



Consumer protection policies in the EU regulatory framework



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23 September 2011



Agenda

■ DG Health and Consumers (DG SANCO)

- Food
- Health
- Consumer affairs

■ Research in the food safety

■ Research in the consumer policy



DG SANCO

- Three main areas of work
 - Food safety
 - Health
 - Consumer affairs
- Numerous initiatives and interests
- Integration of DG SANCO issues in other policy areas, e.g. internal market, telecommunications, energy or agriculture



Food safety /Health /Consumers

■ Food safety – “from farm to fork”

■ Objectives

- To ensure a high level of protection of human health and consumer interests in relation to food
- To also ensure effective functioning of the internal market

■ Main areas

- General food law (traceability, responsibilities, procedures)
- Animal nutrition
- Labelling and nutrition
- Biotechnology, novel foods, chemical safety, biological safety, official controls, sustainability, food improvement agents

Food labelling

■ Main areas:

- Food and nutrition labelling
- Nutrition and health claims





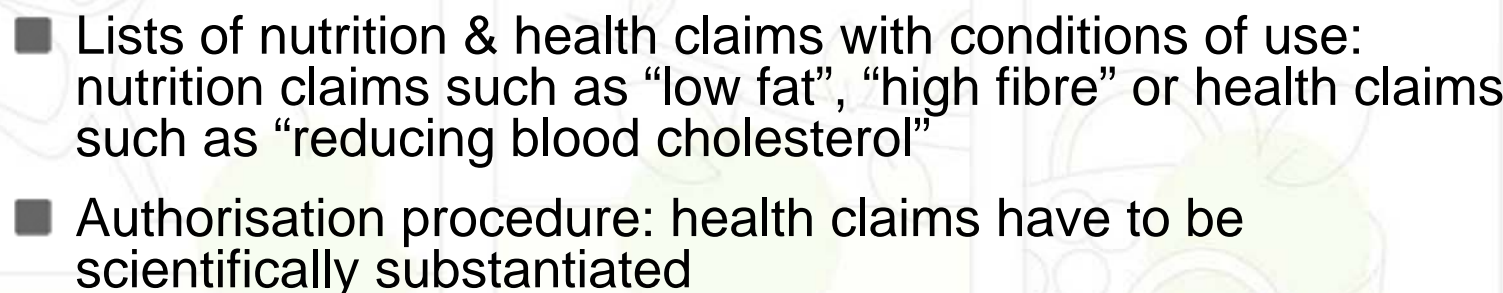
Food and nutrition labelling

- Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the provision of food information to consumers
 - General principles: legibility, origin, allergens, imitation food, additional labelling requirements for meat and fish products
 - Nutrition information: mandatory nutrition labelling, additional forms of expression of the nutrient content

- Final adoption should take place by October 2011

Nutrition and health claims

■ Regulation on health claims made on food (2006)

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- Lists of nutrition & health claims with conditions of use: nutrition claims such as “low fat”, “high fibre” or health claims such as “reducing blood cholesterol”
 - Authorisation procedure: health claims have to be scientifically substantiated

■ Health claims (4600 compiled by the Commission, input from the Member States) are being evaluated by EFSA, who will authorise or reject by the end of 2011



Food safety /Health /Consumers

- European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), Parma, IT

- Objectives

- To provide the European Commission with independent scientific advice on all matters with a direct or indirect impact on food safety
- To identify and assess any potential risks to the food chain
- To provide scientific advice on non-food and feed GMOs as well as on nutrition in relation to EU legislation

- A separate legal entity, independent from the other EU institutions
- In its work covers all stages of food production and supply
- Cooperates with a network of organisations in the fields



Food safety /Health /Consumers

■ Main areas of the EU health policy

- EU public health
- Improving healthcare: cross-border healthcare, patient safety
- Pharmaceuticals
- Action against diseases
- Medical devices



Food safety /Health /Consumers

■ Consumer affairs – strategy

- To empower consumers
- To enhance consumer welfare
- To protect consumers effectively

■ Priorities

- Increase consumer confidence in the internal market
- Strengthen consumers' position in the marketplace
- Integrate consumer issues in all EU policies
- Complement Member States' consumer policies
- Collect consumer-related data



Food safety /Health /Consumers

- Consumer contractual rights
 - Consumer Rights Directive (June 2011): in-store and off-premises sales
- Consumer protection:
 - Unfair Commercial Practices Directive (2005)
 - General Product Safety Directive (2001, now under revision)
- Consumer empowerment:
 - Unit Prices Directive
 - Consumer information, skills, engagement, awareness, education, associations
- Provisions for consumers integrated in the recent telecoms and energy packages

Food safety /Health /Consumers



■ Research for consumer policy

■ Consumer research, market studies

- Consumer Markets Scoreboard – includes food markets
- Study of the functioning of the retail electricity market
- Study of the functioning of e-commerce for consumers
- Ongoing studies on the functioning of the meat market for consumers and on the functioning of the Internet services provision market

■ Behavioural tests

- research findings used in policy – default in the Consumer Rights Directive regarding prohibition of pre-ticked boxes for additional services offered



Thank you for your attention!



More information:

http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumer_research/cms_en.htm