

Ed Komorowski  
Technical Director  
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Reference: NUD 32

Dear Ed

I am writing on behalf of Melanie Johnson, Parliamentary Under Secretary for Public Health, and Sir John Krebs, Chairman of the Food Standards Agency, to thank you for your letter of September 2004, giving details of the commitment made by Dairy UK.

Salt reduction remains a priority for Government as outlined in the recently published White Paper on Public Health. The Food Standards Agency's new Strategic Plan confirms our commitment to work with industry to reduce the salt intake of the population to 6g/person/day by 2010.

We are therefore pleased to hear of the work that is being taken in this area, and the contribution that you have made to the development and implementation of salt reduction plans. We welcome the commitment that has been made to reduce the salt content of cheese by 5% this year, and a further 5% the following year, if possible. We understand that this is particularly difficult in some food products like cheese, which makes the commitment from Dairy UK all the more welcome. We also appreciate the work that has gone into the development of the cheese salt model, as well as raising awareness of the need for salt reductions amongst your members.

Details of salt reduction plans will be shortly published on the Food Standards Agency and Department of Health websites. Please find enclosed the details we have on salt reduction for your company.

It is important to the FSA to receive long-term salt reduction plans with stepwise commitments to reductions commensurate with achieving the 6g population intake target by 2010. It would be helpful to hear more about what Dairy UK's plans for future reductions might be, after the initial 5-10% reductions are made.

Openness and transparency are obviously very important; and as such is would be of great help to the Agency if you could provide data on current and proposed salt levels, per 100g of food, so that it is possible to monitor and verify the salt reductions made.



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As you already be aware, the FSA/DH programme of work with industry on salt reduction for 2005 will include work in the following areas:

- obtaining long term plans backed up with clear data for all sectors;
- focusing on foods which contribute most to salt in the diet, including meat and cereal products;
- establishing cross industry projects on pizzas, ready meals and sandwiches;
- increasing the emphasis on public procurement and the catering sector;
- and establishing targets for ten key product categories and developing a 5-year framework for salt reporting.

You will be interested to note that the FSA Salt Model has been revised to separate processed and unprocessed foods in a number of product groups. The target average sodium values, however, have not changed and remain as they were in the original model. The changes that have been made should address the comments made about the groupings of products but if you have any further comments we would be interested to hear them.

The FSA also understands the need to ensure that consumers are adequately informed about the dangers of eating too much salt and is currently considering the next phase of its public campaign.

The Agency and Department of Health are now considering the potential opportunities to reduce intakes of saturated fat and sugar through changes in the composition of foods in line with commitments made in the FSA's new Strategic Plan and the Public Health White Paper. We will be developing action plans in consultation with stakeholders over the next few months.

We see close working with industry as an essential component of this strategy and very much value your input in this respect. It would be helpful if you could provide an update on progress and revised salt reduction plans by March 2005. If you feel it would be helpful to meet to discuss this or any other aspect of our work please contact Henry Odeje on 020 7276 8933 to arrange a meeting.

Yours sincerely



pp Rosemary Hignett  
Head, Nutrition Division

Company/ Organisation	Product Group	Commitment (per serving (ps), per portion (pp) or per 100g)	Date to achieve commitment	FSA Salt Model Target (mg sodium per 100g)
<p>Dairy UK submitted plans in February, indicating that manufacturers would evaluate the potential to reduce the salt content of processed cheese, and that Dairy UK would collaborate with suppliers of cultures used in cheese making to investigate the possibility of using strains of organisms less tolerant to salt. In April, Dairy UK and Dairy Crest agreed to work with members to establish a salt model specifically for cheese, setting different targets for different cheeses, by the end of September.</p> <p>At a meeting with officials in September, Dairy UK submitted its cheese model. This was also included in its September plan, together with a commitment to reduce the salt in UK cheeses by 5% over the next year and a further 5% if possible the following year.</p>	Cheese	5% over next year then further 5% if possible the following year	Over next 2 years	500mg, or 1.25g salt