauces. Although not what would ordinarily be considered a “food containing alcohol”, the natural fermentation process breaks the wheat starches down to sugars and part of the sugar is then changed into alcohol, with a level generally above 1.15%.

The other method of producing soy sauce is by acid-hydrolysis, but this method does not result in an alcohol by-product.

Currently there are varieties of both traditional and acid-hydrolysed soy sauces that are legitimately labelled as being “reduced salt”, as the sauce contains 25 percent less sodium than its normal counterpart. The effect of Clause 3, Standard 1.2.7, however, is that the only variety of soy sauce that may be permitted to be labelled with a reduced salt claim is that made from acid-hydrolysed soy protein. Traditionally produced soy sauces will be prevented on account of the alcohol content present as a result of the fermentation process.

Soy sauce is intrinsically high in salt and in keeping with attempts to reduce salt consumption, there is very good reason to provide consumers with a reduced salt variety. The method of production should not be a determining factor in whether a salt claim may or may not be made.

We believe that this situation is analogous to the “gluten content” claim discussed in the first part of these comments. There has not been a considered decision to prohibit the making of “salt reduced” claims on naturally brewed soy sauce; rather, the



complexities of soy sauce production have not been brought to FSANZ's attention and the barrier to salt claims by traditionally brewed soy sauce is an oversight.

If permission for salt/sodium claims is maintained as requested, consumers will continue to have access to information about salt/sodium (e.g. "reduced salt") in foods containing alcohol, such as traditionally brewed soy sauces. If the permission is not maintained, then consumers are likely to be confused as some soy sauces will continue to be labelled as "reduced salt" and others that were labelled "reduced salt" will be prohibited in making that claim. The ability of consumers to make informed choices about soy sauce products will be diminished and producers of traditionally produced soy sauces will be unfairly disadvantaged in the market for no reason of health consequence.

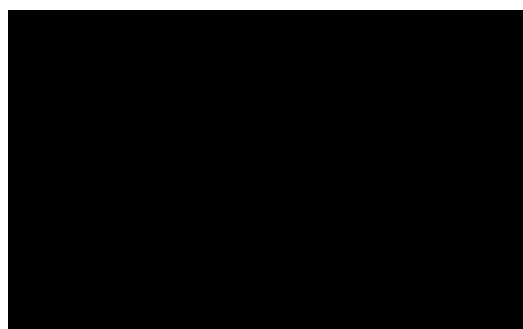
Summary

(1) Proposal P1035 to continue the permission for nutrition content claims about gluten content in relation to food containing more than 1.15% alcohol by volume is supported.

(2) The request to vary Standard 1.2.7 by omitting from paragraph 3(b) "energy content or carbohydrate content", and substituting "energy content, carbohydrate content, gluten content, salt or sodium content" is also strongly supported.

Should you have any questions on the above, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,



A J Beaver
Secretary