

## SFDA Announcement\*

Date: 18/04/2011

## Rejected Claims on Labeling of Foodstuff

Within the framework of following up on foods imported into the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, it has been noticed that some labels of prepackaged foods contain statements regarded as rejected claims. For example, some nutritional and health claims lack substantiated scientific grounds or they may create false deceptive or manipulative impressions; or may not be valuable by any means; may make a reference closely connected with health practices, or may use superlative descriptions.

In light of the above, the Saudi Food and Drug Authority (SFDA) is currently involved in developing a comprehensive approach for claim assessment, drawing on the relevant research and studies and maintaining the approved requirements and guidelines of international organizations such as the Codex Alimentarius, EFSA, NZFSA, FDA, CFIA, as well as the recommendations of the TPT agreement of the WTO. This new approach is adopted in order to ensure protection of public interest, avoid rejection of the entry of food products intended to be imported into the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and to ensure the delivery of correct and non-misleading information on prepackaged food labels which allow consumers to take their own impervious dietary decisions.

Therefore, the SFDA, after reviewing submissions from importers asking the Authority to allow for time to customize their current status, would like to announce the following:

**First:** as of the date of this announcement, the importers shall be given a six month deadline to terminate any previous agreements with their respective exporters which may involve food labels incorporating rejected claims, excluding the following:

1. Foods intended for a one-year old child or younger.
2. Herbal formulas, herbs and tea extracts .
3. Food products with labels containing claims subject to GSO 9:2007 on labeling of prepackaged foods as shown below:
  - a. Article 7/1/5 states that " legally or forbidden names, symbols, marks or photos shall not be used".
  - b. Article 8/1 states that the information written on the label shall not contain any statements having drug or treatment characteristics.
  - c. Article 4/2 states the following: any foodstuff shall not be described or offered for sale with any label which may be deceptive, misleading or false or is likely to create an erroneous impression regarding its nature or characteristics in any aspect".

**Second:** the SFDA has prepared a list of guideline examples for claims which will be updated periodically on the SFDA website. These examples are not exclusive. Therefore, any claims with similar meanings shall be rejected and any unlisted claims shall undergo scientific review by an SFDA expert panel.

**Third:** the SFDA suggests taking the necessary steps to have the above information published in the bulletins and magazines of all the commercial and industrial chambers as soon as possible.

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Examples of Rejected Claims\*

Claims referring to reduction of diseases risk:

	Food Product	Claim
1	Supplement containing berry-blend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduces blood cholesterol levels.</li> <li>Reduces the risk of cardiovascular diseases.</li> </ul>
2	Supplement containing cranberry extract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eliminates the adhesion of harmful bacteria to the bladder wall.</li> <li>For a healthy urinary tract.</li> </ul>
3	Lycopene-whey complex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prevents oxidation of lipoproteins in blood.</li> <li>Reduces the risk of heart diseases.</li> </ul>
4	Mix of prebiotics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular consumption of prebiotics helps to protect against the bad bacteria in the intestines.</li> </ul>
5	Product containing dehydrated leaves of the prickly pear cactus (Opuntia ficus-indica)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Helps to improve blood lipid parameters and HDL-cholesterol.</li> </ul>
6	Lactobacillus helveticus fermented low-fat milk products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce the risk of arterial stiffness and heart diseases.</li> </ul>
7	Sparkling or mineral water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The regular consumption of mineral water reduces body hyperglycaemic levels.</li> </ul>
8	Green tea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beneficial for diabetics.</li> <li>Reduces the risk of developing cancer.</li> <li>Reduces the risk of stroke.</li> <li>Slows down aging signs.</li> <li>Prevents tooth decay.</li> <li>Contains flavonoids which help detoxify your body.</li> <li>Protects you from Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS).</li> <li>Boosts the immune system.</li> <li>Dissolves cholesterol and increases vitality.</li> <li>Helps to maintain a perfect body weight.</li> <li>Healthy.</li> </ul>

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Claims referring to children's development and health:

	Food Product	Claim
1	Mixture of the n-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFAs) [eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA)] and the n-6 PUFA gamma-linolenic acid (GLA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides the nourishments that support healthy central nervous system development.</li> <li>• Provides the nourishments that help children to maintain healthy brain functions.</li> <li>• Provides the nourishments that help children to maintain concentration levels.</li> <li>• May help maintain coordination.</li> <li>• May help maintain concentration.</li> <li>• May help supporting the development of brain functions and maintaining such functions.</li> <li>• May help maintain learning ability.</li> <li>• May help support the development of eyes functions and maintaining such functions.</li> </ul>
2	Mixture of the polyunsaturated fatty acids [Docosahexaenoic Acid (DHA) and Arachidonic Acid (ARA)]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DHA &amp; ARA support neural development of the brain and eyes.</li> </ul>
3	Dairy products (milk, cheese and yoghurt)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help promote a healthy body weight during childhood and adolescence.</li> </ul>
4	Dairy products (milk and cheese)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote dental health in children.</li> <li>• Stabilize calcium and help to maintain stronger bones and teeth.</li> </ul>
5	Food supplement containing Lactobacillus plantarum, Lactobacillus rhamnosus and Bifidobacterium longum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helps maintain the normal functioning of the alimentary tract.</li> <li>• Improves the general immunity by maintaining the microbiological balance.</li> <li>• Helps protect the alimentary system against enteric pathogens because of its strong antagonistic properties.</li> <li>• Helps building the natural intestinal barrier.</li> <li>• Helps to maintain natural intestinal microflora during travel, changing the climatic zone or a diet, especially in poor hygiene conditions.</li> <li>• Contains living probiotic bacteria with strong ability to colonize the intestinal tract. These bacteria are isolated from naturally fed-infant.</li> </ul>
6	Chocolate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helps you grow.</li> <li>• Aids digestion.</li> </ul>
7	Follow-on formulae with a fixed combination of short-chain galacto-oligosaccharides, acidified milk, nucleotides and beta-palmitate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aids minor intestinal ailments (as colic, constipation, digestive symptoms).</li> </ul>

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Other claims:

	Food Product	Claim
1	Food supplement containing fish oil [Docosahexaenoic Acid (DHA) and Eicosapentaenoic Acid (EPA)]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contributes to the reduction of hot flushes resulting from the increase of temperature.</li> </ul>
2	Immune Balance Drink, containing vitamin C, green tea extract, grape skin extract, grape seed extract, and shiitake mushroom extract.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Boosts the immune system.</li> </ul>
3	Lactobacillus plantarum 299v (DSM 9843)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improves iron absorption.</li> </ul>
4	Milk product, rich in fiber and protein	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduces the sense of hunger.</li> </ul>
5	Mix of prebiotics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Helps to maintain a healthy gastrointestinal (GI) function</li> <li>Supports your natural defenses.</li> </ul>
6	Tablets and chewing gum containing prebiotic bacteria [Lactobacillus reuteri (L. reuteri) strains DSM 17938 and ATCC PTA 5289]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Helps re-balancing and improving oral health.</li> </ul>
7	Food products containing Conjugated Linoleic Acid (CLA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Help to build and re-shape the body.</li> </ul>
8	Food products containing cocoa extract.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Help to build and re-shape the body.</li> </ul>
9	Mix of probiotics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Helps to reduce gastrointestinal discomfort.</li> <li>Boosts the immune system.</li> </ul>
10	Milk and dairy products enriched with milk peptide and magnesium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Helps to moderate signs of anxiety in mildly stress-sensitive adults due to its milk peptide and magnesium content.</li> </ul>
11	Black tea extracted from Camellia sinensis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Helps to promote attentive and concentration.</li> </ul>
12	Using Docosahexaenoic Acid (DHA) as a raw material for foods/food supplements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promotes antioxidants in the cells of the human body.</li> </ul>
13	Tea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rich natural source of flavonoids (Antioxidants).</li> <li>Stimulates mental clarity.</li> <li>Increases vitality.</li> <li>Rich in antioxidants and thiamine which helps protecting the body.</li> <li>Helps stimulating the mind and the body.</li> <li>Considered one of healthiest types of tea.</li> <li>Healthy.</li> </ul>
14	Products of potassium salts and ammonium salts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Used for diet.</li> <li>Doesn't cause high blood pressure.</li> </ul>
15	Coffee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For mental clarity and mood-altering.</li> <li>Stimulates vitality.</li> </ul>
16	Peanut butter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Energy, strength and smartness.</li> </ul>

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Food Sector

		قطاع الغذاء
17	Wheat germ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strength, agility and vitality.</li></ul>
18	Vegetable oils and their derivatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Free of cholesterol.</li><li>• Healthy.</li><li>• Healthy heart.</li><li>• Picture indicating a healthy heart.</li><li>• Rich in omega-3.</li><li>• Omega-3 protection.</li><li>• Provide a healthy food for your heart.</li><li>• Maintain a healthy heart.</li><li>• Helps development and growth.</li></ul>
19	Cornflakes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Help to maintain a strong body and to fight diseases.</li><li>• Helps transport oxygen which sustain the function of the blood cells and the body.</li></ul>
20	Honey and its derivatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strengthens the heart.</li><li>• Boosts the immune system of the body.</li><li>• Cures Intractable wounds.</li><li>• Reduces blood lipids.</li><li>• Cures skin diseases.</li><li>• Cures gingivitis (inflammation of the gum tissue).</li><li>• Cures cancer and fights viruses.</li><li>• A solution for stomach and intestines problems.</li></ul>

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