



H.E.S.O. Newsletter

Human Ecology Student Organization

University of Manitoba

October 2011 Issue

Your New HESO Members



Jennifer Bewza
Senior ACHES Representative



Anna Nezveschuk
Fundraiser/ Jr. ACHES Representative



William Reimer
Textiles Representative



Olena Andrushchyshyn
Graduation Representative



Donna Aran
Sr. MaHSSA Representative

Thanks to all the students who participated in Human Ecology Student Organization (HESO) bi-election on September 27 and 28. With your participation, there was an increase of 96% in number of votes compared to last year. It allowed us to have a full council this year with 16 members. It has also led HESO members to amend HESO constitution by unanimously voting in favour of creating a new HESO position called Senior Manitoba Health Sciences

Association (MaHSSA) Representative, which Donna Aran will be volunteering for. This position will allow active participation of the faculty, especially the departments of nutritional sciences and health sciences/studies, in promoting interprofessional education and facilitating collaboration amongst health sciences students in the province of Manitoba. HESO also held a referendum to support the

Human Ecology Endowment and Equipment Fund. There were 76 "yes" votes, 18 "no" votes and there were no spoiled ballots. The results of this referendum have now been sent to the Dean of Human Ecology, who will forward it to the President of the University of Manitoba. It will then be presented it to the Board of Governors for ratification. Once approved, the referendum will take effect on fall 2012.

Events in October!

Do you LOVE pumpkin carving? HESO presents **Pumpkin Carving Contest** on Oct 24th (Mon) & 25th (Tue). Winners get awesome prizes. Sign up as a group/individual at umduong9@cc.umanitoba.ca
Spooky Halloween Movies All Day on Oct 31st. Dress up and get free candy. See details on the posters.

Hungry? Check out HESO MINI-MART

MINI-MART in the student lounge has a variety of snacks, drinks, and frozen dinners. Staff's favourites are Pocky sticks and fortune cookies. We also rent lockers and sell Human Ecology merchandise. We are open around lunch time on weekdays. Check out the detailed hours displayed in the lounge. Please let HESO know if you have any requests for MINI-MART.

Inside this issue:

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Comments on newsletter?
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Coming up event! The Department of HNSC and HESO Present: Forks Over Knives Screening and panel discussion.

November 21st (Mon) at Park Theatre, 698 Osborne St. at 7:00 pm. HE Students get in FREE!

FORKS OVER KNIVES examines the profound claim that most, if not all, of the degenerative diseases that afflict us can be controlled, or even reversed, by rejecting our

present menu of animal-based and processed foods. The major storyline traces the personal journeys of Dr. T. Colin Campbell, a nutritional scientist from Cornell University, and Dr. Caldwell Esselstyn, a former top surgeon at the world renowned Cleveland Clinic. Inspired by remarkable discoveries in their young careers, these men conducted several groundbreaking studies. Their separate research led them to the same startling conclusion: degenerative

diseases like heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and even several forms of cancer, could almost always be prevented—and in many cases reversed—by adopting a whole foods, plant-based diet. In addition, cameras follow "reality patients" who have chronic conditions from heart disease to diabetes, and are taught by their doctors to adopt a whole foods plant-based diet as the primary approach to treat their ailments.



Join HESO on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/175898952424000/>
Coming soon! U of M HESO website: http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/human_ecology/student_org/index.html



Buyer Be Aware - Health Claims on Food Labels

By Shauna Doerksen (HNSC 4300 Dr. Joyce Slater's Student)



Have you ever read a food label and wondered what it meant? Have you ever chosen a food because the package said it was healthy? If so, you may have fallen prey to one of food manufacturers' greatest weapons - the health claim.

A health claim is any label or advertisement that suggests a specific food or nutrient will benefit a person's health. Health claims can include words, a logo, or a product name (Canadian Food Inspection Agency [CFIA], 2010). Health Canada is responsible for establishing policies that ensure food safety and nutrition. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency enforces these policies on food labels, packages, and advertisements (CFIA, 2010).

Two types of health claims allowed by Health Canada are disease risk reduction claims and function claims. Disease risk reduction claims state that a certain food or nutrient reduces the risk of developing a disease, for example, "A healthy diet low in saturated and trans fats may reduce the risk of heart disease. (Naming the food) is low in saturated and trans fats" (CFIA, 2010, ["8.4.5 Summary Table of Disease Risk Reduction Claims,"](#) para. 3). Function claims state that a food or nutrient helps maintain good health but does not prevent a specific disease, for example, "**Milk is an excellent source of calcium which helps build strong bones and teeth**" (CFIA, 2010, ["8.6 Nutrient Function Claims,"](#) para. 4).

The purpose of health claims is to help consumers make informed choices about the foods they eat (CFIA, 2010). Consumers have the right to know what is in the food they purchase, and the health benefits of those foods. Health claims benefit food manufacturers by increasing their marketing power in our health-conscious society (Health Canada, 2010).

While health claims made by manufacturers are usually accurate, they do not reveal the overall nutrition of a food, which may not be as healthy as the package suggests. Health Canada should introduce stricter policies regarding the health claims that companies can make for their products.

Research shows that most consumers do not understand the difference between disease risk reduction claims and function claims (Bone & France, 2009). Some customers assume that a product with a general function

claim has the same health benefits as one with a specific disease risk reduction claim. Food manufacturers take advantage of this by making a general health statement and allowing consumers to form their own health claims from that information. Consequently, almost twice as many food labels use a function claim even when the product qualifies for a disease risk reduction claim (Bone & France, 2009).

Some companies exploit consumer confusion to showcase certain benefits of a food while ignoring its less healthy qualities. To advertise a food as "100% fat-free", it must contain less than 0.5 grams (g) of fat per 100 g serving (CFIA, 2010). Jell-O is marketed as a fat-free food, but that does not mean it is healthy. Strawberry Jell-O contains 19 g of sugar per 21 g serving - that means Jell-O is over 90% sugar (Kraft Canada Inc., 2010a). Even a fat-free food will make you fat if you consume too many Calories from sugar.

Health Canada allows companies to use general claims about healthy eating, such as "healthy for you" (Health Canada, 2010). Kraft Canada's "Sensible Solution" campaign is a self-established program that is not regulated by Health Canada. A food is eligible for the "Sensible Solution" logo if it contains a low or reduced amount of either Calories, saturated fat, total fat, sugar, or sodium (Kraft Canada Inc., 2010c).

By those standards, Kraft Dinner Original Macaroni & Cheese is a "Sensible Solution". What you do not know without reading the Nutrition Facts label is that one serving of macaroni and cheese contains 410 milligrams (mg) of sodium, almost one-third of the daily sodium (salt) intake recommended by Health Canada (Kraft Canada Inc., 2010b). On top of that, one serving of Kraft Dinner is only one-quarter of the package (Kraft Canada Inc., 2010b). That means one box of Kraft Dinner, which is typically a meal for one or two people, provides 960 Calories and 1640 mg of sodium - more than the recommended sodium intake and almost half the average Calorie requirements for one day. Your meal is not so "Sensible" once you do the math.

In the United States, a food must meet requirements for the levels of satu-

rated fat, total fat, cholesterol, sodium, and certain vitamins and minerals before it can make a claim with the word "healthy" (Health Canada, 2010). Health Canada provides guidelines but does not impose strict standards for manufacturers using a generic "healthy" claim (Health Canada, 2010).

Health Canada also has not established core nutritional requirements for foods carrying health claims. In Canada, criteria for each disease risk reduction claim are determined on a claim-by-claim basis (L'Abbé, Dumais, Chao, & Junkins, 2008). On the other hand, any food carrying a health claim in the United States must meet three sets of standards: general nutrient requirements (e.g. low saturated fat), a minimum amount of at least one specified nutrient (e.g. vitamin C), and specific requirements based on the particular health claim (L'Abbé et al., 2008).

The lack of core criteria for health claims in Canada may impact the health of consumers who choose a food for its claimed benefits, yet are unaware of its negative qualities. As well, consumers may experience the "halo effect" and believe that foods with health claims are healthier than foods without claims, which may not be true (L'Abbé et al., 2008).

Health Canada needs to take action to protect consumers from misleading advertisements and health claims. We need public health strategies to educate consumers on how to read food labels and interpret health claims. This education is essential because the leading causes of death in Canada are heart disease and cancer, which are both related to nutrition (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2005). If we are not aware of how our food choices impact our health, we cannot take steps to prevent disease and improve our lives.

Health Canada must also introduce stricter standards for health claims. Canada needs to follow the United States in establishing core criteria for all health claims and regulating use of the word "healthy". As Canadians, we need to support Health Canada so that they can support our health. Companies have the right to use health claims when advertising their products, but most importantly, we the consumers have the right to be protected and to live healthy lives.