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The effect of the Dutch choices logo on product composition and innovation

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In 2004, the WHO asked food producers to make the healthy choice the easy choice for consumers. In 2006 the Dutch Choices Foundation was launched with the aim to stimulate producers to improve the nutritional quality of products and to help consumers to recognize these relative healthier products. Producers are stimulated to reduce the amount of saturated fatty acids, trans fatty acids, sodium, added sugar and energy in products, or to increase the amount of fibers in products. This is done with a set of criteria for the mentioned nutrients per product group, developed by an independent scientific committee. When products comply with these criteria, the producer that joins the initiative is allowed to use the Choices symbol on the package in order to promote the quality of the product. Every four years these criteria are evaluated and made stricter where possible. We analysed changes in nutrient composition of products in specific products groups over the years in order to analyse the innovation effect of the Dutch Choices initiative. The results show that the average nutrient composition of several product categories has improved, which in several cases can be linked directly to changes in the criteria. Some insights will be shared on the dynamics between the criteria, the product innovation possibilities, and company policies related to the health image of their products.

Biography

Leon Jansen obtained his MSc in Food Technology, PhD in Toxicology from Wageningen University and performed Post-doc research at the WHO International Agency for Research on Cancer (Lyon, France) and at the Dutch Cancer Institute. For five years, he worked as Toxicologist at the Netherlands Nutrition Centre. In 2006, he joined the Schuttelaar & Partners and worked on the launch of the Dutch Choices Foundation. Since then, he is Scientific Coordinator of Choices International Foundation and the Dutch Choices foundation.

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