



Údarás Sábháilteachta Bia NA hÉIREANN
Food Safety AUTHORITY OF IRELAND

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Food Reformulation Task Force:
DRAFT energy and target nutrient
thresholds for use in new product
development



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Glossary

Term	Text
FSAI	Food Safety Authority of Ireland
g	gram
Kcal	kilocalories
n	number of samples
NPD	new product development
ml	millilitres
NT	not targeted

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This report outlines draft energy and target nutrient thresholds for use in new product development (NPD) in 15 food categories prioritised for reformulation. This draft energy and target nutrient thresholds have been developed to address industry feedback on the challenges of applying percentage nutrient reduction targets to new products. These thresholds have been developed using median values for food products on the Irish market in 2021. The draft energy and target nutrient thresholds for new product development are published for consultation to provide interested parties an opportunity to feedback on the draft targets.

1.2 Background

The Obesity Policy and Action Plan – A Healthy Weight for Ireland published in 2016, outlines ten steps to be taken within a 10-year time frame to address overweight and obesity in Ireland (Department of Health 2016). Step three of the plan relates to food reformulation and aims to ‘*secure appropriate support from the commercial sector to play its part in obesity prevention and agree food industry reformulation targets and review progress*’. To achieve this a Food Reformulation Subgroup of the Obesity Policy Implementation Oversight Group developed *A Roadmap for Food Product Reformulation in Ireland* which was published in 2021 (Department of Health 2021).

To deliver the Roadmap, the Food Reformulation Task Force, a strategic partnership between Healthy Ireland and the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI), was established in 2022. The Food Reformulation Task Force will implement the Roadmap and monitor progress made in reducing energy (calories), saturated fat, sugar, and salt in priority food categories.

1.3 Energy and nutrient reformulation targets for priority food categories

When referred to in the context of *A Roadmap for Food Product Reformulation in Ireland*, food reformulation means improving the nutritional content of commonly consumed processed foods and drinks. This is achieved by reducing energy (calories) and target nutrients (saturated fat, sugar, and salt) to improve the nutrient quality of the food supply. Specifically, the Roadmap sets targets for the reduction of energy (calories) and sugar by 20% and salt and saturated fat by 10% between 2015 and 2025, in pre-packaged foods consumed by the general population (see Figure 1).



Figure 1 Nutrient reduction targets for food products prioritised for reformulation in Ireland between 2015 and 2025

1.4 Priority food categories for food reformulation in Ireland

The Food Reformulation Task Force published *Priority Food Categories for Food Reformulation in Ireland* in mid-2022. The 40 priority food categories were identified as being in high priority need of reformulation given their significant contribution to dietary intakes of the target nutrients in the Irish population (aged 1 - 90 years). The report, *Food Reformulation Task Force: Priority Food Categories for Food Reformulation in Ireland V3*, is available [here](#) (Food Safety Authority of Ireland 2022).

1.5 New product development and reformulation

The task force has received feedback from the food industry of challenges in applying percentage reduction targets to NPD. In response to this feedback, food businesses were advised to contact the task force when creating new products and a nutrient threshold relevant to the product type would be provided. This approach has been burdensome to both the task force and food industry. To address this the task force has accessed pre-existing market snapshot data and developed draft energy and target nutrient thresholds for new products in 15 priority food categories.

2. Methodology for energy and target nutrient threshold development

2.1 Data collection

The FSAI took part in a European Union Joint Action [Best-ReMaP](#) work package 5, sharing best practice in reformulation monitoring between 2020 and 2023. Under Best-ReMaP in 2021, prior to the establishment of the task force, market snapshots of five food categories were completed by the FSAI. Nutrition declaration and food label information were collected for the food categories from four of the leading grocery retailers, who accounted for at least 60% of market share. These data were provided to the Food Reformulation Task Force and in 2023, these data were recategorised using the Irish Universities Nutrition Alliance food categorisation structure that has been adopted by the task force. In total these data represented 15 of the 40 priority food categories.

2.2 New product energy and target nutrient threshold development

To develop energy and target nutrient thresholds for use in NPD, the median energy and target nutrient value was calculated for each of the 15 priority food categories, using data described in section 2.1. The median value was chosen as it is considered to be a feasible target given half of existing food products in the food category have already achieved the target. It is also considered sufficiently ambitious as half of existing food products in the category require reformulation to meet the target. Applying the median nutrient content as a category wide threshold for NPD will contribute to achieving food category reformulation targets described in the Roadmap.

3. Draft energy and target nutrient thresholds for use in NPD

The draft energy and target nutrient thresholds for NPD in 15 priority food categories are outlined in Tables 1–8. Food category and subcategory examples are outlined in [Appendix 1](#). Additional information on food categories and their descriptions can be found in the following report *Food Reformulation Task Force: Priority food Categories for Food Reformulation in Ireland V3* published [here](#).

Table 1: Draft target nutrient threshold per 100 ml of new beverage products

Priority food category	Sugar (g)
Alternative to milk & milk-based beverages (n=164)	4.75
Carbonated beverages (n=375)	4.00
Fruit juices & smoothies (n=82)	10.00
Squashes, cordials & fruit juice drinks (n=126)	3.90

n= sample size; ml=millilitres.

Table 2: Draft target nutrient threshold per 100 g of new dessert products

Priority food category	Sugar (g)
Desserts (n=54)	18.45

n= sample size; g= gram.

Table 3: Draft energy and target nutrient thresholds per 100 g of new bread products

Priority food category	Energy (kcal)	Sugar (g)	Salt (g)
Other breads (n=178)	NT	NT	0.97
White sliced bread & rolls (n=175)	257	3.70	1.10
Wholemeal & brown bread & rolls (n=146)	235	2.60	1.06

n= sample size; kcal= kilocalories; g= gram; NT= not targeted.

Table 4: Draft energy and target nutrient thresholds per 100 g of new beef & veal and chicken, turkey & game products

Priority food category	Energy (kcal)	Saturated fat (g)	Salt (g)
Beef & veal (n=22)	NT	1.00	NT
Chicken, turkey & game (n=73)	120	NT	1.10

n= sample size; kcal= kilocalories; g= gram; NT= not targeted.

Table 5: Draft target nutrient thresholds per 100 g of new bacon & ham products

Priority food subcategory for bacon & ham products	Saturated fat (g)	Salt (g)
Sandwich hams (n=128)	0.90	1.80
Rashers (n=94)	5.10	2.70
Other bacon & ham (n=112)	4.60	2.90

n= sample size; kcal= kilocalories; g= gram; NT= not targeted.

Table 6: Draft target nutrient thresholds per 100 g of new sausage products

Priority food subcategory for sausage products	Saturated fat (g)	Salt (g)
Traditional Irish sausages (n=87)	8.50	1.78
Other sausage products (n=103)	11.00	3.70

n= sample size; kcal= kilocalories; g= gram; NT= not targeted

Table 7: Draft energy and target nutrient thresholds per 100 g of new breakfast cereal products

Priority food category	Energy (kcal)	Saturated fat (g)	Sugar (g)	Salt (g)
Other breakfast cereals (n=62)	371	1.00	1.10	NT
Ready to eat breakfast cereal (n=297)	385	NT	17.00	0.37

n= sample size; kcal= kilocalories; g= gram; NT= not targeted.

Table 8: Draft energy and target nutrient thresholds per 100 g of new yoghurt products

Priority food subcategory for yoghurt products	Energy (kcal)	Saturated fat (g)	Sugar (g)
Natural yoghurt	65	1.6	4.9
Flavoured yoghurt	84	1.6	9.9
Non-dairy yoghurt alternative	76	0.4	8.2

n= sample size; kcal= kilocalories; g= gram; NT= not targeted.

4. Application of draft energy and target nutrient thresholds

The draft energy and target nutrient thresholds outlined in this report should be used for NPD. In order for new products being placed on the market to contribute to food categories achieving their reformulation targets, new products introduced to the market from 2025 onwards should not exceed the nutrient thresholds outlined in this report. Whilst achieving reformulations, it is important to note that foods placed on the Irish market must be safe, as required by Regulation (EC) No 178/2002, Article 14.

For food categories not included in this report, food businesses should continue to contact the task force for guidance on appropriate nutrient thresholds.

The task force will publish additional energy and target nutrient thresholds for use in NPD for some of the remaining 24 priority food categories in 2025.

5. Monitoring of conformance with draft energy and target nutrient thresholds

Conformance of new food and drink products placed on the market from January 2025 onwards, with the draft energy and target nutrient thresholds will be measured using commercial datasets with a focus on NPD and market snapshots.

6. References

1. Department of Health (2016). A Healthy Weight for Ireland: Obesity Policy and Action Plan 2016 – 2025. D. o. Health. Dublin, The Stationery Office.
2. Department of Health (2021). A Roadmap for Food Product Reformulation in Ireland
3. Food Safety Authority of Ireland (2022). Food Reformulation Task Force: Priority Food Categories for Reformulation in Ireland.

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Appendix 1

Table 9 Food categories and examples

Food Categories	Subcategories included in this report	Examples* of foods contained in categories
Bacon & ham	Sandwich ham, Rashers, Other bacon & ham	Sliced ham, Bacon rashers grilled, Gammon steaks fried, ham
Beef & veal	None	Fillet steak fried, mince beef, roast beef
Carbonated beverages	None	Cola, orange, other fizzy drinks
Chicken, turkey & game	None	Chicken breast fried, turkey leg grilled, roasted duck
Desserts	None	Tiramisu, apple crumble, sponge pudding
Fruit juices & smoothies	None	Mixed fresh juice, fresh apple juice, banana smoothie
Other breads	None	Garlic bread, malt bread, scones
Other breakfast cereals	None	Porridge, cereal requiring cooking
Alternatives to milk & milk-based beverages	None	Flavoured milk, evaporated milk, plant-based drinks
RTEBC	None	Cornflakes, crispies, muesli
Sausages	Traditional Irish sausages, Other sausages	Pork sausages, beef sausages, Frankfurters
Squashes, cordials & fruit juice drinks	None	Fruit drink prepared for consumption, fruit juice drink, ready to drink
White sliced bread & rolls	White breads and rolls	White sliced bread, white rolls, crusty, ciabatta
Wholemeal & brown bread & rolls	Wholemeal, wholegrain and brown bread	Brown rolls, multigrain bagels, granary bread
Yoghurts	Natural yoghurt, Flavoured yoghurt, Non-dairy yoghurt alternative	Full fat fruit yoghurt, 0% fat yoghurt, Twin pot strawberry yoghurt, Soya based yoghurt alternative



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