

COMMUNIQUE

Health Star Rating Advisory Committee Meeting – 25 October 2022

The Health Star Rating (HSR) is a front-of-pack labelling system that rates the overall nutritional profile of packaged food and assigns it a rating from ½ a star to 5 stars. It provides a quick, easy, standard way to compare similar packaged foods.

The role of the HSR Advisory Committee (HSRAC) is to provide governance support to the continued implementation of the HSR system. The HSRAC met on 25 October 2022 via video conference.

Key outcomes from the meeting include:

HSR Guidance documents – review

Members agreed to three updated HSRAC governance documents:

- 4.1 HSR Policy Context – What is an anomaly?
- 4.2 Submission of a potential anomaly
- 4.3 Dispute resolution process for the HSR system

Updates have been made to ensure currency and relevance with the updated HSR system. Editorial changes were also made to improve readability. The updated documents will be published online and will be regularly reviewed by the HSRAC.

Fermented beverages and brewed soft drinks

Noting a potential risk for fermented beverages to contain alcohol, members discussed the options for the treatment of fermented beverages and brewed soft drinks under the HSR system. Currently products are permitted to display the HSR if they contain ≤1.15% alcohol by volume, aligning with Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code requirements to label alcoholic beverages.

Concern about potential risks of underreporting of alcohol levels in fermented beverages is based on research undertaken in [2019 by the Implementation Sub-Committee for Food Regulation](#) which found widespread non-compliance of alcohol levels in fermented beverage products on the Australian market.

Members variously expressed support for either maintaining the status quo or excluding beverages with alcohol above 0.5% from displaying the HSR. A consensus was not reached. The considerations of HSRAC members will be included in advice to go to the Food Regulation Standing Committee (FRSC) for decision.

Use of the HSR system on digital platforms

Members discussed whether it is appropriate for retailers to display the HSR digitally when it is not displayed on pack.

A consensus was not reached. The Secretariat agreed to include the content of these discussions both in support and against, in advice to go to FRSC for consideration.

Implementation period ending

Members noted the implementation period for the updated HSR system is ending on 14 November 2022, with the exception of long-life products which have until 2023. Members agreed that they support considering instances of non-compliance on a case-by-case basis. The Front-of-Pack Labelling Secretariat will be the first point of contact in addressing cases of non-compliance.

Future meetings format

Members discussed the format of future HSRAC meetings and supported the option for face-to-face meetings when possible.