



Big Food's Opposition to the French Nutri-Score Front-of-Pack Labeling Warrants a Global Reaction

As part of a national effort to develop strong nutritional policies, in 2017 France adopted on a voluntary basis the Nutri-Score front-of-pack nutritional labelling system. The objective of Nutri-Score is “to help consumers make healthier choices at the point of purchases, leading to healthier diets.” In addition to hopeful strong health benefits, this policy is also aiming to encourage the industry and agro-alimentary businesses to “reformulate their products to improve their nutritional quality.”

Nutri-Score went through a four-year procedure during which key stakeholders including scientist, consumer associations, learned societies, agro-industry, and retailers' organisations were involved throughout the different regulatory steps. However, the process experienced a substantial amount of lobbying both from the industry and retailers in an attempt to sway the decision process. As a consequence, they offered their own front-of-pack labelling. In addition to challenging the design of the label itself, they requested a real-life trial to select the final graphical format, delaying by almost a year any decision on the issue and costing more than €2 million. The results of the trial confirmed once again the superiority of the Nutri-Score to encourage healthier purchases in consumers, particularly in vulnerable populations. Overall, this paper highlights some of the common barriers and challenges that might be experienced by policymakers when attempting to design and implement nutritional policies such as front-of-pack labelling.

Reference: Julia, C. & Hercberg, S. Big Food's Opposition to the French Nutri-Score Front-of-Pack Labeling Warrants a Global Reaction. *American journal of public health*. 2018;108(3):318–320. doi: 10.2105/AJPH.2017.304284