

## **The Whole Grain Stamp**

Cynthia Harriman, Director of Food & Nutrition Strategies for Oldways and the Whole Grains Council, will speak on the success of her organization's Whole Grain Stamp program, which was developed and designed as a tool to help consumers quickly identify whole grain products in stores and restaurants, thus helping them increase their consumption of whole grains for better health.

- I. Overview
  - a. The WG Stamp is a program of the Whole Grains Council
  - b. WGC is part of Oldways, a 501c3 educational non-profit.
  - c. Our goal at Oldways and the Whole Grains Council is to educate consumers and provide tools and incentives for healthier eating, as we have for a decade and a half.
- II. What the WG Stamp stands for
  - a. It's a nutrient-specific symbol, not a summary symbol.
  - b. It does not make health claim.
  - c. Only on products with at least 8g of whole grain
  - d. Number of grams is stated on the Stamp
  - e. Foods where all the grain is whole grain can add "100% whole grain" banner
  - f. Our website address leads consumers to info on health benefits of whole grains
- III. How we developed criteria for the WG Stamp
  - a. Created as tool to support the 2005 Dietary Guidelines.
  - b. Consistent with long-time definition of 16g as one grain serving.
  - c. Goal = alternative to "all or nothing" choice between refined and 100% whole grain.
  - d. Consultation with FDA, USDA, consumers, health experts and industry along the way. Such a system has to work for everyone involved.
- IV. Our health education programs support the symbol
  - a. Website and media work to educate consumers
  - b. Outreach to RDs, teachers, other health educators through educational materials on our website and through support materials (share examples of partnerships).
- V. The WG Stamp is successful in helping consumers find whole grain products
  - a. Share samples of consumer emails.
  - b. Harris Interactive poll; Focus groups
  - c. Examples of confusion when "read ingredients" is the only way to find whole grains.
  - d. The WG Stamp is a widespread industry standard – over 1400 products, support from 170 companies. Consumers need a consistent message over time to change to healthier habits.
  - e. A well-considered program from an educational organization has advantages over a complex government program or a company-specific patchwork of symbols.
- VI. The WG Stamp is successful in nudging industry toward healthier products
  - a. Some companies call us for specifics, are surprised to learn their products are really whole grain and don't qualify.
  - b. Some have reformulated to meet criteria or to beat competitors' gram numbers.
  - c. Not just reaching bare minimum: 3/4 of products using WG Stamp have 16g or more.
  - d. Completely voluntary program, very minimal cost to manufacturers

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# **The Whole Grain Stamp**

**Helping Consumers Easily Identify  
Whole Grains in Stores & Restaurants**

## **Cynthia Harriman**

Director of Food & Nutrition Strategies  
Oldways & the Whole Grains Council

**FDA Public Hearing**  
September 10-11, 2007

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**The Whole Grains Council**



**Oldways Preservation Trust**

# The Whole Grain Stamp

- What the Whole Grain Stamp is
- Why it was needed
- How it was created
- The education and outreach that supports it
- How consumers use the WG Stamp
- How it nudges industry in a healthier direction



# The Whole Grains Council

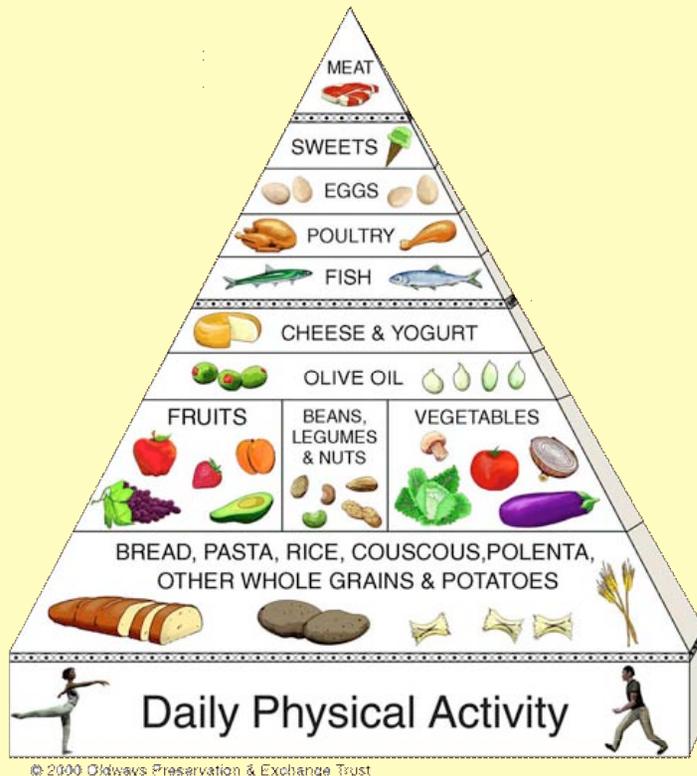
The Whole Grains Council is a nonprofit consumer advocacy group working to increase consumption of whole grains for better health.

## The Council's many initiatives

- encourage manufacturers to create delicious whole grain products and assist them in doing so
- help consumers find whole grain foods and understand their health benefits
- help the media write accurate, compelling stories about whole grains.

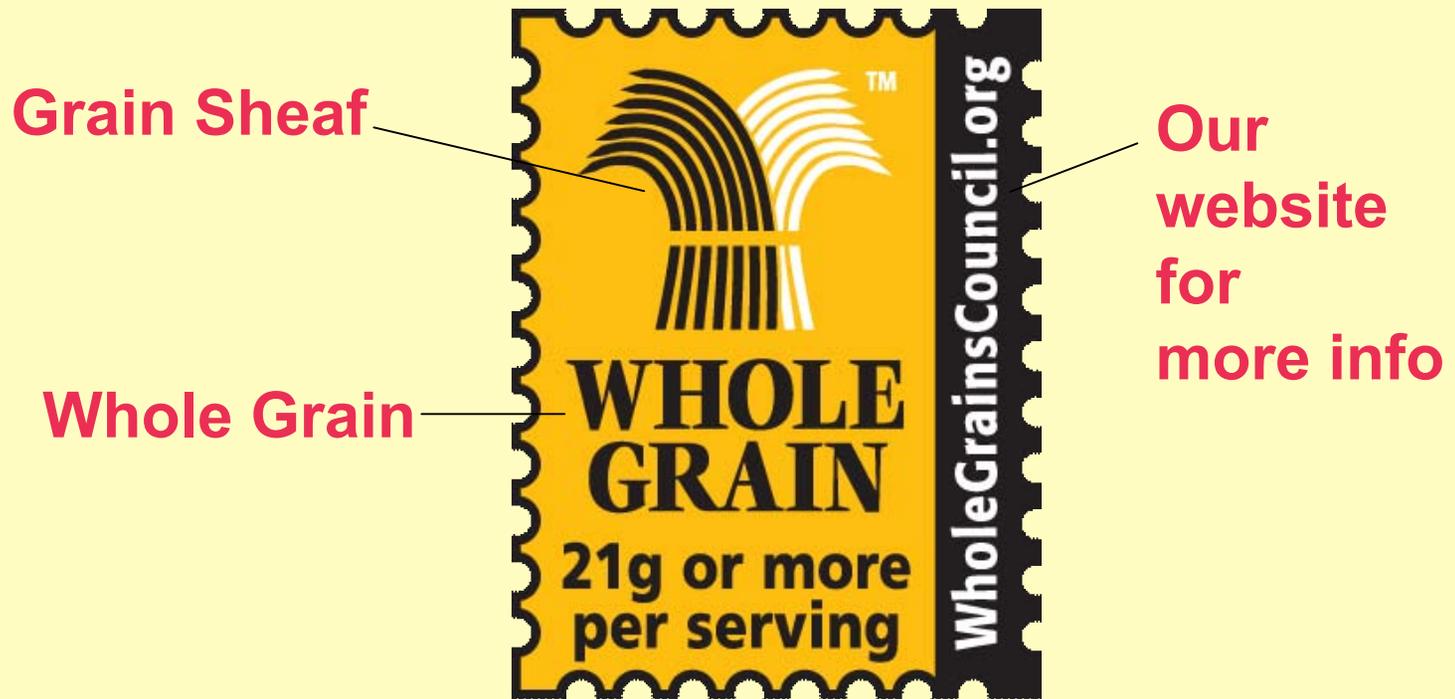


# Oldways



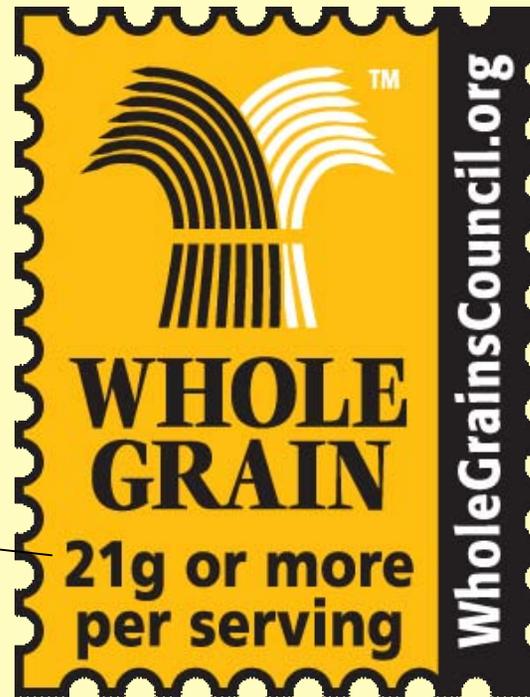
- Creators of the Mediterranean Diet Pyramid
- 501(c)3 non-profit
- Pioneer in developing & organizing effective programs and materials about healthy, traditional and sustainable food choices
- Work with consumers, scientists, food companies, health professionals, chefs, journalists and policy makers.

# The Whole Grain Stamp



# The Whole Grain Stamp

Grams of  
whole grain  
per labeled  
serving



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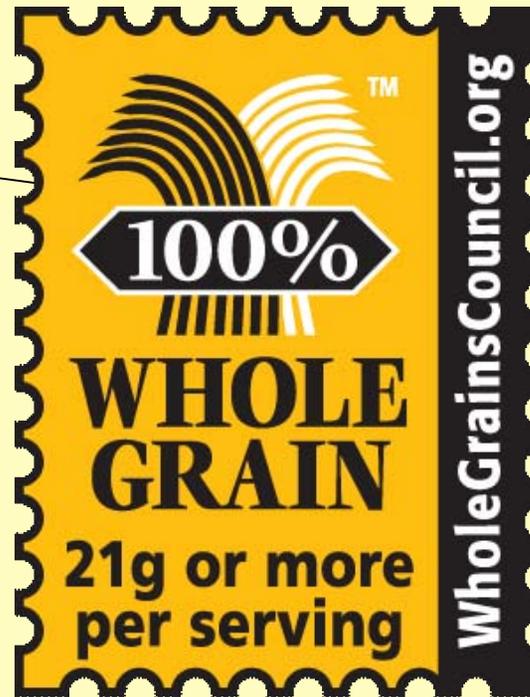
The Whole Grains Council



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# The Whole Grain Stamp

100%, if all the grain is whole grain; there is NO refined grain



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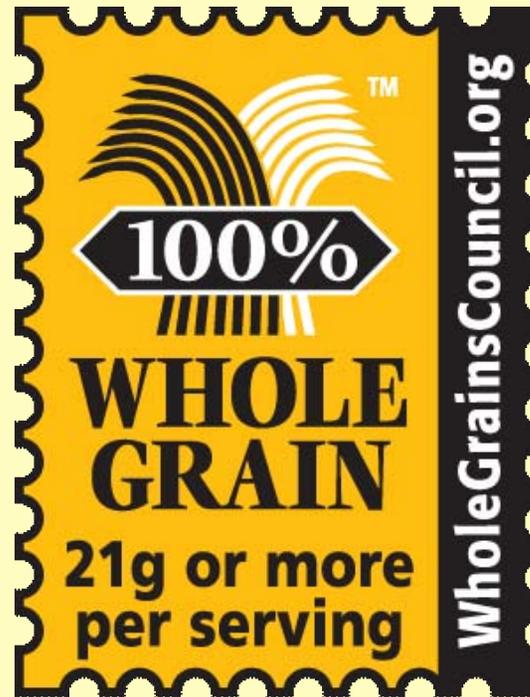
The Whole Grains Council



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# The Whole Grain Stamp

Minimum  
Dietary Guidelines  
Recommendation  
for context



**EAT 48g OR MORE OF  
WHOLE GRAINS DAILY**

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The Whole Grains Council



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# The Whole Grain Stamp

- A nutrient-specific symbol, not a summary symbol
- It does NOT make a health claim
- Minimum of at least 8g whole grain / serving
- Number of grams is stated clearly on the Stamp
- If all grain is whole grain, “100%” can be added
- Our website address leads consumers to info on health benefits of whole grains



# The Whole Grain Stamp



**Basic Stamp**  
minimum 8g of WG

**100% Stamp – NO refined grain**  
minimum 16g of WG

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The Whole Grains Council



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# Helping Consumers Find Whole Grains

“ It cannot be hoped to successfully educate, market and increase whole grain consumption until consumers can identify whole grain foods.”

*Marquart, Wiemer, Jones, and Jacob  
Proceedings of the Nutrition Society (2003) 62: 151-160.*

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**The Whole Grains Council**



**Oldways Preservation Trust**

# Why the Stamp was Needed

WG Health claim in 1999 was a good start, but

- Industry had no incentive beyond “all or nothing”
- Consumers too often chose “nothing”
- Uneven playing field
  - ... breads must “work harder” than cereal, crackers
  - ... lower-fiber grains not included



# Why the Stamp was Needed

Tool to support the 2005 Dietary Guidelines

- Consumption hadn't budged with WG health claim
- Need uniform message to consumers
- WG not included / allowed on Nutrition Facts Panel
- "Ounce-equivalents" only apply to 100% WG foods

Let's make support of DG a primary goal of packaging!



# Development of the WG Stamp

- Started development July 2003
- Introduced in January 2005, a week after DG
- Consultation along the way with
  - ...Scientific Advisory Committee
  - ...FDA and USDA
  - ...consumers
  - ...health professionals
  - ...manufacturers

To be successful, a tool must meet everyone's needs



# Outreach: Media Campaign



“...If you still aren't sure which of your favorite foods are really made with whole grains, **look soon for these stamps on products.** They're going to help take out the guesswork.”

*Oprah Winfrey, May 3, 2005*

“I am SUCH a believer in whole grains!”

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# Outreach: Media Campaign



## Shopping Toward the Goal

Quick tips to keep in mind when reading labels to find products made with whole grains:

**1. Watch the wording on packaging.** According to a research review published in the *Journal of Nutrition*, many people are unable to correctly identify whole-grain foods in the supermarket because terms like multigrain or nine-grain are so misleading. Knowing what to look for is key. If a product is made from a whole grain, it will say so explicitly in the ingredient list. For example, a true whole wheat bread will have 100 percent whole wheat flour as its first ingredient.



**2. Scan for seals.** Two new, easy-to-spot clues include a Food and Drug Administration–approved health claim linking the consumption of whole grains to a reduced risk of heart disease and certain cancers. The other is one of three yellow and black Whole Grain Stamps (left), which were developed by the Whole Grains Council, a subsidiary of the Oldways Preservation Trust, a nonprofit organization that advocates healthful eating.

eating smart

To ensure your food choices are made with whole grains, look for an FDA health claim on packaging, as well as one of three new Whole Grain Stamps.



*Readership: 11,600,000*

The Whole Grains Council



Oldways Preservation Trust

# Outreach: Media Campaign



**PARADE**

**What America Eats**

PLUS...  
In Step With  
*Desperate Housewives'*  
**Marcia Cross**

One way to be sure is to check packaging for a seal from the Whole Grain Council or a whole-grain health claim from the FDA.

—**Bonnie Tandy Leblang**

*Readership: 78,835,000*

**The Whole Grains Council**



**Oldways Preservation Trust**

# Outreach: Education Programs



*Thanks for what you provide to those of us "in the trenches."*

*I love working with the kids and families and I'm so glad to have experts like you and your partners doing the research, promoting the whole grains to retailers, and developing tools for us to use.*

*Susan Pollack, Club Strongheart, West Cabarrus YMCA, Concord, NC*



# Changing Consumer Behavior

*“I am pregnant. It has been quite a bit of work for me to try and find products that not only contain whole grains, but also have them in a quantity that makes it worth while to purchase them.*

*Having the 'whole grain' stamp has made it much easier for me to find these products. I especially like having the exact gram count per serving listed on these stamps.”*

*A. Wilson, July 2007*



# Changing Consumer Behavior

*“The whole grain stamp is a wonderful idea, for people like me who are pre-diabetic. I intend to email some of my favorite manufacturers to encourage them to feature the stamp on their products.”*

*B. Mohammed, Nov. 2006*



# Changing Consumer Behavior

*Dear Ms. Harriman:*

*I did not see any [REDACTED] products. Did I miss them or does their whole grain bread somehow not qualify?*

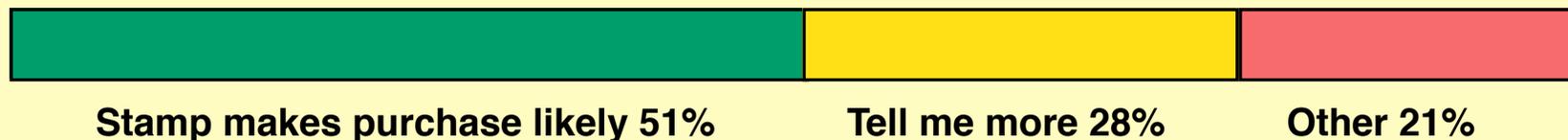
*D. Holt, August 20, 2007*



# A Difference Maker

In its first year...

- 51% of consumers said the Whole Grain Stamps “increase the likelihood” that they would choose a product.
- Another 28% say they need to know more about the Stamp and the Whole Grains Council first.



*Harris Interactive Survey for Uncle Ben's / Masterfoods USA, December 2005.*

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**The Whole Grains Council**



**Oldways Preservation Trust**

# A Difference Maker

Consumer focus groups held in October 2006 in three midwest cities questioned shoppers about the Whole Grain Stamp. The majority of these adults

- associated the WG Stamp with being **healthy**
- thought it carried **helpful & meaningful** information
- believed the Stamp was reason to at least "**make me pick it up** and look at it" and that
- it would be "a **difference maker** when they were trying to decide between two similar products."



# Widespread Consistent Standard



Now on 1400 products.  
Across all segments of grain products.  
170 companies support the standard.

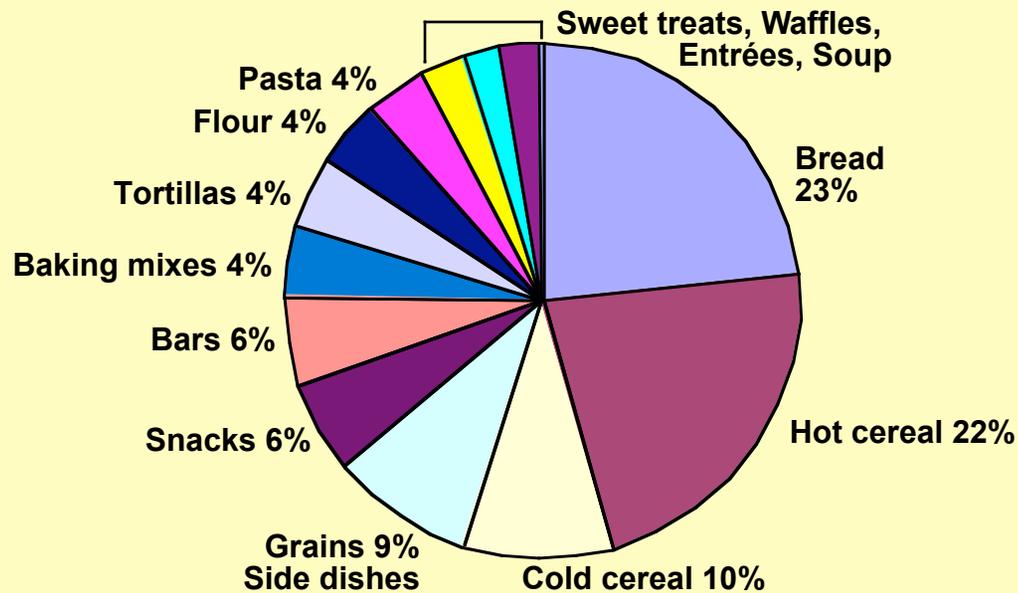
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The Whole Grains Council



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# Widespread Consistent Standard



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# Widespread Consistent Standard

American Italian Pasta Co.

Barilla USA

Bimbo Bakeries

ConAgra

**Costco Wholesale**

Country Home Bakers / J&J Snacks

Flowers Foods

FritoLay

General Mills

George Weston Bakeries / Thomas'

Heartland / McKee

Interstate Bakeries

Kellogg and Kashi

Mission Foods

Nestle

Quaker Oats

Ralcorp

Schwan Food Company

Tyson Foods

Uncle Ben's/Mars USA Inc.

Unilever

**Whole Foods**

*Including companies based in Canada, Germany, Ireland, Norway, Finland, Italy*

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**The Whole Grains Council**



**Oldways Preservation Trust**

# Nudging Industry to do Better

- 3/4 of Stamped products offer a full serving (16g) or more – not just reaching minimum levels
- Products reformulated to meet criteria – or to beat competitors' gram numbers!
- Educating manufacturers on definition of WG – some learn their products don't qualify
- Completely voluntary program, with minimal cost to manufacturers and large benefits to consumers



# Nudging Foodservice to do Better



- Menu symbol for restaurants and foodservice started June 2007
- Extend consumer familiarity with Stamp to meals eaten out of home
- Goal: at least one whole grain choice everywhere Americans eat



# The Whole Grain Stamp

## Quick, Easy, Effective

- Consistent standard, widely supported across segments
- Backed by science
- Third-party endorsement from a respected non-profit
- Makes the Dietary Guidelines actionable
- Replaces company-specific patchwork of symbols
- A positive “get more good stuff” message
- Trusted by consumers; easy to use and effective



# The Whole Grains Council



Helping Americans make half (or more!)  
of their grains whole.

Thank You

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The Whole Grains Council



Oldways Preservation Trust