

Ten Pillars of the Nutrition Policy of the Food Industry

1. The food industry promotes a healthy lifestyle

A balanced and varied diet and a lot of physical activity are prerequisites for a healthy and satisfying life. Eating and enjoying food is not only a pleasure but also something of a science. Nowadays we have access to a wide variety of foodstuffs our grandparents' generation could only dream of. Yet our hectic modern lifestyle has introduced new risks. Many people struggle with excess weight caused by an unbalanced diet, a lack of physical activity and a sedentary lifestyle which has an impact on their health and overall quality of life.

Most of us want to enjoy good food and "eat and live with passion". This requires that there is a wide range of food products available on the market so that each consumer may have a balanced and diverse diet based on their needs and preferences. Each foodstuff has its place in the diet – what matters is a balanced intake corresponding to one's lifestyle.

Food producers in the Czech Republic are aware of their ability to help improve the state of health of consumers through offering a wide range of products ("standard" products and those with a reduced content of certain nutrients, reduced energy value or improved nutritional composition) as well as through education and by increasing consumer awareness, and promoting physical activity and intersectoral cooperation.

2. The food industry is working to develop and produce innovated and reformulated products (improved macronutrient content)

The food industry is applying the latest scientific and technological discoveries to constantly improve its ability to respond to the needs and wishes of consumers and to introduce products with improved composition onto the market. The focus is not only on improving the sensory characteristics of foodstuffs but primarily on perfecting their structure in terms of health and nutrition.

New recipes make it possible to reduce sugar, fat and salt content, and to improve the structure and composition of certain macronutrients (e.g. removing trans-fatty acids or saturated fatty acids, or increasing protein content). The changes are either through reformulation, meaning improving the structure of an existing product, or through innovation, introducing a brand new product with improved composition onto the market.

3. The food industry is expanding its offer with products with improved content (improved composition of micronutrients and other components)

Improving product composition often does not only involve macronutrients (sugars, fats and proteins) but also the use of technologies that better preserve and increase the content of vitamins, minerals and other substances such as antioxidants, fibre, probiotics and others. Food producers are also widening the range of products suitable for consumers with intolerances (lactose-free or gluten-free products).

4. The food industry is offering a diverse range of products and packaging

A healthy lifestyle does not only mean respecting generally valid nutritional recommendations – it also means taking an individual approach. Each person has different nutritional needs because of his or her genetic predispositions, way of life and amount of physical activity. Therefore, the food industry offers a wide range of products and types of packaging to enable the consumer to compose a diverse and balance diet thanks to the compulsory nutritional information disclosed on the products. In addition to standard products, this offer also includes ones with reduced energy content, different portion sizes or single-serve packaging. There are also resealable packages which mean that consumers need not eat all the product at once.

5. The food industry is informing consumers over and beyond legislative requirements

To make selecting from the wide range of food products on the market easier, producers provide a whole range of data on the nutritional composition of the product: either directly on the packaging (nutritional data per 100g/ml or per portion, data related to reference intake values) or through websites, consumer lines or in various brochures and materials. Products with improved composition may bear the "Reformulation of Year" logo.

6. The food industry is promoting its products in a responsible manner

The food industry has decided to communicate with consumers in a responsible manner through voluntary commitments and self-regulation. In cooperation with the Czech Advertisement Controlling Board, the code of ethics for advertising has been updated (the part on food products and products for children) and a number of companies have agreed not to focus their advertisements on children under 12 years of age.

7. The food industry is educating consumers and the public

Addressing the phenomenon of an unhealthy lifestyle, excess weight and obesity requires a comprehensive approach involving changing eating habits in combination with optimal physical activity. Education and awareness are highly important as regards the need for an individual approach and consumers' willingness to change their behaviour. In collaboration with the STOB association, the food industry is educating fifth-year elementary school pupils through the long-term "Play for a Healthy Life" programme promoting a healthy lifestyle. Many producers also issue thematic publications and brochures to increase awareness among consumers.

8. Food producers are publishing the results achieved, educating and sharing experience with each other

In response to growing European and local efforts to improve the structure of foodstuffs, at the end of 2016 the Federation of the Food and Drink Industries of the Czech Republic established the Platform for Reformulations, which builds on the previous long-term activities of the food industry relating to a healthy lifestyle. The platform is an expert forum where members may discuss the individual activities and share their experience with each other, whether in the form of publications and seminars or through the website at www.reformulace.cz.

9. The food industry is promoting a healthy lifestyle and physical activity

A varied and balanced diet is one of the elements of a healthy lifestyle. Physical activity also plays a highly important role. Food producers are introducing physical activity and wellness programmes at their workplaces and promoting community physical activity.

10. The food industry is cooperating with the relevant institutions, academic circles, experts and other stakeholders

Reversing the trends in unhealthy nutrition and the lack of physical activity requires focused and integrated society-wide activity. Food producers are collaborating with other sectors and institutions (Ministry of Health of the Czech Republic, Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic, scientific and research facilities, nutrition experts, the media, distribution networks, consumer and other organizations) in the implementation of Action Plan No 2 Proper Nutrition and Eating Habits of the Population for 2015–2020 and in the promotion of activities focusing on a balanced diet and a healthy lifestyle.