



Summary of Remarks
To FDA Public Hearing on
Use of Symbols to Communicate Nutrition Information
September 10 - 11, 2007

"Food Industry Perspective on Use of Symbols to Communicate Nutrition Information"

Regina Hildwine
Senior Director, Food Labeling and Standards
Grocery Manufacturers/Food Products Association

General Remarks

- In 2005, FDA challenged the food industry to compete by using the health and nutrition characteristics of foods. This challenge prompted many food companies to reformulate products. FDA also encouraged food companies to experiment with labeling presentations on calories and serving sizes. Food companies have taken this encouragement seriously, and many are using label surfaces and labeling techniques, such as symbols and graphic designs, that supplement Nutrition Facts in order to communicate this information.
- The symbols used on food labels are voluntary label elements that are truthful and non-misleading. GMA/FPA believes that use of symbols on food labels and labeling should remain voluntary.

Nutrition Symbols as Representations about the Food

- The chief purpose of many nutrition symbols used on labels and labeling is to provide positive dietary guidance messages to consumers, to help them meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and implement the guidance in MyPyramid (itself a common symbol on food labels and labeling). As such, they are grounded in sound science, and are consistent with the policies set forth by the federal government, and by FDA specifically, on communicating dietary guidance and similar representations about the food.
- Nutrition symbols used on labels and labeling of foods are designed to send positive and helpful messages to consumers. It is important that consumers understand the

2007N-0277

TS13