

Food label battles Part 1 of 4

March 2025

☀️ Jeopardy!

Classic hits radio station WPBG (Peoria, IL) features a program – [Question Impossible](#) – as part of its daily Mix 93.3 Drive segment, which floats statements to listeners to solicit a matching question. The November 6, 2024 statement was:

Q: Nearly 80% of people say they are confused by these.

A: What are food labels?

☀️ Consumers “lost in the maze of labels”

That same month, the European Court of Auditors, an official EU agency, published a special report on [food labelling in the EU](#). Corrective recommendations include addressing gaps in the food labelling legal framework, investigating current manufacturer practices, and consumer education.

☀️ Public sector encroachment

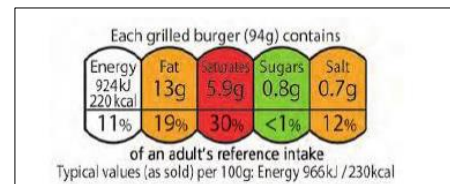
Food labels are primary real estate. The available space for “romance copy” – a manufacturer’s sizzle, sear and sell – continues to diminish as mandatory – yet necessary from a food safety perspective – food labelling information requirements increase (allergen declaration, traceability code, as examples).

☀️ Front-of-Package: help or hindrance?

FOPs are designed to provide consumers with a front-label, condensed, infographic of the nutritional profile of a processed food through the use of logos, numerical scores or graphics (i.e. traffic light system of red, amber and green). To date, most but not all, FOPs have been manufacturer driven and thus susceptible to subjective thresholds, select product inclusion and a myriad of regimes in marketplace use. As early as 2009, the USA’s FDA issued a [Letter to Industry Regarding FOPs](#). The FDA noted that FOPs result in consumers being less likely to read the Nutrition Facts on the information panel (and consider all core nutrient values), and concluded that consumers are no less confused and/or misled with the use of manufacturer-designed FOPs. Regulators in other jurisdictions have seen likewise, and have legislated or proposed FOP regimes consistent with each agency’s public health priorities and nutrition promotion programs.

☀️ First out of the gate – the UK (voluntary)

In 2013, the UK government published rules for its voluntary [Front of Pack Nutrition Labelling \(FOPNL\)](#).



- Serving size: in g or mL, and food quantity and format
- Energy (kJ and kcal): per 100 g/mL, and per serving
- Fat, saturated fat, sugars and salt (all in g) per serving
- Progressively colour-coded green, amber or red if or as content exceeds nutrient-specific thresholds

Status? The UK’s major retailers have adopted it. In 2020, a public consultation [FOPNL in the UK: building on success](#) was launched; stakeholders await results.

☀️ Next – Canada (mandatory if > threshold)

In July 2022, Health Canada published mandatory FOP nutrition symbols for packaged food (some conditional exceptions apply) with a saturated fat, sugar or salt content which exceeds 15% of the nutrient’s Daily Value. Manufacturers have been busily preparing for the coming-into-force date of January 1, 2026.



☀️ USA FDA’s proposed mandatory FOPNL

Call it a Nutrition Label-“ette”. Based on extensive consumer research, and designed to complement the full Nutrition Facts label, the FDA proposed a [FOPNL](#) in January 2025 to “help consumers quickly and easily identify how foods can be part of a healthy diet”.

Nutrition Info		
Per serving 1 container		% Daily Value
Saturated Fat	18%	Med
Sodium	37%	High
Added Sugars	5%	Low
FDA.gov		