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3 in 4 Aussies not eating enough whole grain foods: New industry standard to help shoppers make better food choices

The majority of Australians, 75 per cent, may be putting their health at risk by not eating the recommended amount of whole grains each day, according to preliminary results of a study released today.

The *2014 Australian Grains and Legumes Consumption and Attitudinal Study*¹, due for full release in October, also shows a decline in the overall consumption of whole grain foods that Australian adults are choosing to eat each day.

Most Australians are aware that the whole grain content in food varies¹, however, it can be hard for consumers to identify and choose better quality whole grain foods, due to inconsistent labelling.

Independent authority, the Grains & Legumes Nutrition Council (GLNC) is collaborating with the Australian food industry to roll out the voluntary Code of Practice for Whole Grain Ingredient Content Claims, offering Australians more clarity on what they're eating and reducing confusion in supermarket aisles.

For the first time consumers will begin to see consistent descriptions on foods labelled as whole grain – and can choose better products that say 'contains', 'high' or 'very high' in whole grain. Until now there was no industry standard for how whole grain content of foods were defined, making it confusing for consumers to know which foods were a better choice.

Twelve major food companies have already signed up to GLNC's Code of Practice to align their labelling of whole grain products with the new standard. Among them are leading brands Goodman Fielder, Sanitarium, George Weston Foods, Nestle, Cereal Partners Worldwide and Bakers Delight.

Georgie Aley, Managing Director of GLNC, said the new industry standard will help people identify which foods actually contain a significant or higher amount of whole grain.

"People are putting themselves at higher risk of developing diabetes and heart disease by not eating enough whole grains². Yet eating the recommended amount of whole grains a day is as easy as simply enjoying foods that are labelled as 'high' or 'very high' in whole grain.

"Whole grains reduce the risk of chronic diseases and long term weight gain². They are naturally low in fat and are a significant contributor to dietary fibre, vitamin and mineral intake in the Australian diet³. GLNC recommends Australian's eat grain foods 3 to 4 times per day making at least half of these whole grains," she said.

Canvassing the habits of over 3,031 Australians aged 2 to 70 years, the *2014 Australian Grains and Legumes Consumption and Attitudinal Study* found that only one third of Australians are meeting the GLNC recommendations.

Ms Aley said it was troubling that the 2014 findings showed that 75 per cent of adults aged 19 – 70 years were eating less than the recommended amount of whole grains each day.

“The results of the study reinforce the compelling need for greater awareness of the nutritional benefits of grain foods accompanied with an industry standard to help people better understand the whole grain content in foods, and ultimately to make better food choices when filling their supermarket trolleys.

“Many people are aware that whole grain content in food varies, but this variation can lead to confusion among consumers. GLNC’s Code of Practice for Whole Grain Ingredient Content Claims will help to set the record straight about foods labelled as whole grain,” she added.

To check which products are using the whole grain content claim messages visit www.glnc.org.au.

ENDS

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For more information

GLNC Newsboost page:
<http://www.newsboost.com/newsroom/grains-legumes-nutrition-council>

GLNC Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/GrainsLegumesNC>

GLNC Twitter feed:
<https://twitter.com/GrainsLegumesNC>

¹ Grains & Legumes Nutrition Council. 2014 Australian Grains and Legumes Consumption and Attitudinal Report. Unpublished: 2014

² NHMRC. Australian Dietary Guidelines Providing the scientific evidence for healthier Australian diets. 2013 Accessed online January 2014

³ ABS. Australian Health Survey: Nutrition First Results - Foods and Nutrients, 2011-12. Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2014. <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/4364.0.55.007~2011-12~Main%20Features~Key%20Findings~1>