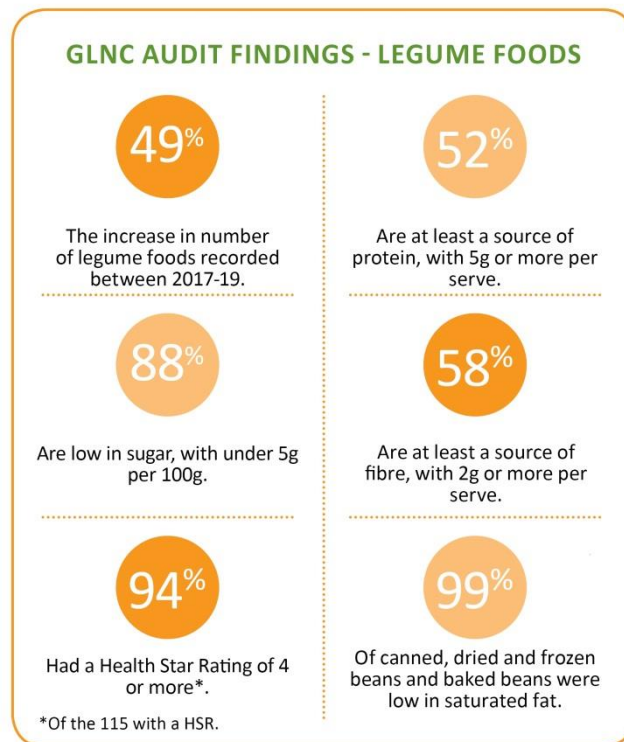


GLNC PRODUCT AUDIT HIGHLIGHTS

LEGUMES
MARCH 2019

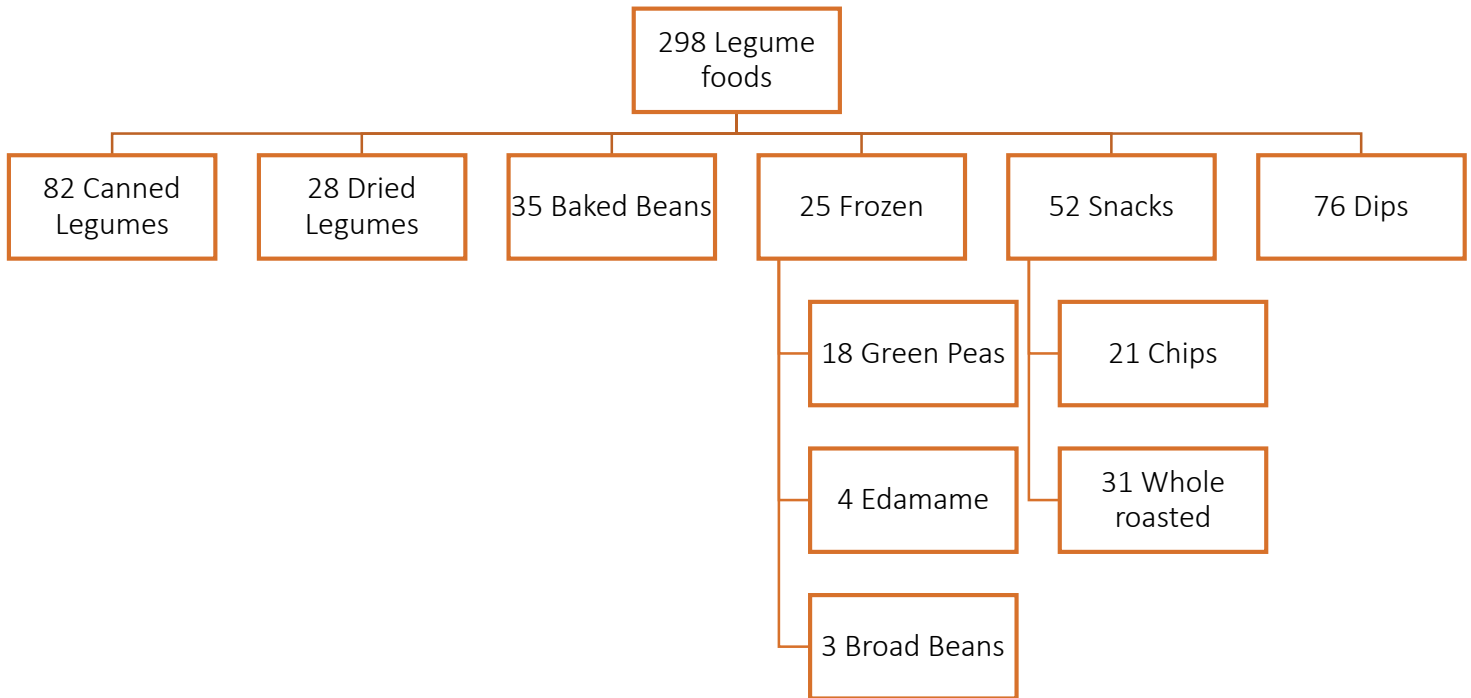
Legumes are packed with nutrients, and they are found as an ingredient in a wide range of different foods as well as on their own. In January 2019, GLNC audited 298 legume products from the four major supermarkets in Sydney, by collecting product information in store and online. Read on for a summary of the audit.



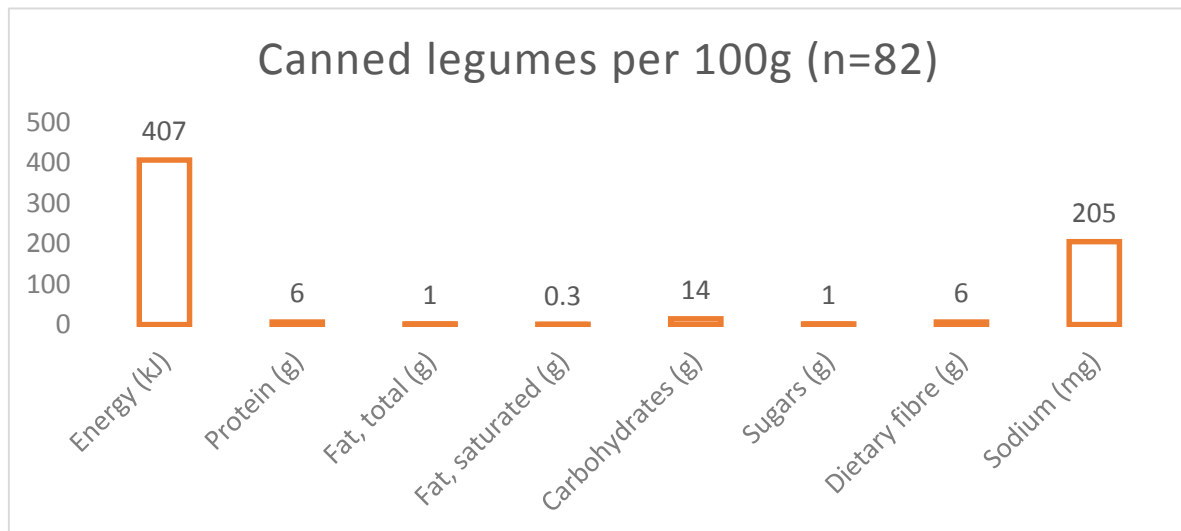
Tips for choosing healthy legume foods

- When comparing products, choose those with a higher percentage of legumes in the ingredients list, as they tend to be higher in protein and dietary fibre
- Choose products with a higher Health Star Rating
- When comparing legume snacks, choose those with lower saturated fat and sodium

Category overview:



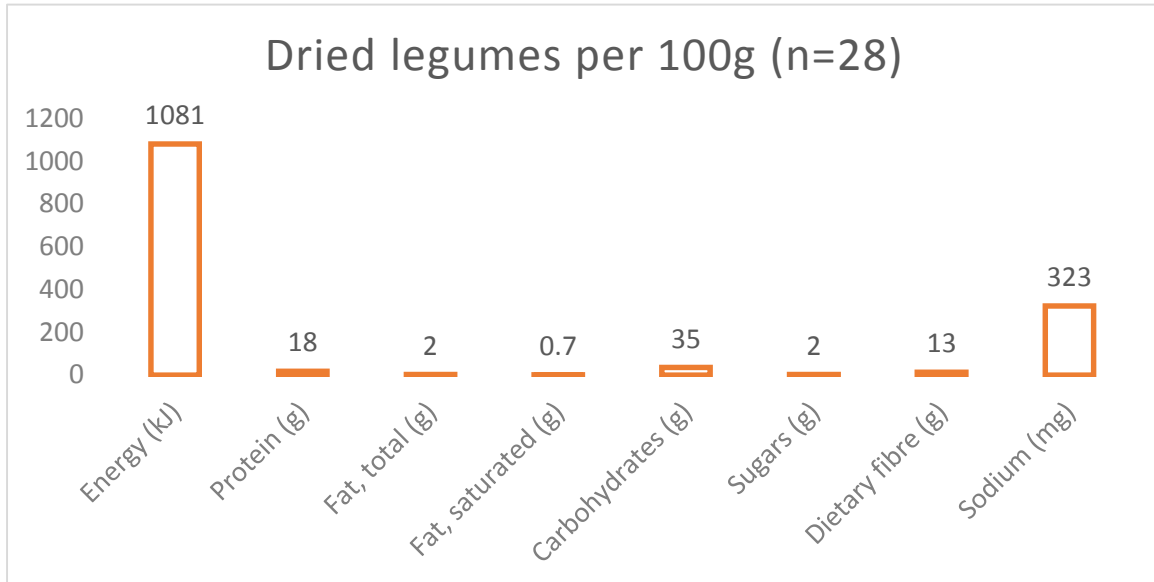
Canned legumes:



The majority of canned legumes (59%) were a source of protein, providing at least 5g per serve. All products were low in both total and saturated fats, and all but two products were low in sugar. Eighty-eight percent of canned legumes were at least a source of dietary fibre, with 2g or more per serve, and while no products were considered low in sodium (missing the aim of less than 120mg/100g), research shows rinsing canned legumes reduces sodium by around 40%.¹

Canned legumes had a wide range of legume ingredients – between 20-65%. This may explain that there was some variation in the dietary fibre and protein content of different kinds, so for this reason, it is worthwhile to check the ingredients.

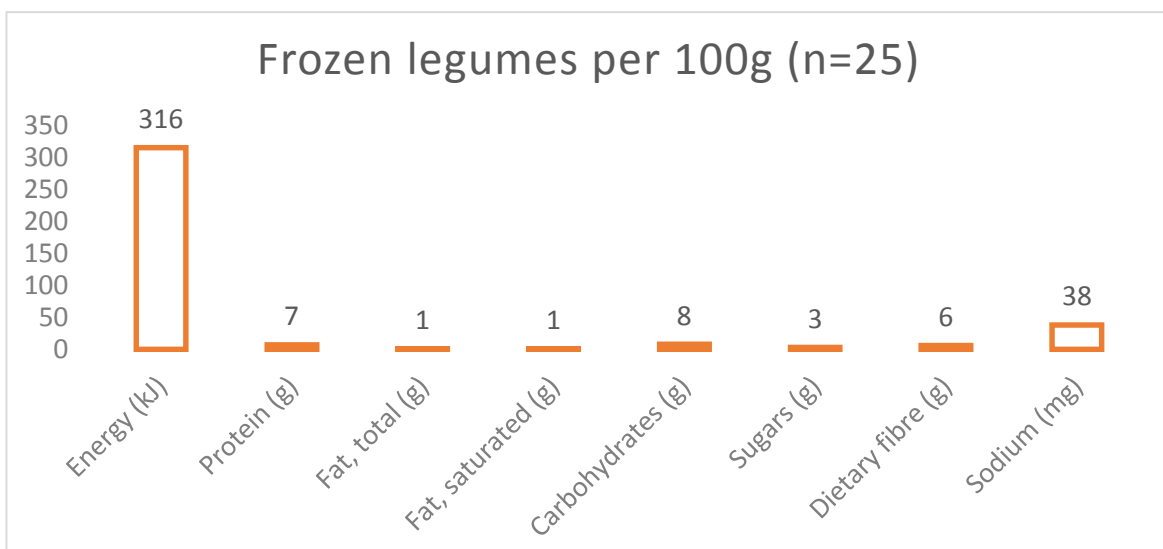
Dried legumes:



Dried legumes were nutritionally very similar to canned legumes, though as they absorb a significant amount of water during cooking, 100g of dried legumes is not equal to 100g of cooked, canned legumes. For that reason, values appeared higher for all nutrients in dried legumes, so comparing nutrition labels of the two versions may not be useful.

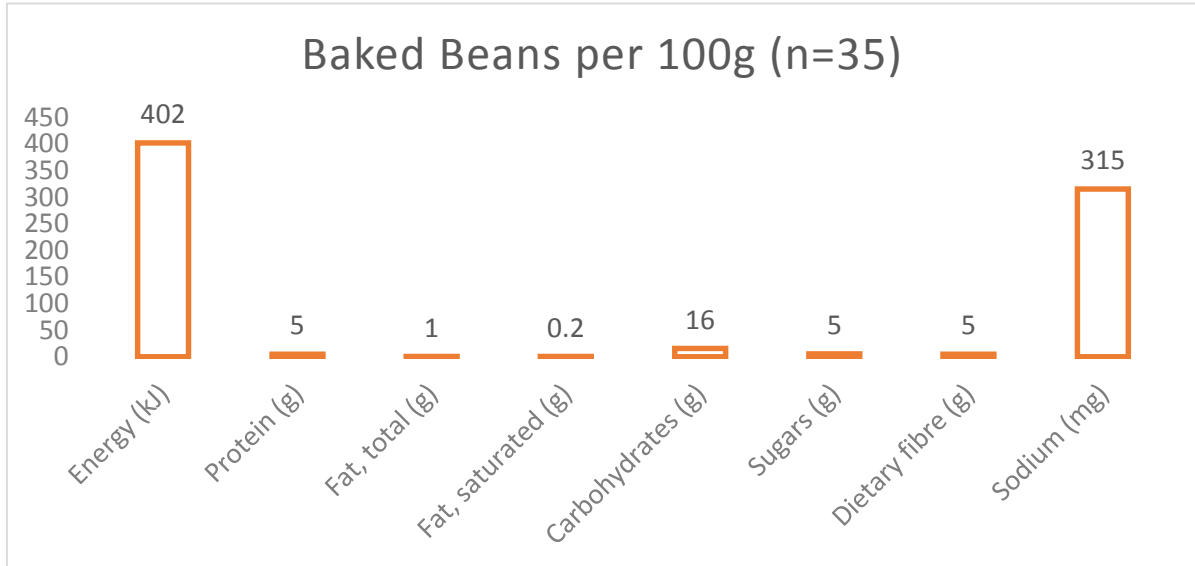
Almost all dried legumes (96%) were a source of protein, and 71% offered a *good* source (at least 10g protein per serve). Most products were low in total (79%) and saturated fats (93%), and 93% were also low in sugar. Three quarters (75%) of all products were low in sodium, and 82% were at least a source of dietary fibre, with 2g or more per serve.

Frozen legumes:



Half of all frozen legumes were a source of protein. All products were low in total and saturated fat, 88% were low in sugar, and 92% were low in sodium. Sixty-four percent of frozen legumes were at least a source of fibre, though 33% did not state dietary fibre on-pack.

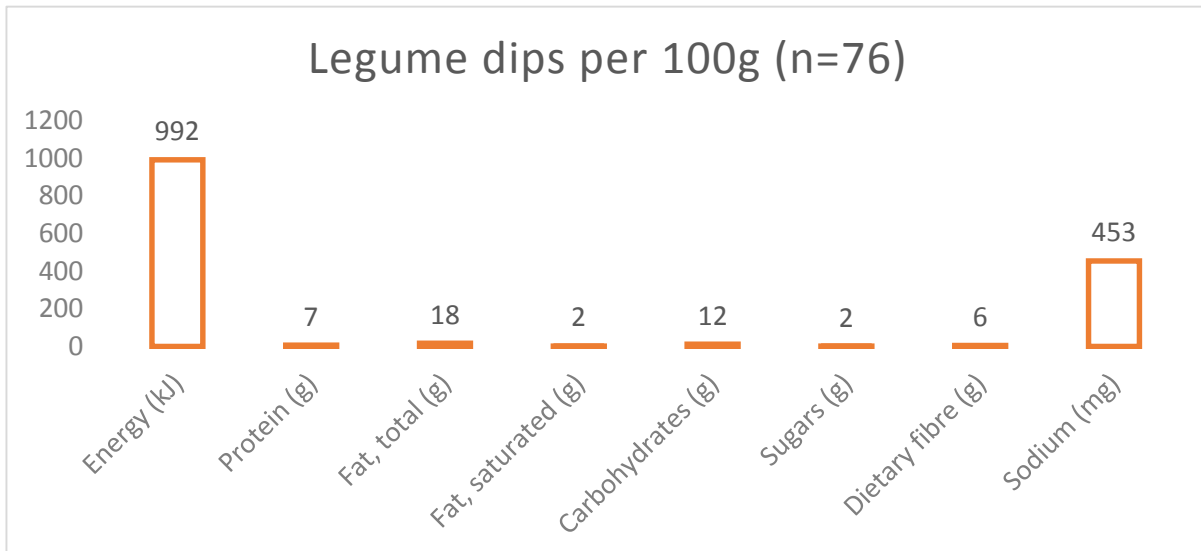
Baked beans:



Ninety-four percent of baked beans were at least a source of protein, and 57% were considered a good source. All products were low in both total and saturated fats, and more than half (54%) were low in sugar. Only two baked beans were low in sodium (6%), but all provided at least a source of dietary fibre.

There was a range of values noted for protein (2.4 – 8.6g/100g), fibre (3 – 8.4g/100g), and sodium (20 – 555mg/100g). In general, products with added ingredients such as meat or vegetables were higher in each of these when compared with plain baked beans. As expected, ‘no added salt’ or ‘reduced salt’ baked beans were lower in sodium than regular versions.

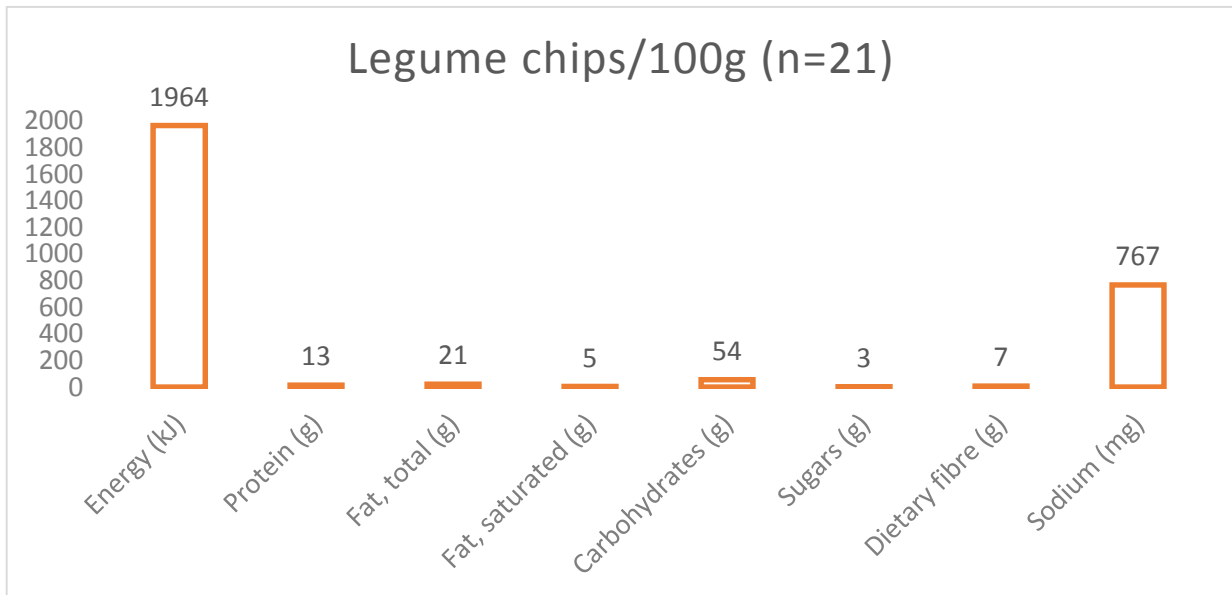
Legumes dips:



Only 12% of dips were considered a source of protein, and while none were low in total fat or sodium, 22% were low in saturated fat. Almost all dips (96%) were low in sugar, and only 3% were eligible for a fibre claim – though only 5% of products overall included fibre information on-pack.

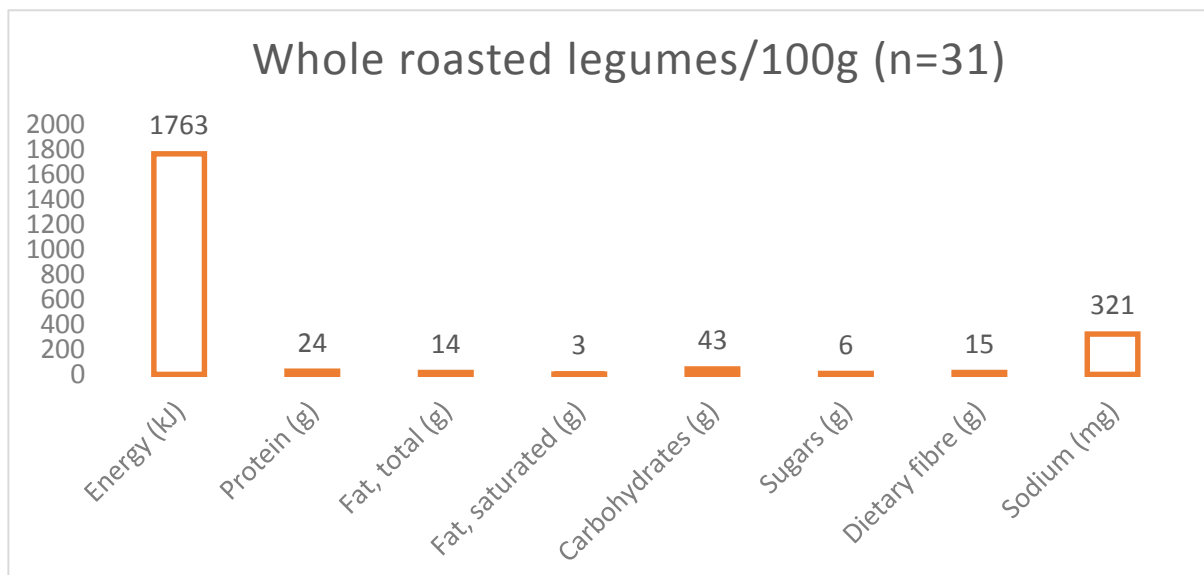
The percentage of legume ingredient ranged between 13 – 86%, which may account for variation in protein content (3-9.8g/100g). Similarly, there was wide variation in energy (515 – 1620kJ/100g), and sodium (153 – 952mg/100g), so it is worthwhile to compare products nutrition labels.

Legume snacks – chips:



Though only 4% of legume chips were low in total fat, 28% were considered low in saturated fat. 14% were a source of protein, and all products were low in sugar. 23% were at least a source of fibre, but none were low in sodium. Although there appears to be some positive points for legume chips, there was a wide range for negative nutrients such as sodium (213 – 1355mg/100g), and saturated fat (1 – 12.5g/100g), so the category is quite varied. When compared to regular potato chips, legume chips may be marginally healthier (being slightly lower in energy and fats, and slightly higher in fibre), though they are generally higher in sodium, so can be a deceptively unhealthy snack.

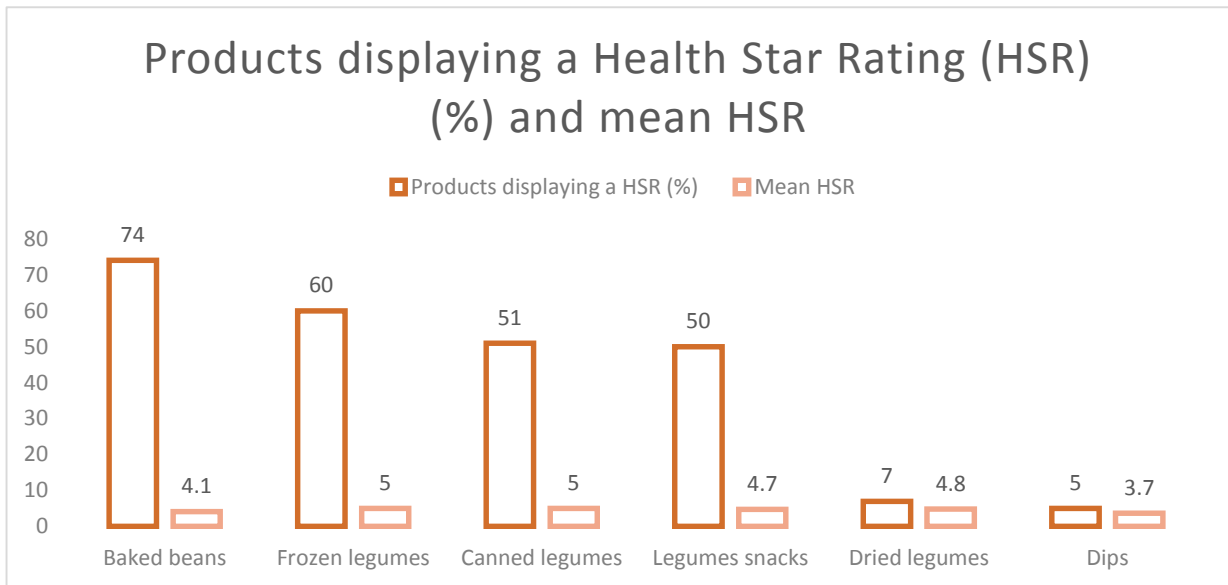
Whole roasted legumes:



Whole roasted legumes were generally a source of protein (with 67% eligible to make this claim), though there was wide variation within the category – between 13.4 – 45.4g/100g. Similarly, 67% were at least a source of fibre, but this ranged between 6.7 – 28.9g fibre/100g.

Few (3%) were low in total fat, but 61% were low in saturated fat, and while 67% were low in sugar, products dipped in yoghurt or chocolate were high in sugar – with up to 30g/100g. Few whole legumes were low in sodium (6%), and there was a wide range, between 24 – 750mg/100g.

Health Star Rating:



Overall, 38% of products displayed a HSR, an increase from 20% in 2017. Baked beans had the greatest percentage of products with a HSR (74%), followed by frozen (60%), canned (51%), and snacks (50%). Few dried legumes (7%) or dips (5%) displayed a HSR. HSR scores ranged between 3-5 stars, and the highest average ratings were from frozen and canned legumes, (both with a mean score of 5). Dried legumes, snacks, and baked beans had similar average scores between 4.1 – 4.8, and dips had the lowest average score of 3.7.

On-pack claims:

Fibre was the top on-pack claim in the entire category, with almost three-quarters making mention of the nutrient on-pack. This was followed by ‘natural’ claims – such as ‘No artificial colours, flavour, preservatives, GMO-free’ High protein, and low sugar claims were on between 16-19% of all products. Interestingly, more than 1 in 5 products featured a claim around being vegetarian or vegan and 15% stated a gluten-free claim.

What has changed since the 2017 legumes audit?

49% more products were captured in 2019, increasing from 199, to 298, though frozen legumes were introduced as a new category this year. Number of products were fairly consistent in canned and dried legumes and baked beans, but dips and snacks increased in number by 66%.

While no nutritional differences were noted in the two years, and top nutrient claims remained consistent, there were some other on-pack claims changes. Glycaemic Index (GI) claims halved, from 7.5% to 2.5%, products displaying a HSR increased from 20%, to 38%, and vegetarian/vegan claims increased by 270%.

Reference values – eligibility for Nutrition Content claims:

| Nutrient | Eligibility criteria |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Fat, total | ≤3 g/100g |
| Fat, saturated | ≤1.5g/100g |
| Sugars, total | ≤5g/100g |
| Sodium | ≤120mg/100g |
| Source of protein | ≥5g/serve |
| Good source of protein | ≥10g/serve |
| Source of fibre | ≥2 - <4g/serve |
| Good source of fibre | ≥4 - <7g/serve |
| Excellent source of fibre | ≥7 g |

References:

1. Jones J, Mount J. Sodium Reduction in Canned Bean Varieties by Draining and Rinsing. Institute of Food Technologists Conference Poster; Anaheim, California 2009.