



## NUTRINFORM BATTERY: THE LABEL THAT HELPS TO FOLLOW HEALTHY DIETS

In the last three decades disorders partly related to nutrition, such as obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular diseases, have sharply increased, especially in economically advanced societies. The promotion of healthy diets therefore emerged among the dominant topics on the agenda of political decision-makers. This resulted in the celebration of a High-Level Meeting of Heads of State and Government at the United Nations General Assembly on 27 September 2018. Through a Political Declaration, then converted into a UN Resolution, world leaders called on governments to provide an environment suitable for empowering consumers to make informed choices for a healthy diet.

Italy has extraordinary and highly appreciated gastronomic traditions, as evidenced by the data relating to agri-food exports, but it is also at the top of the health and longevity rankings. As several studies show, this is mainly due to the Mediterranean Diet, recognized by the Unesco as an intangible heritage of humanity, which not only does provide a reliable guide towards food balance, but also a cultural basis of values such as conviviality, hospitality and understanding between different generations. It is therefore quite natural that Italy has assumed a leading role on nutritional issues in the various international fora. As part of the Farm to Fork Strategy launched by the European Commission, our country is proposing its own vision, based on few fundamental principles: promotion of healthy diets, protection of local gastronomic traditions, sustainable production, consumers' freedom of choice.

The NUTRINFORM BATTERY represents an important part of this strategy. In fact, front-of-pack nutrition labelling can increase consumer nutrition knowledge thus promoting more informed choices by consumers and more responsible behavior by producers. Conceived and implemented by a Working Group made up of experts from four ministries (Health, Agriculture, Foreign Affairs and Economic Development), food scientists and representatives of the agricultural world, industry and consumers, the Italian system is completely innovative compared to labelling systems currently on the market, overcoming many of their critical issues. In particular, it was established to place the emphasis on the balance of the overall diet and not on individual foods, with specific reference to the nutrients considered relevant by the World Health Organization. This has avoided unfair claims of unhealthiness placed on whole categories of products by other labelling systems, such as Nutri-Score.

It was also pointed out that the Italian system should be linked to real consumption patterns such as portions and not to abstract parameters such as 100 grams, which have a completely different effect depending on whether you eat a large food (such as a pizza), or one normally consumed in very limited portions (such as olive oil). These are the theoretical assumptions on which the NutrInform Battery was based: a system that does not discriminate products but indicates their caloric and nutrient content per portion, underlining the impact on the daily requirement according to the Reference Intake established

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by EFSA through the graphic symbol of the battery. The data expressed are purely objective, therefore the system cannot be manipulated by the producers, as is the case with other schemes. The portions, for each food category, have been defined by the Ministry of Health.

Before its official adoption by the government, the NutrInform Battery was tested with a representative sample of Italian families, who appreciated its clarity, usefulness and informative character compared to the Nutri-Score system.

Fully compliant with art. 35 of EU Regulation 1169/2011 on correct information to consumers, the NutrInform Battery was approved by the European Commission and officially adopted as an Italian scheme in January 2021.

Within the last quarter of this year, the European Commission will put forward a proposal for harmonized front-of-pack nutrition labelling at EU level. We are confident that once better known by European representatives, NutrInform Battery can be identified as a useful, equitable, educational, effective and adaptable system to the nutrition guidelines of all countries.

## **NUTRINFORM BATTERY**

Objective data only

Specific indications on calories and nutrients

Non-discriminatory

Calculation on actual quantities consumed (portions)

Focus on the balance of the overall diet and not on individual foods

Compliant with EU legislation

Respectful of traditional diets and local gastronomies