

PRESS RELEASE

Health logos gaining ground in Asia says EAS

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Authorities across Asia are increasingly considering health logos for food and beverage products that meet certain nutritional criteria to help combat rising obesity rates in the region, international food policy consultancy EAS has said.

EAS Asia Food and Health Policy Manager Levie Cequena highlighted the growing popularity of health logos on products in the wake of Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia prioritising programmes to counter obesity in 2011, and Indonesia's plans to hold a multi-stakeholder meeting on non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and obesity this month in Jakarta.

Symbolic health logos on products are specific to the food and beverage industry, enabling products meeting specific nutritional criteria to bear health logos on the packaging.

Products carrying these logos are generally lower in total fat, saturated fat, sodium and sugar, and some are also higher in dietary fibre and calcium compared to similar products in the same food category.

"The programmes being discussed, implemented and advanced in the region are comprehensive, and food and beverage companies should be monitoring activities in this area," Cequena said. "Significant numbers in Asian countries are now considered morbidly obese, therefore most of the programmes governments in the region are looking into are awareness and information campaigns on healthy lifestyles. The aim is to help make health and nutrition decisions easier for consumers."

Cequena highlighted advanced initiatives in Singapore, where products can carry a 'Healthier Choice Symbol' if they meet nutritional guidelines established by the country's Health Promotion Board, and where more than 2,400 Healthier Choice Symbol products are on the market, with guidelines covering over 60 food categories.

"Singapore leads the initiatives on healthy choice symbols, and has also created a variant of the Healthier Choice Symbol called the Healthier Snack Symbol," Cequena added. "Malaysia too is following suit, with its recently announced plans to re-introduce a Healthier Choice symbol programme similar to that of Singapore."

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

1. EAS provides strategic consulting advice on international regulation on food and nutritional products. It provides companies with regulatory and strategic advice for the marketing and approval of their products in Europe, Asia and Latin America.
2. EAS also advises governments, trade associations and companies on the impact of global policy.
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