

Item 2 - Salt Pledge for Caterers

Aim

This paper updates HLSCG members on the proposed salt catering pledges and asks HLSCG to agree the wording for the pledges.

Actions following the last meeting

At the HLSCG meeting in November it was agreed that the pledge would be further revised to identify separate areas of activity. The pledge has now been divided as follows:

Pledge 1 - Draft salt pledge for caterers - training and kitchen practices

Pledge 2 - Draft salt pledge for caterers - reformulation of products as purchased by the consumer

Pledge 3 - Draft salt pledge for caterers - procurement

The BHA agreed to test this proposed approach with its members in advance of any wider discussion across the catering sector. The BHA has consulted with the following of its committees:

Food and Service Management Forum (contract caterers)

National Restaurant Group

Restaurant Association

Food and Technical Committee

Previous discussions on the salt catering pledge with the catering sector had identified concerns as to whether and when all of the 2012 targets could be met recognising that salt reduction in this sector had started later than with the retailers and food manufacturers. A figure of meeting 50% of the salt targets by the end of 2012, and 100% by 2014 has been proposed in the revised pledges. This reflects the food currently procured by the catering sector, and although major food manufacturers and retailers have committed to meet the 2012 salt targets, we cannot work on the assumption that these can be met by the catering sector to the same timescale.

Feedback to date suggests that splitting the various activities into discrete pledges will maximise the sign up. One business commented that it would be unlikely to be able to sign up to the pledges if for example we combined the requirements for kitchen practice and procurement as they need flexibility in how they meet an overall salt target for a complete meal. For example, this may mean that a burger might not meet the salt targets but the chips served as part of the meal are well below the targets, with the meal in its entirety meeting the salt targets.

The BHA will provide an update at the meeting on the number of businesses who will sign up to the pledge, and DH will continue working with the out of home sector to maximise sign up.

Action required

The revised pledges will encourage businesses to go further with their salt reduction programmes. The HLSG is asked to agree the wording of the pledges.

Pledge 1 - Draft salt pledge for caterers - training and kitchen practices

We commit to assisting consumers to reduce their dietary salt intake by taking the **following actions in respect of:**

- Kitchen practices
- Salt availability
- Chef training

Restaurant kitchen practice:

We will adopt the following kitchen practices:

- vegetables and boiled starchy carbohydrates such as rice, potatoes and pasta will be cooked without added salt
- provide our chefs with specific ingredient and salt quantities (where practical) as well as equipment to control salt dosage, in order that we offer consistent salt levels in the foods we prepare.
- ensure our chefs season to taste and only add salt if product quality is compromised without adding salt.
- the amount of salt used in our kitchens will be reduced by at least 15% [within a specified 2yr period]

Salt availability:

We will encourage behaviour change among consumers in the use of discretionary salt by ensuring that salt (cellars, sachet etc) remain out of sight and is made available only at customers direct request

Chef training:

We commit to train all of our chefs/staff on

- the importance of salt reduction for heart health and to help consumers meet recommended dietary intakes
- foods which are high in salt or contribute significantly to the diet
- how to reduce the levels of salt in their dishes/items, and to encourage changes in consumer palates
- developing menus which are lower in salt and include lower salt options

Pledge 2 - Draft salt pledge for caterers - reformulation of products as purchased by the consumer

We commit to assisting consumers reduce their dietary salt intake by taking the **following actions in respect of reformulation of products**

We will:

- Establish the salt levels in products as they are offered to the final consumer
- Prioritise reformulation to reduce salt in the top 10 selling products in terms of volume sales to maximise the impact on our guest's health.
- Provide the salt content for each product on the menu on our website and menu information guides, which will be available on request in our catering establishments.
- Not add salt to ingredients or recipes intended for children's menus, unless if for safety or functionality reasons the ingredient cannot be made without salt (e.g. bacon, cheese). In these cases we will ensure that salt is the lowest level possible.

Pledge 3 - Draft salt pledge for caterers - procurement

We commit to assisting consumers reduce their dietary salt intake by taking the **following actions in respect of procurement of products:**

- By the end of 2012, we will meet the salt targets for at least 50% of the products we procure, increasing to 100% by 2014. For some products this will require acceptable technical solutions.