



**FOOD  
STANDARDS  
AGENCY**

**FSIS 01/08 : FEBRUARY 2008**

## **PROCESSED FOOD DATABANK**

**(SAMPLING ROUND TWO: FEBRUARY 2007 – SEPTEMBER 2007)**

### **Summary**

The Food Standards Agency published the results of the first sampling round of the Processed Food Databank in 2006, with almost 1000 products in 29 processed food categories being purchased from high street food retail outlets between December 2004 and February 2005 (FSIS 13/06)

<http://www.food.gov.uk/science/surveillance/fsisbranch2006/fsis1306>

A second sampling round of the Processed Food Databank has now been completed. Data from the second round were collected from the labels of 1094 products purchased in the UK between February and September 2007. The results of this second round are published on the Agency website as a separate document, rather than amending the information gathered in round one. The second sampling round includes a range of products from the first round that were re-sampled to capture any reformulation changes as well as a number of products sampled for the first time. As in the first round, the absence of a particular brand in the second round means only that the brand has not been sampled and has no other significance.

## Background

The Processed Food Databank was originally designed as a reference tool to provide indicative information on levels of sodium (salt) in a range of processed foods and has been used by the Agency to inform discussions with industry and other bodies aimed at encouraging a reduction in the salt content of processed foods.

However, as the Agency's Strategic Plan (2007) covers wider areas of work in nutrition, the databank also collected other information, including the declared levels of saturated fat and sugar in these processed foods. The databank includes types of processed foods that are major contributors to intakes of salt, saturated fat and/or sugar in the diets of both adults and children.

The Processed Food Databank therefore provides indicative information on levels of salt, saturated fat, sugar and other nutrients in processed foods over time and builds up an outline picture of the work carried out by the food industry on product reformulation as part of a wider programme toward set dietary objectives, such as those included in the FSA Strategic Plan (FSA, 2007), the Public Health White Paper (Department of Health, 2004) and the Agency's Salt Targets (FSA March 2006). As part of the work toward these objectives, the Agency is working closely with the food industry on the reformulation of processed food products in order to reduce salt, saturated fat and sugar intakes.

The first round of data was collected in 2005, with almost 1000 products in 29 processed food categories being purchased from high street food retail outlets between December 2004 and February 2005. This information sheet refers to the second round of sampling, which took place between February and September 2007. The second round of sampling has collected details of 1094 products, which have been recorded in an Excel database.

The second round aimed to collect a broad sample of processed foods and beverages available to the UK public. A sampling plan for collecting 1,100 samples was designed with the aim of including a broadly representative range of the processed foods consumed by the UK public, but which focused on the types of food most commonly consumed rather than aiming simply to cover the entire range available. The plan was

informed by both market share data and information on the contribution of particular processed foods to salt, saturated fat and sugar intakes in the UK diet. By including the market leaders in each product category the databank aims to achieve a broadly representative spread of the foods and drinks consumed by the UK public, and to reflect the key processed food categories that contribute most to salt, saturated fat and sugar in the diet.

As with the first sampling round the data obtained from the second sampling round will also be used to inform discussions with the food industry, and other bodies, aimed at encouraging reductions in the salt, saturated fat and sugar content of processed foods and to inform related areas of work in nutrition. This in turn will help consumers more easily choose a healthy diet and meet nutrient intake guideline.

## **Methodology**

### ***Sampling***

1094 processed food products in 29 categories were purchased in the UK between February 2007 and September 2007. The products were purchased from retailers in the West and East Midlands. Both Internet and in-store methods were used.

The databank, from the outset, intended to represent the brands and varieties most frequently purchased by the UK public, whilst taking into account the primary contributors to salt, fat and sugar intake.

The categories and sub-categories covered in round two (see Annex 1) were largely the same as those in round one with the following exceptions:

Addition of the following category:

- Savoury dips

Addition of the following sub-categories:

- Cereal bars
- Salad cream
- Mayonnaise
- Salad dressing
- Other processed egg products
- Flavoured milk, yoghurt drinks and probiotic drinks
- Other ready meals

Removal of the following category:

- Miscellaneous

The first year databank focussed on broadly representing the overall market share data of brands within a category. The predominant form of market share data used was brand / supermarket share data for a given category and did not always capture the top selling products.

The second round sampling plan was constructed based on the inclusion of a range of repeat products from the first sampling round, and reflected the approximate market share of the supermarkets across the databank. Market share data for top-selling individual products was also used wherever possible to inform the sampling plan for the second round. The databank includes own-label versions from the main supermarket chains in the UK as well as manufacturers' branded products.

## ***Repeats***

Repeat products for the second round were chosen based on TNS market share data where available. Manufacturer and retailer websites were also used to identify whether or not potential repeat products were still available. It was intended that each sub-category should include at least 4 repeat samples from the first sampling round. However, in some instances some of the repeat products were no longer available, and therefore fewer than 4 repeat products were purchased.

In instances where the sub-category contained less than 4 products in sampling round one, the second round sub-category included less than 4 repeats. In instances where no repeats or fewer than four repeat products were available within the second round sub-category, TNS market share data was used to select additional top-selling individual products for that sub-category.

A general guideline was applied to determine if repeat sampled products were still directly comparable to the round one product. A change in weight or recipe would not constitute a change in product, but a change in name combined with a recipe change would.

## ***Other Factors***

There was no need to specify any geographical distribution of the sampling as it was not anticipated that the availability of products would vary geographically.

## **The following points should be noted when using the databank (Second Sampling round: February 2007 to September 2007):**

1. Information was entered as given on the label.
2. Micronutrient information has not been included in round two.
3. No laboratory analyses were carried out.
4. Some nutrient levels may have been given on the label in a non-numerical format e.g. 'trace'. Non-numerical 'values' were transcribed exactly as given on the label. For example, where 'trace', 'nil', '-' or '<0.1' were given on the label these were

written in the cell. Where no data were available at all, the cell was left blank. If '-' was shown on the pack, then this was transcribed directly and not left blank.

5. The Food Coding System Number: All products will have a letter 'a' at the end of the number in order to identify them as products from the second round of sampling.
6. Where a number of units is given on the pack, but was not included in the product name, this was recorded under 'stated number of portions, servings or units per pack'.
7. Other relevant information: This field includes relevant information that is not captured in the other columns. This may include information that is not necessarily presented on the packaging.
8. The declared pack size is a direct transcription of the information given on the label.
9. Conditions for nutritional data (as sold per 100g / as sold per 100ml , as sold per portion/ serving, as cooked/ made up per 100g or ml, as cooked/ made up per portion or serving). Please note that there may be more than one condition applicable to a product. If information was given for 'as sold' and 'cooked' then both sets of nutrient data were recorded.
  - The relevant combination of the following conditions were used:
    - As sold per 100g
    - As sold per 100ml
    - As sold per portion / serving
    - As cooked/made up per 100g
    - As cooked/made up per 100ml
    - As cooked / made up per portion / serving
- For conditions that were not clearly declared on the label (i. e " As sold " or " As cooked " ), it has been assumed that the nutrient information on the product label is given "As sold "
- In all instances, nutrient information per 100g as sold was entered, if declared on the label.

- Where nutrient information on more than one portion size, serving or number of product units is given both in the nutrition panel and elsewhere on the pack, nutrient information for the portion/serving/unit given in the nutrition panel took precedence and was entered into the databank.
10. Where nutrient information was also given for one or more portion/serving sizes or methods of preparation/cooking in the nutrition panel, the first set of such data was entered reading from left to right in the nutrition panel. For example, where nutrient information is given per 100g oven-baked and per 100g grilled, nutrient information for the first condition (in this case oven-baked only) was entered in the databank.
11. Description of a portion or serving/weight of a portion or serving :
- If recorded, the portion weight in g, is as exactly as written on the pack. Calculations have NOT been made from other information on the pack.
  - If the portion size is only given in (ml) this has been recorded in the “Description of a portion or serving” column and the “Weight of a portion or serving” column is blank; weights can only be given in g.
  - If the portion size as made up for a dried product was given as the dry weight in (g) plus an amount of water or milk (as may be the case for dried soups, dried beverages, breakfast cereals, and some instant hot snacks), this was recorded in the “Description of a portion or serving (product as made up/ cooked)” column by listing the dry weight and the amount of water or milk (exactly as written on the packaging).
12. Where nutrient information on more than one portion size, serving or number of product units was given both in the nutrition panel and elsewhere on the pack, nutrient information for the portion/serving/unit given in the nutrition panel was entered into the databank.
13. A small number of samples purchased were multi-packs, where each unit declared different nutrient levels (e.g. a multi-pack containing 4 different fruit-flavoured yoghurts). Where this was the case nutrient information was entered for one unit chosen at random, and identified as such in the databank.
14. The ingredients list is contained in a separate worksheet. Ingredients were recorded in the same order as they appeared on the label

15. A full listing of information recorded is included under the sub-tab entitled 'legend' within the databank. This contains a list of column headings, and where necessary, provides further information on the content of each column.

## **Results and Interpretation**

This second round of the Processed Food Databank was undertaken to extend the information on the levels of nutrients in processed foods. The second round contains some products sampled in round one to capture reformulation changes, whilst maintaining a broadly representative, though not exhaustive sample of products on the market. The second round of the databank is available on the Agency website as a separate Excel document rather than amending the information gathered in round one.

The second sampling round contains nutrient information collected from the product labels of 1094 processed food products in 29 categories. The second round of the databank includes a total of 307 products that were sampled in both round one and round two.

As in round one, data from round two will continue to provide a valuable resource of indicative information on the levels of sodium (salt) as well as other information, including the declared levels of fat, saturated fat and sugar and a range of other nutrients in processed foods.

In addition the data from both sampling rounds will be used as a reference tool to inform areas of related work in nutrition, such as the development of front of pack nutrition signposting. These will in turn help consumers more easily choose a healthy diet and meet nutrient intake guidelines.

The second round of the databank represents a “**snapshot**” of the nutrition information from the selected processed food products within the categories sampled between February 2007 and September 2007.

It is likely that a number of products contained within the databank may have had a change in ownership, change in packaging, been reformulated, or even de-listed since the project was undertaken. The databank does not contain information from the labels of

products reformulated after the sampling period and therefore does not reflect any changes that may have been made to product composition or labelling since sampling.

The databank is not intended as a reference tool for making individual food choices or to provide “average” nutrient values for the particular categories included in the databank.

As in the first round the absence of a particular brand in the second sampling round means only that the brand has not been included in the databank and has no other significance. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all products on the market.

Readers should contact the appropriate brand owners for the most up to date information on the nutrient composition and availability of products.

## References

1. Food Standards Agency Strategic Plan 2010 (2007)  
<http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/strategicplan2010e.pdf>
2. Department of Health (2004). The Public Health White Paper: Choosing Health: Making healthy choices easier.  
[http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_4094550](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4094550)
3. Food Standards Agency Salt Reduction Targets (March 2006)  
<http://www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2006/mar/salttargets>

## Further Information

This survey report is held in the Dr Elsie Widdowson Library and Information Service at the Food Standards Agency headquarters in London. If you would like further copies (a small charge for photocopying will be made), please contact:

Dr Elsie Widdowson Library and Information Service

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Processed Food Databank product categories and sub-categories (Sampling round: February 2007 to September 2007)

**1 Pizza**

- 1.1 Pizza (with meat)
- 1.2 Pizza (no meat)

**2 Pasta (not ready meals, not plain dry)**

- 2.1 Dry recipe pasta
- 2.2 Fresh unfilled pasta
- 2.3 Stuffed pasta
- 2.4 Canned pasta

**3 Ready Meals**

- 3.1 Fish based ready meals (chilled)
- 3.2 Fish based ready meals (frozen)
- 3.3 Vegetable based ready meals (chilled)
- 3.4 Vegetable based ready meals (frozen)
- 3.5 Chinese/South East Asian ready meals (chilled)
- 3.6 Chinese/South East Asian ready meals (frozen)
- 3.7 Indian ready meals (chilled)
- 3.8 Indian ready meals (frozen)
- 3.9 Italian ready meals (chilled)
- 3.10 Italian ready meals (frozen)
- 3.11 Traditional British ready meals (chilled)
- 3.12 Traditional British ready meals (frozen)
- 3.13 Other ready meals (chilled)

**4 Rice (not ready meals, not plain dry rice)**

- 4.1 Frozen rice dishes
- 4.2 Microwavable rice
- 4.3 Dry savoury rice

**5 Bought sandwiches (pre-packed)**

- 5.1 Cheese-based sandwiches
- 5.2 Egg-based sandwiches
- 5.3 Chicken or turkey-based sandwiches
- 5.4 Meat-based sandwiches (not poultry)
- 5.5 Other seafood-based sandwiches (not tuna)
- 5.6 Tuna-based sandwiches

**6 Buns, cakes, pastries and biscuits**

- 6.1 Buns, cakes and pastries
- 6.2 Savoury biscuits
- 6.3 Sweet biscuits

6.4 Cereal bars

### **7 Desserts**

7.1 Yoghurt and fromage frais

7.2 Ice cream

7.3 Other ambient and chilled desserts and processed pudding products

7.4 Other frozen desserts (not ice cream)

### **8 Soup**

8.1 Soup – instant dried

8.2 Soup – ready made chilled/fresh

8.3 Soup – ready made wet ambient

### **9 Bread**

9.1 White bread

9.2 Brown bread

9.3 Wholemeal bread

9.4 Other bread

### **10 Meat products**

10.1 Bacon – pre-packed

10.2 Canned meat products

10.3 Meat burgers (not poultry)

10.4 Meat products with pastry

10.5 Meat slices/rashers and pate (chilled pre-packed, not bacon)

10.6 Prepared meat portions (not ready meals)

10.7 Coated chicken and turkey products

10.8 Pork sausages – economy

10.9 Pork sausages – healthy eating

10.10 Pork sausages - premium

10.11 Pork sausages - standard

10.12 Other sausages

### **11 Breakfast cereals**

11.1 Wholegrain and high fibre breakfast cereals

11.2 Hot breakfast cereals

11.3 Other breakfast cereals (not wholegrain/high fibre/hot)

### **13 Cheese**

13.1 Natural soft cheese (not re-formed)

13.2 UK regional cheeses (not cheddar)

13.3 Cheddar

13.4 Re-formed cheese

13.5 Other natural cheese

### **14 Fat spreads**

14.1 Butter

14.2 PUFA fat spread (62-80% fat content)

14.3 Non-PUFA fat spread (62-80% fat content)

14.4 PUFA reduced fat spread (41-60% fat content)

14.5 Non-PUFA reduced fat spread (41-60% fat content)

- 14.6 PUFA low fat spread (<39% fat content)
- 14.7 Non-PUFA low fat spread (<39% fat content)
- 15 Baked beans**
- 15.1 Baked beans in tomato sauce (no additions)
- 15.2 Baked beans in tomato sauce (with meat)
- 16 Vegetable dishes (not ready meals)**
- 17 Processed fish and shellfish products and dishes (not ready meals)**
- 17.1 Canned fish
- 17.2 Other processed fish and shellfish products and dishes (not canned)
- 18 Crisps and savoury snacks**
- 18.1 Crisps and other savoury snacks
- 18.2 Nuts
- 19 Instant hot snacks (e.g. pot noodles)**
- 21 Table sauces and pickles (not cook-in sauces)**
- 21.1 Brown sauce
- 21.2 Ketchup
- 21.5 Pickles
- 21.6 Salad cream
- 21.7 Mayonnaise
- 21.8 Salad Dressings
- 22 Cook-in and pasta sauces**
- 22.1 Ambient wet pasta sauces
- 22.2 Ambient wet cook-in sauces (not pasta)
- 22.3 Dried cooking sauces
- 22.4 Fresh chilled cooking sauces
- 23 Egg dishes**
- 23.1 Quiche (with meat or fish)
- 23.2 Quiche (no meat or fish)
- 23.3 Other processed egg products
- 25 Drinks (not dried beverages)**
- 25.1 Carbonated soft drinks (not diet)
- 25.2 Still soft drinks – concentrated (not diet)
- 25.3 Still soft drinks – ready to drink (not diet)
- 25.4 Flavoured milk and yoghurt drinks and probiotic drinks
- 26 Potato products (not crisps)**
- 26.1 Chips
- 26.2 Other potato products
- 27 Canned vegetables**
- 27.1 Canned vegetables – prepared peas and beans
- 27.2 Canned vegetables – sweetcorn
- 27.3 Canned vegetables - other
- 28 Confectionery**
- 28.1 Chocolate
- 28.2 Gum and jelly confectionery
- 28.3 Other confectionery
- 29 Dried beverages**
- 29.1 Chocolate drinks
- 30 Preserves, spreads and sandwich fillings**

- 30.1 Jam, chocolate and peanut based spreads
- 30.2 Other spreads, pastes and sandwich fillings
- 30.3 Yeast, vegetable and meat extracts
- 31 Dressed salads**
- 32 Savoury dips**