

## News Release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### Voedsel etiketten; leesvoer voor iedereen?

Hoewel meer dan een derde van de Italianen een etiket leest alvorens een product te kopen snapt slechts een tiende ook echt wat er op staat. Nederlanders zeggen geen problemen te hebben met het snappen van de etiketten maar zij lezen deze relatief dan ook minder; 15% (na Frankrijk en Tsjechië derde in Europa) geeft aan nooit op het etiket te kijken. Iets minder dan de helft (45%) van de Nederlanders geeft aan wel op het etiket te kijken bij het kopen van een nieuw product.

De ingrediënten waarvoor de Nederlander graag een blik op het etiket werpt zijn; suiker, vet en calorieën, ruim eenderde maar liefst. In het zuiden van Europa speurt meer dan de helft van de consumenten de etiketten na op deze ingrediënten. Nederlanders geven aan het etiket niet vaker dan twee jaar geleden te lezen, en is hiermee hekkensluiter in Europa waar dit percentage wel omhoog ging..

**15 Augustus, Diemen, Nederland:** According to a Nielsen Global Food Labeling Survey, more than one in ten Italians readily admit that food labels baffle them, yet at the other end of the scale more than seven out of ten Portuguese read and understand the labels. This, coupled with the fact that checking labels is important to more than a third of Italians, sends an important message to food manufacturers in Italy – simplify your labeling.

Pat Dodd, President, ACNielsen Europe stated “Food is central to Italian culture and we have seen that nearly half the money Italians spend on food and groceries can be attributed to fresh, and often unpackaged food. Therefore they tend to use packaged food

less than some of their European counterparts. There is an important message for Italian packed food manufacturers in that they need to simplify their labels”

Calorie counting and dieting remain high up the list of reasons to check labels. Nearly half of European respondents (47%) check out the Fat content of their food, and over four out of ten Europeans on average check for calorie content and sugar. Southern European countries – Spain (52%), Portugal (55%), Greece (60%) and Italy (50%) top the calorie counters in Europe, while at the other end of the scale only a quarter of respondents in Latvia and Lithuania are counting calories.

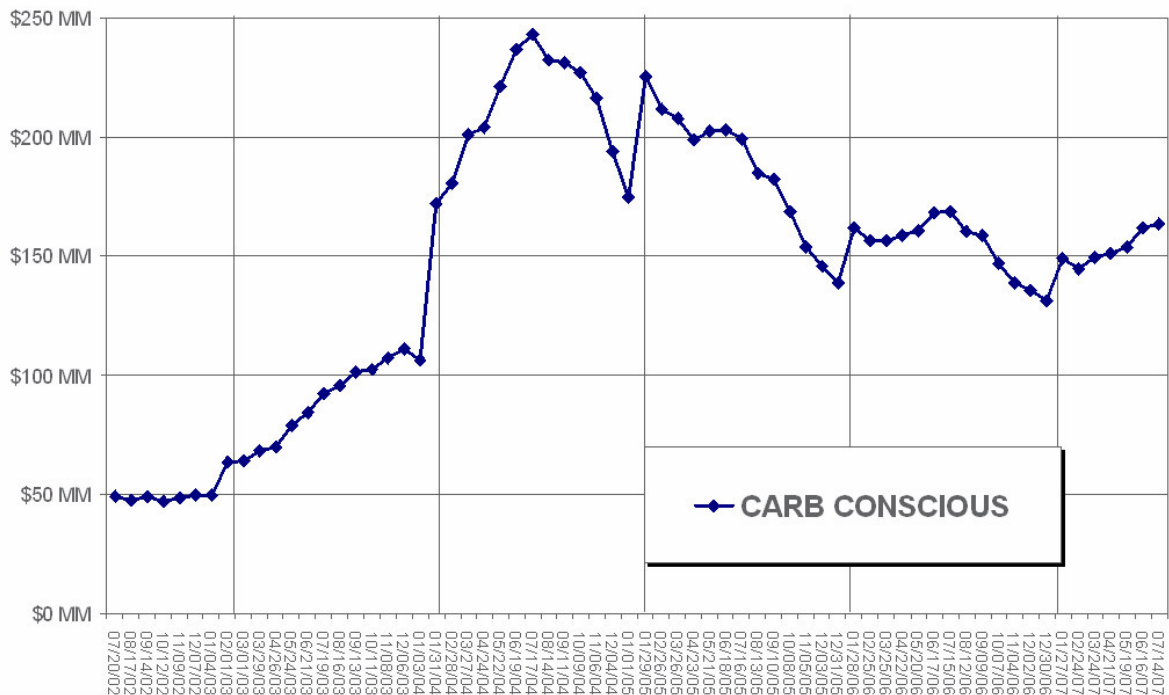
Dodd continued “Our respondents focus on fat, sugar and calories reflects the regions obsession with weight control, and yet health messages about controlling salt intake don’t seem to be gaining traction as only 24% of our respondents check out this when looking at packaging”.

Topping the European charts for increased vigilance when it comes to scrutinising labels are the Greeks - nearly seven out of ten respondents in Greece claim that they check the labels more than they did 2 years ago. This could be explained by a series of food scares concerning yoghurt, milk, pasta, honey, oil and meat over recent years, together with a successful educational programme aimed at protecting consumers rights by The Greek Consumer Association (INKA). In addition 60% of respondents in Greece check the calorie content of their food – this could be related to the fact that Greece has one of the highest average BMI (Body Mass Index) in Europe with seven out of ten Greeks having a BMI of 25 or higher.\*

There are vastly different levels of understanding about saturated and unsaturated fat. Respondents in France are bottom of the European rankings with 61% claiming they don’t understand the difference between “good” and “bad” fats. At the other end of the scale over eight out of ten respondents in Norway (86%) and Sweden (81%) claim they have a full understanding of the difference.

The survey also indicates that the popularity of carbohydrate controlling diets such as the Atkins Diet is waning. On average across Europe less than a third of respondents check the carbohydrate content of their food, and this is consistent with findings in the US, where sales of carbohydrate conscious products are down 2% on last year.

## 5 Years of Healthy Eating Trends – Carbs/Protein



The survey also showed that the Portuguese most regularly check their food labels with 42% of respondents claiming that they always check the nutritional information on the package, 13% more respondents than any other nation in Europe.

Consumers are most vigilant about checking food labels when trying out new products for the first time, with more than a third checking ingredients of possible new purchases. “For those manufacturers and retailers engaged in new product development, creating clear and easily understood labeling is an important consideration when developing their packaging” continued Dodd.

Concerns about additives and preservatives remain high as consumers continue to be concerned about the provenance of their food, and we have seen a trend where foods promoting “naturalness” are seeing considerable success.

Dodd concluded “There are some important messages from this study that food manufacturers can benefit from, and vast differences in consumer interest and understanding across Europe. Ensuring that the food labels are clear, and consumer



concerns about fat, calories, sugar, preservatives and additives are addressed could significantly improve brand perception amongst shoppers”.

\* Source: Forbes.com

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