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INDUSTRY ON TRACK TO MEET TRANS FAT REGULATION BY MAY 2013

***Over 70% of local bakeries using ingredients which meet the trans fat requirement,
while 80% of retail oil and margarine products labelled with trans fat content***

Since the announcement in March 2012 to control trans fat targeted at importers and manufacturers of fats and oils, at least 70% of local supplies of fats and oils from the key manufacturers and importers already meet the new regulation. The regulation limits trans fat to no more than 2g per 100g product for fats and oils supplied to local food service establishments and food manufacturers, as well as fats and oils sold in retail outlets. In addition, the labelling of trans fat levels on packaging of retail fats and oils is now compulsory. AVA, HPB and NEA have also formed a taskforce to jointly monitor and enforce regulation from May 2013.

2. Described by the World Health Organisation as an industrial additive with no demonstrable health benefits and clear risks to human health, trans fats are primarily found in foods containing shortening, margarine or partially hydrogenated oils such as commercially prepared baked and fried items. Sources of trans fats consumption by Singaporeans include pastries, cakes, doughnuts and biscuits.

3. Amy Khor, Minister of State for Health and Manpower said, "According to HPB's 2010 National Nutrition Survey, three in 10 adult Singaporeans exceeded the World Health Organisation's recommended daily limit of two grams of trans fat. Two thirds of these people are younger adults aged 18 to 39 years, of which 10% had trans fat intakes of more than double the recommended limit. With the total switch to fats and oils meeting trans fat requirements by 2013, the average intake among Singaporeans who had previously exceeded the trans fat limit will be reduced by at least 60% from 3.7 grams to 1.6 grams. This means for these Singaporeans, their risk of getting heart disease will be cut by 10%."

4. Said Mr Ang Hak Seng, CEO HPB, "A 4 gram increase in daily trans fat intake, is associated with a 23% increase in the incidence of coronary heart disease. This amount of trans fat intake is equivalent to the quantity of trans fat found in two doughnuts, prior to bakeries adopting the new guidelines. This is a cause for concern. To further reduce the trans fat intake among Singaporeans, HPB has actively engaged the food industry and food service sectors to provide trans fat free foods to the public. To date, there are more than 1100 trans fat free Healthier Choice Symbol (HCS) products on market."

5. The three major suppliers of fats and oils in Singapore are Woodlands Sunny Foods Pte Ltd, Lam Soon Singapore Pte Ltd and Phoon Huat & Co (Pte) Ltd. These companies either produce or acquire margarines and shortenings for sale in Singapore and which are used in 70% of the local bakeries. To meet the new regulation requirement, these suppliers began to develop or import products which contain permissible levels of trans fat for supply to the local food businesses. These companies have reported no difference in the sensory properties, shelf life or consumer acceptance of their food products using these reformulated margarines and shortenings.

6. More than 80% of retail fat and oil products on the market are already labelled with trans fat content. The remaining 20% of products are expected to be labelled by May next year.

7. At BreadTalk, all of its products including its signature Taro Hero and Claypot Chicken buns are currently manufactured using ingredients which meet the trans fat limit. Since the announcement of trans fat regulation, BreadTalk's R&D team has switched to using margarines and shortenings with low trans fat content to develop healthier products. The products incorporated with the new ingredients have been well received by the customers.

8. As part of the HCS surveillance, HPB will also partner with AVA and NEA to monitor the trans fat content in fats and oils used by food service establishment and sold at retail outlets.

Issued by Health Promotion Board

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