Getting Consumers to eat more whole grains: The role of policy, prices, and product availability

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Make (at least!) Half Your Grains Whole
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2005 Dietary Guidelines

• The United States Department of Agriculture and Department of Health and Human Services make dietary recommendations every 5 years

• Specific dietary recommendations for whole grains added in 2005
How far do we have to go?

Percent change from 2001-2002 consumption needed to meet 2005 Guidelines

Diets are hard to change

• 2007 IFIC study—Most Americans sampled believe weight (91%), exercise (94%), and diet (90%) influence health

• Yet we still choose diets that are out of sync with dietary guidance

• Prevalence of obesity and diet related illnesses continue to rise
But whole grain sales did rise

Quantity share – whole grain to total grain

Source: ERS calculation based on Nielsen Homescan data
Main drivers of food choices

- Taste
- Prices and income
- Information/health benefits
- Convenience
Trend in relative prices is mixed

Price of whole grain relative to non-whole grain product

Source: ERS calculation based on Nielsen Homescan data
Health benefits
Whole lot of media attention

Monthly number of newspaper articles

- Release of 2000 Dietary Guidelines
- Pre-release of 2005 Dietary Guidelines
- Release of 2005 Dietary Guidelines

Source: Lexis-Nexis
Increased availability and maybe convenience too

Monthly number of new product introductions

Source: Productscan data
A closer look at changes over time

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<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cereal</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bread</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pasta</td>
<td>34.7%</td>
<td>36.5%</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flour</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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* Month of pre-release of the 2005 Dietary Guidelines
New products and past changes

U.S. per capita food consumption
**Carrots**

Farm weight, pounds per capita per year

- **All**
- **Fresh**

Source: ERS Food availability data

U.S. new product introductions
**Baby Carrots**

Reported Introductions

Source: Productscan data
New products and past changes

U.S. per capita food consumption
Spinach

Farm weight, pounds per capita per year

Reported Introductions

Source: ERS Food availability data

Source: Productscan data
More products with “Whole Grain” seal

Total number of products with “whole grain” seal

Source: Whole grain council
But multigrain sales have not changed

Quantity share – whole or multi grain to total grain

Source: ERS calculation based on Nielsen Homescan data
Do increased sales affect intake?

Average amount in bread products (per 100 grams) among adults 20 and over

Source: ERS calculation of NHANES data

*Mypyramid equivalent database, v2
Do increased sales affect intake?

Average amount in RTE cereal (per 100 grams) among adults 20 and over

Source: ERS calculation of NHANES data

*Mypyramid equivalent database, v2
Maybe for kids?

Average amount in bread products (per 100 grams) among children ages 2-19

Source: ERS calculation of NHANES data

*Mypyramid equivalent database, v2
Maybe for kids?

Average amount in RTE cereal (per 100 grams) among children ages 2-19

Source: ERS calculation of NHANES data

*Mypyramid equivalent database, v2
We still have a ways to go

Source: ERS calculation of NHANES data

*Mypyramid equivalent database, v2
In summary

• Whole grain product purchases have increased
  – more pronounced among value added products (bread, RTE cereal and pasta)
  – new product introduction more pronounced among these categories as well

• Whole grain recommendation in 2005 Dietary Guidelines likely provided additional incentives for reformulations

• Continued room for ambiguous claims, however, may have tempered how effective these recommendations have been at increasing intake