

**2 April 2011**

## **FOOD INDUSTRY JOINS FORCES WITH THE HEALTH PROMOTION BOARD TO FIGHT BATTLE OF THE BULGE**

*Hawkers go healthy and CEOs pledge to trim 25 billion calories from food supply*

To combat rising obesity rates, the Health Promotion Board (HPB) is taking the fight to the hawker centres, food manufacturers, supermarkets, restaurants, caterers and food courts. HPB is working with hawkers to offer healthier food options in the Healthier Hawker Programme, an initiative that aims to have all hawker centres in Singapore offer healthier hawker food in 3 years. In addition, CEOs from 51 food companies and eating establishments have put their names to a pledge to work with HPB to wipe out 25 billion calories from the food supply chain by 2013.

2 According to the 2010 National Health Survey, obesity rates are on the rise, with one in 10 Singapore residents classified as obese. This rise has been attributed to an increased number of people eating out and being physically inactive.

3 The proportion of Singapore residents who usually eat out at least 4 times a week at hawker centres, food courts and coffee shop stalls for meals, has increased from 49% in 2004 to 60% in 2010. Preliminary analysis showed that people who usually eat out at such venues consumed 200 kcal more or about 10% more than those who seldom eat out.

4 HPB Chief Executive Officer Mr Ang Hak Seng said, "The fight against obesity is an urgent one. Singapore residents are eating more. Preliminary results from the Health Promotion Board's 2010 National Nutrition Survey showed that seven in 10 exceed their recommended calorie requirements. Among them, about 15% consume at least twice the recommended allowance."

5 Mr Ang added, “We are working with the community as well as the private sector to bring down our obesity rates. We have engaged the help of the food industry to reduce the amount of calories in our food and this will trim 25 billion calories from the food supply chain over the next three years. Together with an equal amount of calories expended through physical activity, we can stem the rise of obesity in the local population.”

### **Healthier Hawker Programme**

6 To tackle the issues of eating out and obesity, HPB has worked closely with the people, public and private sectors to develop a sustainable model for healthier food supply. From April 2011, HPB has partnered the South West Community Development Council, Yuhua grassroots organisations, as well as other government partners such as the National Environmental Agency (NEA) and the People’s Association (PA) to launch the healthier hawker programme to provide healthier food options.

7 For a start, the healthier hawker programme launched at Yuhua Hawker Centre has 90% of the hawkers offering a wide range of healthier ingredients, such as brown rice and whole-grain noodles in their menus. This is especially timely as preliminary results of the 2010 National Nutrition Survey showed that close to 90% of the population consumed less than two servings of whole-grain foods each day.<sup>1</sup>

8 Noodles were identified as one of the main ways of increasing whole-grain intake as almost nine in 10 Singapore residents consume noodles at least once a week. A bowl of noodles prepared using whole-grain noodles will provide about half the daily amount of whole-grains recommended for adults. Evidence suggests that people who have a diet rich in whole-grains cut their risk of becoming overweight by 50% compared to people who rarely consume whole-grains.<sup>2</sup>

9 Besides whole-grain ingredients, hawkers in Yuhua Hawker Centre will use cooking oil with reduced saturated fat and offer customers reduced-sugar drinks with HPB’s Healthier

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<sup>1</sup> The recommended intake for whole-grain foods is 2-3 servings a day.

<sup>2</sup> Liu S, Willett WC, Manson JE et al (2003). Relation between changes in intakes of dietary fiber and grain products and changes in weight and development of obesity among middle-aged women *Am J Clin Nutr* 78: 920-7.

Choice Symbol (HCS). Customers can easily identify participating stalls through the HCS on their food hygiene decal. Stalls will also sport menu boards with the lower-calorie dishes identified by the HCS, as well as the calorie count of these items and decals publicising their healthier offerings.

### **Pledge to trim 25 billion calories**

10 In addition to hawker centres, HPB is working with other sectors of the food industry, and a total of 51 food manufacturers, supermarkets, restaurants, caterers and food courts have put their names to a pledge to remove 25 billion calories from the food supply chain by 2013. These include both local Small Medium Sized Enterprises such as Sakura and New Moon, food giants such as Nestle, F & N and Unilever, and the Kopitiam and Swenson's food chains.

11 A reduction of 25 billion calories from the food supply over 3 years together with an equivalent amount of calories expended through physical activity is estimated to stem the 1% rise in obesity rate among the local population.

12 Over the next three years, food manufacturers have committed to modify or introduce food products with reduced calories such as healthier breads, noodles, children's milk and snacks. The food service sector has also committed to provide healthier fare that includes a wide variety of cuisines such as Japanese, French, western cuisines, as well as favourite local fare. Participating retailers, such as NTUC FairPrice will be embarking on more education campaigns for their shoppers as well as looking at increasing the number of HCS items in their basket of housebrand items.

13 Please refer to Annex A for more information on the food pledge.

## Information Sheet – Healthier Food Pledge

The Healthier Food Pledge aims to help prevent obesity increase by trimming 25 billion calories from the food supply by 2013. The Pledge brings together members of the food industry comprising food and beverage manufacturers, retailers and restaurants including fast food restaurants and food courts to pledge their support to provide and promote healthier lower calorie food products and meals.

Companies participating in the Pledge are committed to:

- Develop more products that qualify under the Healthier Choice Symbol guidelines/ develop healthier products or menu items
- Embark on public education to actively and regularly promote the healthier choice

A reduction of 25 billion calories from the food supply over 3 years together with an equivalent amount of calories expended through physical activity is estimated to stem the 1% rise in obesity rate among the local population.

### **List of Food Establishments Participating in the Healthier Food Pledge**

- 1 Abbott Laboratories (Singapore) Pte Ltd
- 2 Austasia Food Pte Ltd
- 3 Bonny Enterprise
- 4 BreadTalk Pte Ltd
- 5 Clouet Trading Pte Ltd
- 6 CP-Meiji Co, Ltd. (Chia Tai)
- 7 Danone Dumex Singapore
- 8 F & N Foods Pte Ltd
- 9 NTUC Fairprice Cooperative Ltd
- 10 Fonterra Brands (S) Pte Ltd
- 11 Fortune Food Manufacturing Pte Ltd
- 12 Gardenia Foods (S) Pte Ltd
- 13 Goh Joo Hin Pte Ltd
- 14 Hotbake Innovations Pte Ltd
- 15 Jia Jia Wang Trading
- 16 Lam Soon Singapore Pte Ltd
- 17 Malaysia Dairy Industries Pte Ltd
- 18 Nestle Singapore (Pte) Ltd

19	Pokka Corporation (Singapore) Pte Ltd
20	PomeFresh Pte Ltd
21	Prima Limited
22	Super Bean International Pte Ltd
23	Tai Sun (Lim Kee) Food Industries Pte Ltd
24	The Brown Rice Shop (S) Pte Ltd
25	Unifood International (S) Pte Ltd
26	Unilever Food Solutions
27	Wholesome Delights Pte Ltd
28	Woh Hup Industries Pte Ltd
29	Ananda Bhavan Restaurant
30	Boon Lay Hawker Centre
31	Banquet Holdings Pte. Ltd.
32	Caffe Pralet
33	Crystal Jade Golden Palace
34	Dian Xiao Er
35	Heart Bistro
36	Kopitiam Investment Pte. Ltd.
37	Loving Hut
38	NTUC Foodfare Co-operative Ltd
39	O'Briens Irish Sandwich Bar
40	Salad Stop Pte Ltd
41	SATS
42	Saybons™ French Food Factory
43	Select Catering
44	Sodexo Singapore Pte Ltd
45	Soup Restaurant
46	The Soup Spoon
47	Stamford Catering
48	Subway® Restaurant
49	Swensen's
50	Umi Sushi
51	Yuhua Hawker Centre