



Health & Nutrition
METRO Policy

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1. Introduction

Poor diet and eating habits are among the main causes of obesity worldwide. It is well known that diets high in saturated fatty acids, sodium and added sugars can harmfully touch consumer health. Contrary, higher consumption of organic/bio fruits and vegetables can reduce the risk of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs¹) and helps to ensure an adequate daily intake of dietary fibre.²

Furthermore, the content of trans fat, other than trans-fat naturally occurring in fat of animal origin, in food intended for the final consumer and food intended for supply to retail, shall not exceed 2 grams per 100 grams of fat, following EU Regulation (EU) 2019/649 of 24 April 2019³. Following EU Commission report, coronary heart disease is the leading cause of death in the Union and a high intake of trans fats seriously increases the risk of heart disease⁴.

Processing and preserving of food are often linked with addition of substances aiming to increase or preserve proper food quality. Some of those substances (additives) have been showing adverse effects on human health. For example: exposure to food Azo Colors⁵ may result in increased hyperactivity in children (see table 1); the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC)⁶ noted that the presence of nitrite and some types of amines or amides in the environment of the stomach may result in the production of some cancer-causing N-nitroso compounds, therefore it is recommended to reduce the intake of certain preservatives (see table 1); EFSA's experts found that exposure estimates at glutamate largely exceed in several population groups the proposed ADI⁷ and levels associated with some adverse effects in humans⁸.

An increase in consumption of alternative protein-based products will reduce consumption of animal origin-based products particularly referring to meat products. Some types of meats are high in fat, especially saturated fat. Consuming high quantity of saturated fat can raise cholesterol levels in blood, and having high cholesterol raises risk of heart disease. Furthermore, consuming high quantity of red and processed meat probably increases risk of bowel colorectal cancer.

¹ Diet, nutrition and the prevention of chronic diseases: report of a Joint WHO/FAO Expert Consultation. WHO Technical Report Series, No. 916. Geneva: World Health Organization: 2003.

² [Healthy diet \(who.int\)](https://www.who.int/healthy-diet)

³ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32019R0649&from=EN>

⁴ <https://efsa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.2903/sp.efsa.2018.EN-1433>

⁵ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/press/news/091112>

⁶ <https://monographs.iarc.who.int/>

⁷ ADI: Acceptable daily intake

⁸ <https://efsa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.2903/j.efsa.2017.4910>

METRO established a cross functional working group of experts steering the Health and Nutrition project. METRO is adapting its Own Brand product portfolio and providing appropriate information regarding the content and nutritional value of their products in accordance with its Health and Nutrition vision:

“Every day we aim to empower our customers to offer healthier choices in their businesses by extending the range of sustainable, healthier, organic, alternative proteins and reformulated products, providing clear and easily accessible information about nutrients and ingredients and by leveraging digital solutions.”

2. Objective

METRO designed its Health & Nutrition Policy focusing on the following drivers:

Increase of healthier food choices worldwide in the METRO assortment with focus on product reformulation, innovation, and product development mainly in own brand (mainstream and premium), expansion of the ultra-fresh assortment (namely fruits and vegetables) and extension of the organic/bio range.

- Increasing the offer of innovative (as well as alternative protein-based), healthier and reformulated products, especially focusing on the reduction of sugar, salt, saturated fatty acids, and trans fats.
- Offering more products “free from” additives like monosodium glutamate or “free from” food azo colours and others.
- METRO is constantly expanding its ultra-fresh assortment, specifically fruits and vegetables, with new, organic/bio and/or local produce with a view to market-specific requirements.
- Extending the organic/bio range of products and in own brand (OB) products, focusing on mainstream quality tier. Organic/bio assortment will be defined according to customer and market relevance. Common sourcing is also actively developing selected organic/bio products based on country requests. Organic/bio products, with specific packaging design, are already included in our current OB portfolio.

Products qualify as “reformulated” under this policy if they fulfil the below mentioned criteria:

Work stream	What	How
Less of	SUGAR	Reduction of sugar content: > 0.5 g per 100 g or ml ⁹ : reduction of at least 0,1 g < 0.5 g per100 g or ml, no reformulation will be reported
	SALT	Reduction of salt content: ≥1 g per 100 g or ml: reduction of at least 0,1 g <1 g per 100 g or ml, no reformulation will be reported
	SATURATED FATTY ACIDS	Reduction of saturated fatty acids content: > 0.5 g per 100 g or ml: reduction of at least 0,1 g < 0.5 g per100 g or ml, no reformulation will be reported
Free from Removal of all additives or reduction of the numbers of additives present in the recipe.	TRANS FAT ¹⁰	Not above 2g of trans fat per 100g of fat, other than trans-fat naturally occurring
	FLAVOR ENHANCER ¹¹ Monosodium Glutamate E621	Avoid monosodium glutamate (MSG) on selected OB products
	AZO FOOD COLOURS ¹² Tartrazine E102 Quinoline yellow E104 Sunset yellow E110 Carmoisine E122 Ponceau 4R E124 Allura red E129	Replace here mentioned food azo colours in OB common sourced products and preferably in all OB products and especially OB mainstream products
	PRESERVATIVES Potassium Nitrite E249 Sodium Nitrite ¹³ E250 Sodium Nitrate E251 Potassium Nitrate E252	Find opportunities to lower the content or avoid these additives in OB products
Organic/bio Range	Organic/bio certified products	Extending the organic/bio range of products
Alternative ¹⁴ Proteins	Plant protein-based products; Cultured meat -based products	Increasing the offer of alternative protein-based products. Alternative protein product with higher number of additives vs previous recipe and / or benchmark, shall not be considered as healthier and therefore not reported. Reformulated product must be compared vs the benchmark not the traditional product. e.g: plant-based soy drink vs benchmark plant-based soy drink and not the milk

Table 1: Workstream and targets

Improving external and internal communication on Health and Nutrition

- Introduce and promote more information in store, on label or country website to guide and educate our customers on healthier food options.
- Develop internal guidelines, trainings, dedicated communication channels and informative material to support countries in fulfilling the globally approved strategy, while adapting to the local situation.

⁹ Always referring to the amount (in grams) of the nutrient in 100 grams of the concerning product

¹⁰ The content of trans fat, other than trans-fat naturally occurring in fat of animal origin, in food intended for the final consumer and food intended for supply to retail, shall not exceed 2 grams per 100 grams of fat, following EU Regulation. (EU) 2019/649 of 24 April 2019. Following EU Commission report coronary heart disease is the leading cause of death in the Union and a high intake of trans fats seriously increases the risk of heart disease. <https://efsa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.2903/sp.efsa.2018.EN-1433>

¹¹ EFSA's experts considered other dietary sources of glutamate besides food additives (including natural presence) and found that exposure estimates largely exceed in several population groups the proposed ADI and levels associated with some adverse effects in humans. <https://efsa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.2903/j.efsa.2017.4910>

¹² Exposure to here mentioned food Azo Colors may result in increased hyperactivity in children. <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/press/news/091112>

¹³ Nitrosamines should be minimized by appropriate technological practices such as lowering the levels of nitrate and nitrite added to the minimum required to achieve the necessary preservative effect and to ensure microbiological safety.

¹⁴ An increase in consumption of alternative protein-based products will reduce consumption of animal origin-based products particularly referring to meat products. Some types of meats are high in fat, especially saturated fat. Eating a lot of saturated fat can raise cholesterol levels in blood, and having high cholesterol raises your risk of heart disease. Furthermore, eating a lot of red and processed meat probably increases risk of bowel colorectal cancer.

3. Scope

The METRO Health & Nutrition Policy applies to the following scopes:

Operational scope

All METRO operations in all countries, including International Trading Offices.

Brand scope

Focus is on Own Brand (Private Label) sold by METRO.

Product scope

All own brand food products excluding wine & spirits.

4. Reporting

The Health & Nutrition Policy will be communicated to all METRO countries, global office stakeholders and Health and Nutrition internal Ambassadors.

METRO supports the further and continuous development of healthy and nutritious product in the Own Brand assortment. METRO countries are contributing locally with the industry, government and business partners to help to transform the market.

METRO will make this policy publicly available and will inform on the progress made through its Corporate Responsibility Report on an annual basis and METRO website [\(Link\)](#) on a quarterly basis.