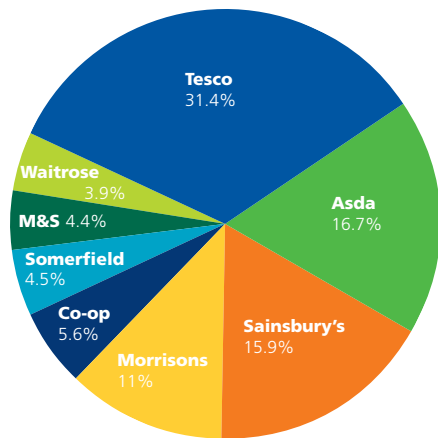


# Summary and key findings



**Supermarkets' share of the UK food market**

Nielsen data: September/October 2006

Supermarkets – the places where most of us buy most of our food – can have an enormous impact on the nation's health, through the shopping choices they encourage their customers to make. Growing concern about obesity, and particularly the high percentage of overweight children and teenagers, underlines the importance of this issue. So what are the supermarkets doing to help?

For the last two years<sup>(1)</sup>, we have reported on how well the top eight supermarkets help their customers shop, cook and eat more healthily, through price promotions, salt content of own-brand foods, prevalence of snacks at checkouts, labelling, and the information and advice they make available.

Our findings are based on what we have found in-store. In this, our third report, we are able to track the retailers' progress, and say whether the UK's consumers really are getting the best deal on health.

This year we made some changes to our measurement criteria, to reflect the Food Standard Agency's (FSA's) new salt targets for many foods and their new guidelines for front-of-pack labelling.

## Key findings

### Salt

Low-income consumers are being short-changed on health. Many economy range foods contain more salt, fat and sugar than their standard equivalents. While we have only rated retailers on their salt content, we have also looked at how much fat and sugar there is in key foods in light of the FSA's guidance on what constitutes 'a lot' or 'a little'.

The results were not encouraging: for example, Morrisons' economy sausage contained nearly twice as much salt as their standard range.

This is a backward step from last year. It is clear that some retailers' practices are contributing to inequalities in diet and health.

## The NCC's Health Indicators

### 1. Nutritional content

- ▶ Salt content of ten everyday own-label processed foods.

### 2. Labelling information

- ▶ Use of front-of-pack, colour-coded signpost labelling in line with FSA criteria.
- ▶ Use of Guideline Daily Amounts (GDAs) on nutrition labelling on back of pack.

### 3. In-store promotions

- ▶ 'Healthy' foods (fruit and vegetables) as a proportion of in-store price promotions.
- ▶ The presence of sweets and less 'healthy' snacks at the checkout.

### 4. Customer information and advice

- ▶ Information and advice on healthy eating available in-store through leaflets and magazines, and via retailers' national telephone help-lines and websites.

### Labelling

We rated retailers on both front-of-pack and back-of-pack labelling. We found that the eight supermarkets have created diverse front-of-pack labelling schemes to indicate levels of key nutrients and general ‘healthiness’ of products. Some of these include colour-coding. We tested the supermarkets on their use of the FSA’s labelling scheme, which includes colour-coding, a traffic-light system, and four key nutrients: fat, saturated fat, salt and sugar.

Sainsbury’s was the only retailer to have mostly adopted the FSA’s guidelines. Waitrose and the Co-op are using them on some products, and Asda and M&S have plans to roll out their schemes soon. Tesco, Morrisons and Somerfield continue with a GDA-based system.

We note the commitment shown by several of the retailers who are in the process of developing FSA-compliant schemes, but have only rated the stores on what was found in-store.

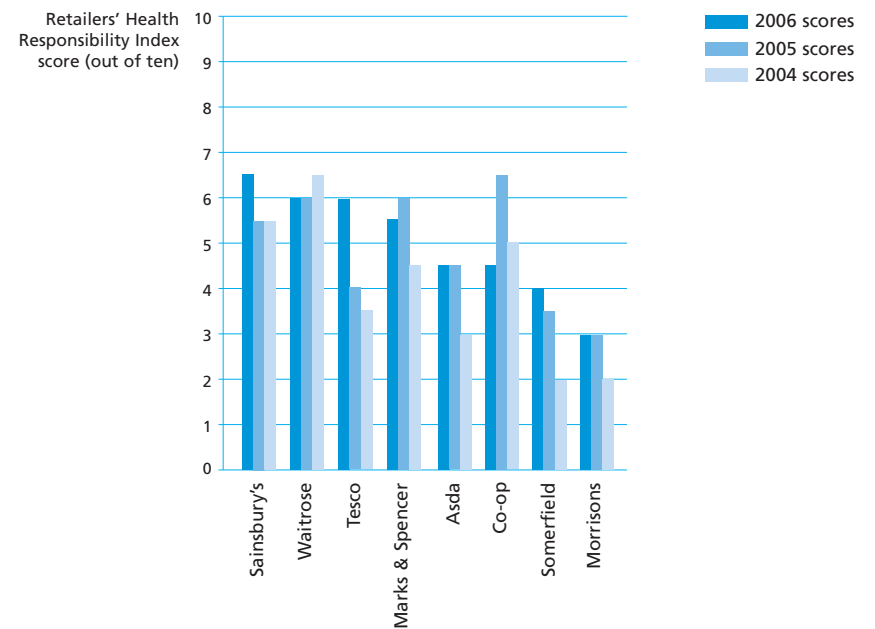
We also looked at back-of-pack labels to compare information on Guideline Daily Amounts (GDAs). These are still not always present, especially in economy line foods.

### Information

Nearly all the retailers scored very poorly on communicating healthy eating messages to their customers. Some rely too heavily on their website or magazine but can’t answer queries. Others have a good selection of leaflets but poor telephone help-lines. Comprehensive staff training would make a huge difference.

### Price promotions and checkout snacks

Fruit and vegetables still make up much too small a proportion of price promotions. Nutritional guidance is that fruit and veg should constitute 33 per cent of our diet, but almost 40 per cent of price



**Retailers' 2006 Health Responsibility Index score, compared to 2005 and 2004**

Notes: scores have been rounded to nearest 0.5

promotions are still for fatty and sugary foods. This sends a skewed message to consumers about what constitutes a healthy diet, and encourages them to make financial savings at the cost of their health.

Many checkouts in most stores still have unhealthy snacks and sweets on display, tempting tired shoppers and encouraging 'pester power'. There are definite improvements in some stores, but the NCC would like to see no unhealthy snacks or sweets at checkouts.

### Responsibility

On a positive note, more retailers are targeting nutrition and health in their corporate responsibility key performance indicators (KPIs). Sainsbury's is the first supermarket to set its own KPIs incorporating our '20 simple steps for supermarkets'. The Co-op told us that it intends to incorporate NCC health indicators in next year's report. We look forward to more retailers taking the initiative and showing a real commitment to making their customers' health a priority.

### Recommendations to retailers

- ▶ Continue to reduce salt, fat, saturated fat and sugar in own-brand products, with particular attention to economy lines.
- ▶ Use more front-of-pack, traffic light signpost labelling to help shoppers improve the balance of their diets, and bring labelling into line with FSA criteria to minimise market confusion.
- ▶ Train all staff in the communication of nutrition and health messages; provide in-store customer help-desks and telephone help-lines and promote these as sources of healthy eating information.
- ▶ As policy, ensure that 30 per cent of price promotions are for fruit and vegetables; increase the promotion of healthier foods in other food categories.
- ▶ Remove all snacks and sweets from checkouts.
- ▶ Build the four health responsibility indicators into corporate responsibility target-setting and reporting at board level.



The report cards



Sainsbury's

Name:

Date of report

July 2006

Comments	2006	2005	2004
<p><b>Nutritional content</b></p> <p>Salt content of own-brand foods against FSA 2006 target average sodium levels</p>	7 1/2 /10	n/a	n/a
<p><b>Labelling information</b></p> <p>Use of colour-coded signpost labelling in line with FSA 2006 criteria</p> <p>Use of Guideline Daily Amounts back-of-pack</p>	12 1/2 /15	n/a	n/a
<p><b>In-store promotions</b></p> <p>Promotions for fruit and vegetables</p> <p>Snacks at the checkout</p>	2/5	4/10	5/10
<p><b>Customer information and advice</b></p> <p>Leaflets</p> <p>Helpline</p> <p>In-store helpdesk</p> <p>Website</p>	4/10	5/10	4 1/2 /10
<p><b>Overall comments</b></p> <p>Jumping up to first place, this year Sainsbury's are clear leaders on front-of-pack traffic light signpost labelling, and on keeping unhealthy snacks away from the checkouts. Need greater consistency with GDA back-of-pack labelling. Staff need to be better informed in communicating nutrition information, and we look forward to further reductions in salt levels across all ranges. Overall ranking: 1st place.</p>	10/10	10/10	9 1/2 /10
	2/5	4 1/2 /5	5/5
	3/5	3/5	2 1/2 /5
	0/5	n/a	n/a
	3/5	n/a	n/a
	6 1/2 /10	5 1/2 /10	5 1/2 /10

How did they score?

Our individual score cards for each retailer show their performance over the past three years.

1st – Sainsbury's

Sainsbury's has made big improvements on salt, with six out of ten standard, five out of ten 'healthier' and four out of ten economy ranges meeting the FSA's 2006 targets. Many products are labelled on front-of-pack with its *Wheel of Health*, mostly in line with FSA signpost labelling criteria. Like Waitrose and Tesco, it gets full marks for keeping its checkouts free of sweets and snacks.

To improve, it should run more promotions of fruit and veg, make its back-of-pack labelling on guideline daily amounts more consistent, and improve its in-store customer information.



TESCO

Name:

July 2006

Date of report

		2006	2005	2004
<b>Comments</b>				
<b>Nutritional content</b>				
Salt content of own-brand foods against FSA 2006 target average sodium levels	Worst on salt, along with Morrisons - only 3/10 standard products met FSA's targets. Slight improvements in its value range, but pasta sauce had more salt than recommended. In 'healthier' lines, 6/10 products met FSA target.	6/10	n/a	n/a
<b>Labelling information</b>				
Use of colour-coded signpost labelling in line with FSA 2006 criteria	Only met two of FSA's criteria for signposting. Following a GDA-style approach without colour-coding to indicate level of nutrients. Tesco had the most products - 27 out of 31 - carrying front-of-pack labelling.	7 1/2 /15	n/a	n/a
Use of Guideline Daily Amounts back-of-pack	Very good - 25 out of 31 products surveyed carried GDA labelling, a big improvement.	4/5	2/10	2 1/2 /10
<b>In-store promotions</b>				
Promotions for fruit and vegetables	A slight improvement - out of 401 price promotions, 76 (19 per cent) were for fruit and vegetables, but well below the 33 per cent guideline. 26 per cent (almost four times over target) still for fatty and sugary foods.	6/10	4/10	4/10
Snacks at the checkout	Full marks for the second year running. We did not find any sweets or snacks at the checkouts.	10/10	10/10	9/10
<b>Customer information and advice</b>				
Leaflets	Top score - a big improvement. A selection of leaflets in-store on variety of nutrition topics.	5/5	2/5	0/5
Helpline	A slight improvement on last year, but still very poor. Staff were unable to give correct information.	3 1/2 /5	0/5	0/5
In-store helpdesk	Poor - provided the wrong information, but did manage to find a helpful leaflet.	1/5	n/a	n/a
Website	Contained basic information but lacked detail on a number of healthy eating topics	2/5	n/a	n/a
<b>Overall comments</b>				
An improvement on last year, particularly for GDA back-of-pack labelling and in-store leaflets. Continuing to lead on keeping checkouts snack-free. Still some room for improvement - 2007 is an opportunity to significantly reduce salt across all product ranges and improve health-related communication with customers. Overall ranking - Joint 2nd with Waitrose.		6/10	4/10	3 1/2 /10

### Joint 2nd - Tesco and Waitrose

#### Tesco

Full marks for keeping snacks off the checkouts. Tesco had back-of-pack GDA labelling on the highest number of products, and we found very good leaflets in-store on a range of food and health-related issues.

To improve its position, Tesco should adopt front-of-pack signpost labelling with colour coding in compliance with FSA criteria, and train its staff to provide customer information and advice. It needs to reduce salt in its own-brand lines to meet FSA's 2006 targets.

#### Waitrose

Full marks for keeping sweets and snacks off the checkouts for three years in a row. Waitrose is meeting FSA's 2006 salt targets in six out of ten standard products. To improve, it needs to provide more comprehensive customer information in-store, roll out the FSA labelling scheme and reduce the number of price promotions for fatty and sugary foods.

### 4th Marks and Spencer

M&S has made excellent progress in reducing salt, is one of the leaders on GDA back-of-pack labelling, and is one of the highest scorers for the number of price promotions on fruit and vegetables.

To improve, M&S needs to incorporate front-of-pack signpost labelling in addition to its Eat Well sunflower logo. It is this year's worst retailer for snacks at the checkout. Its website could contain more nutrition information and advice.



Waitrose		2006	2005	2004
<b>Comments</b>				
<b>Nutritional content</b>	Real progress on reducing salt - 6/10 standard products met FSA's 2006 salt targets. Only 3/10 healthier range products met target. There are no economy lines.	8/10	w/a	w/a
Salt content of own-brand foods against FSA 2006 target average sodium levels				
<b>Labelling information</b>	One of five retailers committed to FSA's traffic light labelling, on sandwiches, pizzas and ready meals at present. Intend to roll out more extensively later in 2006 and early 2007.	0/15	w/a	w/a
Use of colour-coded signpost labelling in line with FSA 2006 criteria				
<b>In-store promotions</b>	Good performance, consistent with last year's high marks. Twelve out of 17 products surveyed carried GDAs.	3 1/2 / 5	8/10	5 1/2 / 10
Use of Guideline Daily Amounts back-of-pack				
<b>Promotions for fruit and vegetables</b>	Top scorer - up from last year - with fruit and veg making up 25 per cent of promotions, though still short of the 33 per cent target. Fatty and sugary foods made up 27 per cent price promotions.	7 1/2 / 10	6 1/2 / 10	6/10
<b>Snacks at the checkout</b>				
<b>Customer information and advice</b>	Full marks for three years running - no sweets or snacks at the checkouts.	10/10	10/10	10/10
Leaflets				
<b>Magazine contains basic nutrition information. Lots of leaflets in store, but only one was health-related.</b>		2 1/2 / 5	3/5	5/5
<b>Helpline</b>	Gave wrong information for salt GDA. Provided other useful information.	2/5	3 1/2 / 5	5/5
<b>In-store helpdesk</b>				
<b>Website</b>	Gave wrong information and could only supply a leaflet about their nutrition service.	1/2 / 5	w/a	w/a
<b>Overall comments</b>				
Lots of information on a variety of different topics including a useful table on traffic light labelling.				
		4/5	w/a	w/a
		6/10	6/10	6 1/2 / 10
Staying in joint second place this year. Waitrose has made considerable improvements in reducing salt levels, and shows a consistent and committed approach to both front-of-pack traffic light labelling and GDA back-of-pack labelling. Needs to improve in-store customer services if it is to regain top place. We look forward to seeing more products with front-of-pack signposting in 2007. Overall ranking: 2nd place.				

Marks & Spencer		2006	2005	2004
<b>Comments</b>				
<b>Nutritional content</b>	Really good reductions in salt, tying in to their Eat Well sunflower logo. Standard bread and crisps were lower in salt than their 'healthier' versions. There are no economy brands.	8/10	w/a	w/a
Salt content of own-brand foods against FSA 2006 target average sodium levels				
<b>Labelling information</b>	M&S expects to implement colour-coded front-of-pack signposting in line with FSA's criteria in 2007.	0/15	w/a	w/a
Use of colour-coded signpost labelling in line with FSA 2006 criteria				
<b>In-store promotions</b>	Shares joint first place with Tesco. 75 per cent of products surveyed carried GDAs.	4/5	8/10	5 1/2 / 10
Use of Guideline Daily Amounts back-of-pack				
<b>Promotions for fruit and vegetables</b>	Joint first with Waitrose. Still top for fruit and veg promotions, with 24 per cent - though still short of 33 per cent best practice level. Fatty and sugary foods at 22 per cent slightly less than last year.	7 1/2 / 10	8/10	9/10
<b>Snacks at the checkout</b>				
<b>Customer information and advice</b>	Last year's biggest improver is this year's worst offender, dropping to last place: a whopping 83 per cent of checkouts display sweets and snacks at child height.	2/10	6/10	1 1/2 / 10
Leaflets				
<b>Helpline</b>	One good leaflet promoting healthy eating.	1 1/2 / 5	4 1/2 / 10	0/5
<b>In-store helpdesk</b>				
<b>Website</b>	The best helpline, together with Sainsbury's. Provided accurate information in a helpful and friendly manner.	3/5	w/a	w/a
<b>Overall comments</b>				
Able to help with information but did not know the GDA for salt.				
		3/5	w/a	w/a
		1 1/2 / 5	4 1/2 / 10	3/10
Provides some useful information but mainly promoting their 'Eat Well' range on ready meals and processed foods.				
		5 1/2 / 10	6/10	4 1/2 / 10
Good improvement on salt reduction, and the best performance for GDA labelling. Disappointed at lack of front-of-pack signpost labelling - however, is committed down on the number of products in 2007. Really needs to cut Leaflets and website could be improved. Overall ranking - 4th place				





Asda		2006	2005	2004
Name:				
Date of report	July 2006			
Comments		2006	2005	2004
<b>Nutritional content</b>		9/10	w/a	w/a
Salt content of own-brand foods against FSA 2006 target average sodium levels	This year's biggest improver. 8/10 of standard products and 5/10 of 'healthier' range meet FSA's 2006 salt target.			
<b>Labelling information</b>		0/15	w/a	w/a
Use of colour-coded signpost labelling in line with FSA 2006 criteria	Committed to FSA criteria using front-of-pack colour coding, but have yet to run the scheme in stores.	1/5	13/2 /10	14/2 /10
Use of Guideline Daily Amounts back-of-pack	Still quite poor - only 5/29 products carry GDAs for four nutrients. No GDAs given on any economy products.			
<b>In-store promotions</b>		4/10	3 1/2 /10	4/10
Promotions for fruit and vegetables	Fruit and veg make up 22 per cent of price promotions, up from 18 per cent. Fatty and sugary food promotions very high at 43 per cent.			
Snacks at the checkout	76 per cent of checkouts display snacks and sweets at child height.	2 1/2 /10	1/10	0/10
<b>Customer information and advice</b>		2/5	4/5	0/5
Leaflets	No leaflets found in-store but points added for a very useful magazine..	2 1/2 /5	4 1/2 /5	2 1/2 /5
Helpline	Helpful, but too reliant on the website for additional information.	0/5	w/a	w/a
In-store helpdesk	Customer service were unhelpful and unable to answer our enquiry.			
Website	Excellent website with detailed information on healthy eating.	5/5	w/a	w/a
<b>Overall comments</b>		4 1/2 /10	4 1/2 /10	3/10
Big improvements on reducing salt levels in standard products. We hope to see further improvements on removing sweets and snacks from child height at the checkouts, and colour-coded front-of-pack labelling in-store in 2007 to reinforce Asda's commitment to FSA's traffic light labelling scheme. Overall ranking - joint 5th with Co-op.				

Co-op		2006	2005	2004
Name:				
Date of report	July 2006			
Comments		2006	2005	2004
<b>Nutritional content</b>		7 1/2 /10	w/a	w/a
Salt content of own-brand foods against FSA 2006 target average sodium levels	Better than last year, but only 5/10 standard products, and one economy range product, meet the new, 'softer', target.			
<b>Labelling information</b>		0/15	w/a	w/a
Use of colour-coded signpost labelling in line with FSA 2006 criteria	Fully committed to FSA colour coding - will be rolling out on Simply range by the end of the year, with other lines following in 2007.			
Use of Guideline Daily Amounts back-of-pack	Only 5 of 16 products surveyed showed GDAs.	1/5	2 1/2 /10	3/10
<b>In-store promotions</b>		4/10	5 1/2 /10	3/10
Promotions for fruit and vegetables	Worse than last year - only 12 per cent of price promotions were for fruit and veg.			
Snacks at the checkout	Slightly worse than last year. Two out of 11 checkouts carried sweets and unhealthy snacks.	8/10	8 1/2 /10	8 1/2 /10
<b>Customer information and advice</b>		0/5	1/5	0/5
Leaflets	No in-store information.			
Helpline	Unable to give correct information for salt - a big drop on the full marks scored last year.	0/5	5/5	0/5
In-store helpdesk	The only retailer besides M&S to provide helpful and accurate advice in store.	3/5	w/a	w/a
Website	Provides a lot of useful information, but lacking in some areas - for example, advice on sugar.	3 1/2 /5	w/a	w/a
<b>Overall comments</b>		4 1/2 /10	6 1/2 /10	5/10
Last year's top scorers, down to joint 5th place. We hope to see improvements next year on GDA labelling and an increase in price promotions for fruit and vegetables. We look forward to the roll-out of the FSA's signposting scheme and further reductions in salt for their products, especially the economy brands. Overall ranking - joint 5th with Asda.				



## Joint 5th – Asda and the Co-op

### Asda

This is Asda's best year for salt reductions. Eight out of ten of its standard products met the FSA's 2006 salt targets.

To improve its score Asda needs to roll out the FSA's front-of-pack labelling scheme in-store. We would also like to see it remove sweets and snacks from checkouts, run more price promotions for healthy foods, and increase the number of products that display GDAs on back-of-pack. Staff training on healthy eating information would also make a big difference.

### Co-op

Half of the standard products surveyed met the FSA's salt 2006 targets, which is an improvement on last year.

To bring its rating up, the Co-op needs to promote more fruit and

veg, show back-of-pack GDAs more consistently, and provide more information on healthy eating. The customer helpline was unable to give us the correct information on salt and we found no leaflets in-store.

## 7th – Somerfield

Somerfield has increased the number of fruit and vegetable promotions since last year from seven per cent to 19 per cent. While this is still not enough, we recognise that it is a big improvement. Its magazine contains helpful nutrition advice alongside recipe ideas.

Thumbs down for the second-highest number of price promotions for fatty and sugary foods. Somerfield needs to adopt a front-of-pack signposting scheme that meets FSA criteria and more back-of-pack GDA labelling. And it needs to remove sweets and snacks from its checkouts.

Name: <b>Somerfield</b>		2006	2005	2004
Date of report: <b>July 2006</b>				
Comments				
<b>Nutritional content</b>				
Salt content of own-brand foods against FSA 2006 target average sodium levels	Only 4/10 standard products met FSA targets. In its 'healthier' range - only three products - two met the FSA target. Only 2/10 offered lower salt in the economy range. Room for significant improvements.	7 1/2 /10	W/A	W/A
<b>Labelling information</b>				
Use of colour-coded signpost labelling in line with FSA 2006 criteria	Uses a GDA system that does not include FSA traffic light colours or nutrient criteria. No products surveyed carry front-of-pack signposting.	0/15	W/A	W/A
Use of Guideline Daily Amounts back-of-pack	Very poor - the worst retailer on GDA labelling. Out of 21 products surveyed, only 13 showed GDA labels and 11 of those gave information for salt only. Two products were labelled for all three required nutrients.	2/5	3/10	2/10
<b>In-store promotions</b>				
Promotions for fruit and vegetables	A big improvement since last year - 78 out of 112 price promotions (19 per cent) were for fruit and veg. Still one of the worst promoters of fatty and sugary foods, at 33 per cent (nearly five times over targets).	6/10	2/10	3/10
Snacks at the checkout	An improvement on last year, but half their checkouts still display unhealthy snacks at child height.	5 1/2 /10	3 1/2 /10	5/10
<b>Customer information and advice</b>				
Leaflets	We found one basic leaflet. In-store magazine contains extensive information, including recipes with nutritional values.	3/5	3/5	0/5
Helpline	Very poor - polite, but gave wrong answers to our questions.	0/5	1/5	0/5
In-store helpdesk	Unable to help.	0/5	W/A	W/A
Website	Could not find any healthy eating information on website.	0/5	W/A	W/A
<b>Overall comments</b>				
Some very small improvements, namely increasing the promotion of fruit and vegetables. Disappointing on GDA and front-of-pack signpost labelling. Needs to improve in all areas and continue the good work started on reducing salt across all brands. Like last year, finishes just in front of Morrisons. Overall ranking - 7th		4/10	3 1/2 /10	2/10





Name:

Morrisons

Date of report

July 2006

Comments

Nutritional content

Salt content of own-brand foods against FSA 2006 target average sodium levels

Joint worst on salt (with Tesco), despite reductions in many products. Only 4/10 standard products met FSA targets. Has one of the saltiest economy ranges. Only 4/10 'healthier' products had less salt than the standard ranges. Room for big improvements.

2006 2005 2004

6/10 2 1/2 /10 1 1/2 /10

Labelling information

Use of colour-coded signpost labelling in line with FSA 2006 criteria

Uses GDA system - not in line with FSA scheme, and no colour coding. No products surveyed carried front-of-pack labelling.

0/15 w/a w/a

Use of Guideline Daily Amounts back-of-pack

GDAs were found on only four out of 27 products surveyed.

1/5 1 1/2 /10 2 1/2 /10

In-store promotions

Promotions for fruit and vegetables

Worst for promotions of fatty and sugary foods, at 39 per cent - nearly six times more than recommended. Also had the fewest fruit and veg promotions, at 10 per cent.

3/10 2/10 3/10

Snacks at the checkout

Very poor! 100 per cent of checkouts surveyed displayed sweets and snacks, though not all were at child height.

4 1/2 /10 3 1/2 /10 5/10

Customer information and advice

Leaflets

No in-store leaflets, but its magazine contains recipes and information on healthy eating.

2/5 0/5 0/5

Helpline

Not very helpful, only gave very basic answers to questions.

4 1/2 /5 0/5

In-store helpdesk

Unable to answer our questions.

0/5 w/a w/a

Website

We couldn't find any information on healthy eating on the website.

0/5 w/a w/a

Overall comments

Very poor rating. For the third year running Morrisons finishes last - showing it needs to take serious steps to promote healthier choices to its customers. The only improvement we could see was some reductions in salt in standard products. In 2007 we would like to see Morrisons improve in all areas, particularly in increasing the amounts of fruit and vegetables it promotes in-store and reducing unhealthy snacks displayed at checkouts. Overall ranking - 8th.

3/10 3/10 2/10

8th Morrisons

Unfortunately, Morrisons is not doing well in any of the areas we surveyed.

To improve its score, Morrisons needs to improve on all indicators. The worst on salt, it still has a long way to go to meet FSA's (less stringent) 2006 salt targets. Like Tesco and Somerfield it has adopted a GDA-based front-of-pack signposting scheme that does not meet FSA criteria, and only four out of 27 products surveyed carried back-of-pack GDA labelling. With nearly 40 per cent of its promotions for unhealthy foods, it needs to massively increase price promotions for fruit and veg. Morrisons was the worst on customer information, and also the only retailer not to provide company policy information. This year, as for the last two years, it finishes bottom of the pile.



# 1 Nutritional content of supermarkets' own-label foods

## Salt content



**Indicator:** Sodium (salt) content of everyday 'standard' own-label processed foods.

**Target:** FSA revised 'target average' sodium levels (2006).

Over the last two years we have been encouraged by the real changes retailers have made to reduce salt levels in their everyday own-brand products.

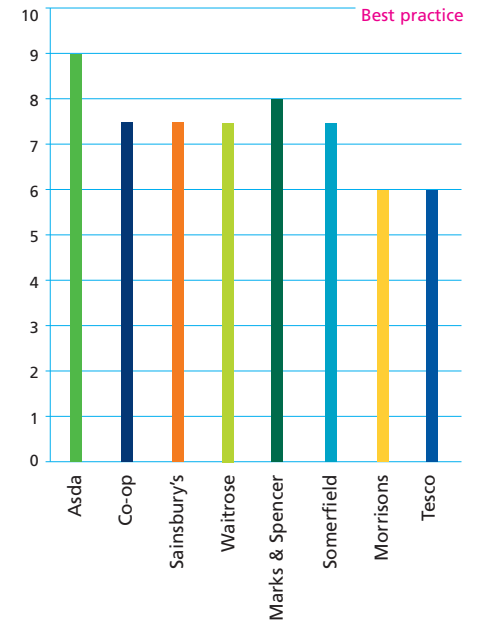
Previous reports have compared salt levels declared on packaging with the FSA's target for average levels of 2003. This year we are reporting on whether the ten own-label standard products listed right meet the new 2006 targets<sup>(2)</sup>. However, we have also commented on progress against 2003 targets.

- ▶ baked beans
- ▶ canned tomato soup
- ▶ cheese and tomato pizza
- ▶ cornflakes
- ▶ pork sausages
- ▶ salt and vinegar crisps
- ▶ sunflower/vegetable fat spread
- ▶ tomato ketchup
- ▶ tomato pasta sauce
- ▶ white sliced bread.

We have also continued to collect salt data on economy and 'healthier' ranges, where available.

The gap is narrowing, with three points now separating the best retailers (Asda) and the worst (Morrisons and Tesco).

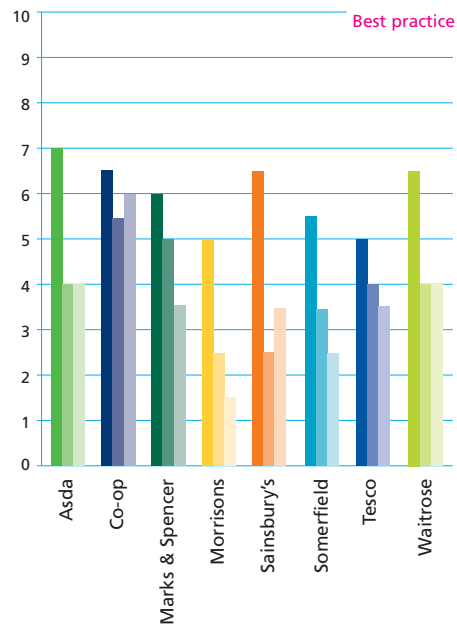
Out of the 94 standard products we surveyed this year, 41 (44 per cent) met the FSA's 2006 sodium target (targets are measured in sodium: to get the total salt levels, which we refer to, multiply sodium quantities by 2.5). In some products higher salt levels are now seen as acceptable. Products which have seen a



**Retailers' scores out of ten for the sodium content of a sample of 'standard' own-label products.**

- ▶ Scores are based 2006 FSA salt targets.
- ▶ Scores rounded to nearest 0.5.

## How FSA 2003 'target average' sodium levels stack up to new, revised FSA 2006



### Retailers' scores out of ten for the sodium content of a sample of 'standard' own-label products.

- ▷ Scores are based 2003 FSA salt targets, enabling year-on-year comparison.
- ▷ Scores rounded to nearest 0.5.

2006 scores  
 2005 scores  
 2004 scores

Product	2003 FSA target average sodium content (g/100g)	2006 FSA target average sodium content (g/100g)	Comments
Pizza	0.3	0.4	Industry cites 0.50mg sodium /100g achievable. New target falls at midway point
Pasta sauce	0.25	0.43	Increased
Tomato ketchup	0.6	1.0	Increased
Baked beans	0.35	0.3	Decreased
Sunflower/vegetable fat spread	0.4	0.6	Increased: lowest achievable by industry is 0.55g sodium/100g
Tomato soup	0.2	0.25	Slight increase
Salt and vinegar crisps	0.55	1.20	Increased
White bread	0.35	0.43	Increased
Cornflakes	0.3	0.3	No change
Sausages	0.55	0.55	No change

significant increase in the 2006 targets include: pasta sauce, tomato ketchup, sunflower/vegetable fat spread, white bread, and salt and vinegar crisps.

Both Asda's and Morrisons' standard tomato soup – with 0.19g and 0.2g sodium/100g respectively – had less salt than the FSA's target of 0.25g. Asda's standard tomato ketchup contained 0.73g sodium/100g and the Co-op's had 0.7g – both lower than the FSA's target of 1.0g. Morrisons lagged behind with 1.4g sodium/100g, while Asda's *Good For You* tomato ketchup contained less salt than the standard.

Somerfield's standard salt and vinegar crisps, with 0.8g sodium/100g, and those from M&S, with 0.87g, had the least salt, at nearly fifty per cent less than Sainsbury's – which had increased from 1.4g to 1.7g/100. Morrisons *Better For You* crisps (1.6g sodium/100g) contained half a gram more than their standard version (1.1g). Asda

has shown the most improvements in salt levels in standard ranges. But it also gets the award for the saltiest sausage – 0.72g sodium/100g, nearly one third of an adult's recommended daily intake and nearly a whole day's intake for a child under three. Asda also missed our best practice target for its *Smartprice* and *Good For You* ranges. In contrast, sausages sold by the Co-op, Morrisons and Waitrose contained less salt than our target. Morrisons had the least salty standard range sausage: 0.4g sodium/100g.

We were disappointed to find that there had been little or no change to salt levels in cornflakes. Most retailers' own-label cornflakes contained 0.6g/100g – double the FSA target level. Our brand comparison showed the same picture, with Kellogg's reporting 0.7g sodium/100g.

### Economy ranges

All stores that we surveyed offered a lower-price 'economy' range except for M&S and Waitrose, with the Co-op offering only a limited number of products. These were variously called: *Smartprice* (Asda), *Everyday* (Co-op), *Bettabuy* (Morrisons), *Basics* (Sainsbury's), *Makes Sense!* (Somerfield) and *Value* (Tesco).

Salt levels varied widely in the economy own-brand foods surveyed, predominantly from Asda, Sainsbury's, Morrisons and Tesco. We were concerned that, despite salt targets being less stringent, many economy products were not meeting them. Out of 49 products surveyed, 17 (35 per cent) met the FSA's 2006 target; these were mainly tomato ketchup and white bread. All retailers except the Co-op met the target for these two products. All of Asda's *Smartprice* products surveyed had more salt than the standard range, and failed to meet the FSA's target of 0.55g. Sainsbury's *Basics*

pizza, tomato soup, white bread and sausages all contained more salt than their standard equivalents. Half of Morrisons *Bettabuy* products had more salt than their standard ranges, including the sausages, which contained nearly twice the amount. However, two products met the recommended salt targets, and two products actually exceeded them. A third of Tesco *Value* products were lower in salt than their standard equivalents.

Of the foods we surveyed, two out of ten of Asda, Sainsbury's and Tesco economy products contained less salt than standard range products, while two out of ten of Morrisons and Somerfield economy ranges were lower. At Co-op, only one out of ten of *Everyday* products contained less salt than standard products.

## Healthier ranges

In all the stores surveyed we found 'healthy eating' ranges, variously branded as *Good for you!* (Asda), *Healthy Living* (the Co-op), *Count on Us...* (M&S), *Be Good to Yourself* (Sainsbury's) *Good Intentions* (Somerfield), *Better for You* (Morrisons), *Healthy Living* (Tesco) and *Perfectly Balanced* (Waitrose).

In sharp contrast to the economy ranges, we found that many retailers offered lower-salt alternatives in these 'healthier' ranges. Tesco (6/10), Asda (5/10), Sainsbury's (5/10) and Morrisons (4/10) offered the best choice, whereas the Co-op and Somerfield offered the fewest lower-salt 'healthier' alternatives.

Of the 43 'healthier' products we surveyed, 30 (70 per cent) met the FSA's 2006 salt targets. Generally, we found that nearly all 'healthier' own-label foods tended to be lower in salt than their standard versions, with the exception of M&S *Count on us...* salt and vinegar crisps, which

contained 0.99g/100g compared to 0.87 in standard crisps. In addition, M&S *Count on us...* white bread contained 0.44g/100g, compared to 0.39g in its standard bread. Morrisons also did badly, with their *Better For You* salt and vinegar crisps containing 1.6g/100g – 0.5g more than their standard equivalent.

## Brands

Across the ten food categories, branded products were often among the lowest in salt. For instance, Goodfella's pizza had less salt than M&S, Morrisons and Tesco; Heinz baked beans (although unchanged from last year), at 0.3g sodium/100g still came in lower than the Co-op, Morrisons, Sainsbury's, Somerfield, Tescos and Waitrose. Only Kellogg's cornflakes were higher in salt than all the retailers' standard products with 0.7g sodium per 100g – twice the amount recommended by the FSA.

## Salt: what the companies told us

**Tesco** reported that half of all its products already meet FSA criteria for 2010. In its baked beans, canned soups and chilled and frozen ready meals salt has been reduced by 20 to 30 per cent.

**Somerfield** aims to meet FSA's targets by 2009 in all own-label products, and

**Asda** claims to have reduced salt by 50 per cent in some cereals and ready meals.

**M&S** notes that it already meets FSA 2006 targets for ready meals, bread and breakfast cereals. It aims to implement the FSA's average salt targets as a maximum, and tries to influence customers to accept less salt in their products.

**Sainsbury's** reports that salt reduction forms a key part of its policy to make own-brand products as healthy as they can be and is on target to achieve FSA targets by 2010.

**Waitrose** aims to meet the FSA's 2010 salt targets in all categories by the end of 2007.

**The Co-op** says it will meet 2010 targets by 2009. Its existing brands aim to reduce salt by 20 per cent subject to taste and safety considerations.

### Hydrogenated fats and oils: what the companies told us

All companies (except Morrisons, who did not provide company policy information) declared an agreed policy on the removal of hydrogenated vegetable oils (HVOs) by 2006/2007. Waitrose has an existing policy to name all oils used as ingredients, and to increase the ratio of unsaturated to saturated fat. M&S, Asda and Tesco aim to remove HVOs from nearly all product lines by the end of 2006, and Somerfield, the Co-op, and Sainsbury's by 2007.

### Fat, saturated fat and sugar

As in 2004 and 2005 we could not rate products given the absence of specified targets. We have used FSA's generic guidance on what constitutes 'a lot' and a little' to report our observations for fat, saturated fat and sugar<sup>(3)</sup> in sausages, cheese and tomato pizza, and salt and vinegar crisps.

### Fat and saturated fat

As in the two previous years, we found a wide variation in the fat/saturated fat content of products offered by different retailers.

For the third year running, M&S wins the fattiest standard sausage award, with fat content of 29.1g fat per 100g. This is in contrast to Asda, whose sausage was the leanest at (17g/100g). Waitrose standard sausages had increased in fat from 12.4g to 18.2g/100g, and saturated fat from 4.5g to 7.8g/100g. Somerfield, on the other hand, had reduced their total fat and saturated fat content from 22g to 19.5g per 100g (fat) and 8.6g to 7.6g (saturated fat).

We found 'healthier' (lower fat) sausages in every supermarket except M&S and Morrisons. All the 'healthier' sausages contained significantly less fat – most offering a reduction of at least half, and in the Co-op, Sainsbury's and Tesco's up to 87 to 89 per cent less fat.

Generally speaking, the economy brands contained less fat and saturated fat, with the exception of Morrisons, which had the fattiest economy range sausage. Asda and the Co-op were the only two supermarkets whose 'healthier' sausages could be officially rated 'low' in saturated fat – at 1.5g and 1.0g saturated fat per 100g, respectively.

None of the standard, 'healthier' or economy cheese and tomato pizzas were high in fat – most of them fell in the 'medium' range. We were pleased to see that four retailers (the Co-op, Sainsbury's, Somerfield and Waitrose) had reduced the saturated fat levels of their standard pizzas, but disappointed that Asda and Tesco had increased theirs. Most standard salt and vinegar crisps were between 29.5g and 34.9g of fat per 100g ('a lot'), with saturated fat levels ranging from 2g to 15.7g per 100g. Only Morrisons offered reduced-fat standard crisps. No economy salt and vinegar crisps were found.



### Brand comparisons

We found brand name sausages (Walls' – 25.3g/100g and Richmond – 22.3g/100g), pizza (Goodfella's – 11.5g/100g) and salt and vinegar crisps (Walker's – 33g/100g) to be among the fattiest products compared to retailers' own brands.

### Sugar

As with fat and saturated fat, we examined the sugar content of a small sample of own-label foods: frosted cereal, strawberry yoghurt and tomato ketchup. We used the FSA definition of what is 'a little' and 'a lot' of sugar, in the absence of any specific targets. We have not rated retailers on this, due to the small sample, but have reported our observations:

There is still wide variation in the sugar levels of products. For example, the sugar content of Somerfield's and the Co-op's tomato ketchup – 27.4g/100g and 30g/100g, respectively – was nearly twice that found in Asda's ketchup (15g/100g). 'Healthier' yoghurts from M&S (4.9g/100g) and Tesco (4.3g/100g) contained about a third of the sugar content of the Co-op (15g/100g), Sainsbury's (15.1g/100g) and Waitrose (14.3g/100g). Generally, all standard frosted cereals came in at the same level, 38g/100g

– meaning that over a third of these breakfast cereals is simply sugar. The only retailer to offer one with less was Tesco – at 25g/100g, still classified as 'a lot'.

### Brand comparisons

Kellogg's frosted cereal (37g/100g) contained slightly less sugar than any of the own-brands. Heinz tomato ketchup, at 23.5g/100g, was lower than most of the retailers' own brands, with the exception of Asda (15g/100g) and Sainsbury's (23.5g/100g). Our brand comparison for yoghurt, Müller (7.5g/100g), had less sugar than all the retailers.



# 2 Labelling information

<b>LOW</b>	<b>FAT</b> 7.7g per serving
<b>LOW</b>	<b>SATURATES</b> 2.0g per serving
<b>HIGH</b>	<b>SUGARS</b> 42.2g per serving
<b>MED</b>	<b>SALT</b> 2.0g per serving

An example of a label that meets the core elements of the FSA's signposting scheme

**Indicator:** use of colour-coded signpost labelling in line with FSA criteria

**Target:** use of FSA criteria, as follows:

- ▶ provides information on levels of four key nutrients – fat, saturated fat, sugar and salt;
- ▶ uses red, amber and green colour coding to indicate at a glance whether level of each nutrient is high, medium or low;
- ▶ provides information on the level of each nutrient present in a portion of a product; and
- ▶ uses nutritional criteria developed by the FSA to determine the colour code.

**Indicator:** use of GDAs for calories, fat and salt on back of pack

**Target:** number of products where GDAs for calories, fat and salt declared

## Colour-coded signpost labelling in line with FSA criteria 2006

We have modified our target for front-of-pack signpost labelling to include use of the four key criteria agreed by the FSA in March 2006<sup>(4)</sup>. Our surveyors have noted when front-of-pack signposting is used and whether it meets the FSA's guidelines. We have rated the retailers on the number of products that have colour-coded, traffic-light labelling for fat, saturated fat, sugar and salt.

At present there are a range of front-of-pack labelling schemes<sup>(2)</sup> in different supermarkets, which can be confusing to consumers in trying to make healthy choices. We consider the FSA's colour-coded signpost labelling scheme to be best practice in helping shoppers to make choices about their nutritional health.

This year Sainsbury's has got off to a good start and is currently leading the field with the roll-out of its Wheel of Health on 3,000 of its

products, including its Be Good to Yourself 'healthier' range. Waitrose and the Co-op have also started to label their products in line with the FSA's recommendations.

Of the four supermarkets who are currently adopting the FSA's scheme, Sainsbury's was the only one to have many products in store carrying traffic light nutrition labelling – but not all of these followed the FSA's scheme completely. Waitrose has used colour coding on its sandwiches, pizzas and ready meals and hopes to extend to other ranges shortly.

Tesco gained points for the number of products that have GDA front-of-pack labelling but fell down on not utilising two of the FSA's key criteria: red, amber and green colour coding, and FSA nutritional criteria on whether a product is 'high' 'medium' or 'low' in a nutrient.

## Commitment to FSA signpost labelling criteria by retailer

### Signpost labelling

While supermarkets have been rated on the signpost labelling that was found on their products, we also note that several retailers have shown commitment to the FSA's front-of-pack signpost labelling guidelines, and reported that they plan to roll out FSA-compliant schemes by the end of 2006, or early in 2007.

The **Co-op** aims to roll out its *Simply* brand in 2006 and its *Healthy Living* range in early 2007. **M&S** aims to incorporate a colour-coded signposting scheme with their *Eat Well* sunflower logo, in line with FSA criteria, in early 2007. The new labelling will initially just be available on selected ready meal ranges.

**Sainsbury's** aims to roll out its *Wheel of Health* scheme over 4,000 products by Easter 2007. **Waitrose** aims to extend its use of colour-coded signpost labelling in 2007-2008. This is a key priority in its CSR report.

**Asda** will also roll out its scheme in 2007.

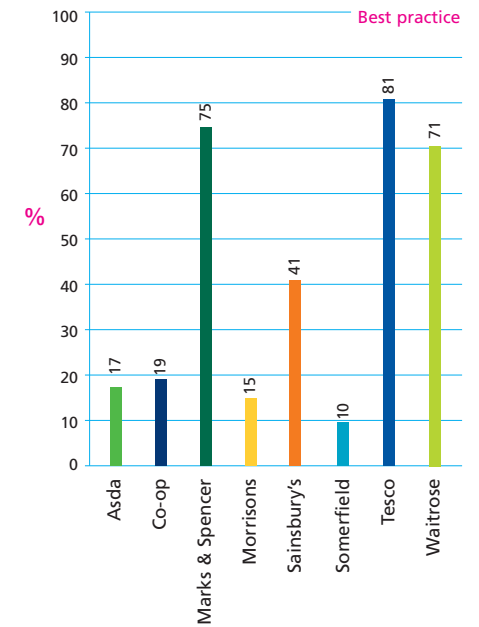
Following these supermarkets' implementation of the FSA guidelines, we look forward to seeing how signpost labelling influences consumers' food choices.

Retailer	Uses traffic light colour coding	Provides information per serving and or per 100g	Provides information for fat, saturated fat, salt and sugar	Uses FSA nutrition criteria for low, medium and high*
Asda	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Co-op	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
M&S	No	No	No	No
Morrisons	No	Yes	Yes	No
Sainsbury's	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Somerfield	No	Yes	Yes	No
Tesco	No	Yes	Yes	No
Waitrose	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

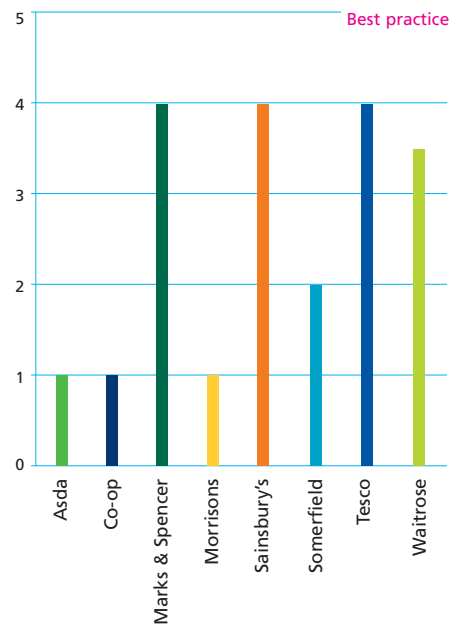
\*Ongoing discussions with FSA to finalise maximum thresholds for sugar and salt

## How supermarkets scored on front-of-pack colour-coded signposting

	No of products surveyed with front-of-pack signpost labelling	Front-of-pack colour-coded labelling	Scores 2006 (out of 15)
<b>Asda</b>	None found	Will trial later 2006	0
<b>Co-op</b>	None found	Yes	0
<b>M&amp;S</b>	None found	Aim to trial January 2007	0
<b>Morrisons</b>	None found	GDA system using per serving /100g for all 4 nutrients	0
<b>Sainsbury's</b>	6 out of 29	Yes	12½
<b>Somerfield</b>	None found	GDA system using per serving /100g for all 4 nutrients	0
<b>Tesco</b>	27 out of 31	GDA system using per serving /100g for all 4 nutrients	7½
<b>Waitrose</b>	None found	Yes	0



Percentage of labels on surveyed products with GDA information on back of pack



**Retailers' scores out of five for GDA back-of-pack labelling.**

Scores rounded to nearest 0.5.

**Guideline Daily Amounts on back of pack**

As in the last two years, we have rated retailers on their use of Guideline Daily Amounts (GDAs) on back of pack. We have included in our scoring the number of products surveyed carrying GDA labelling, as well as the quality of the information found.

We were disappointed to see that an inconsistent approach still prevails – though there were some examples of good practice. Tesco was a clear leader, with labels listing GDAs for calories, fat and salt for both women and men on 25 products out of 31 surveyed (71 per cent). Standard tomato ketchup, and both standard and 'healthier' sausages, also gave GDAs for sugar. M&S and Waitrose came closely behind, with 75 per cent and 71 per cent of their products respectively listing GDAs for at least our three target nutrients. Sainsbury's improved on last year, coming in fourth for this indicator.

There were some disappointments: Somerfield, after showing considerable improvement last year, has slipped to last place. Where most retailers carried GDA labelling for salt, fat and calories, Somerfield for the most part only gave salt. Like last year, GDAs were less likely to be shown on economy ranges than on the standard or 'healthier' products.

**What the companies told us: colour-coded signpost labelling on front-of-pack**

**Sainsbury's** conducted consumer research in June 2006 to monitor its Wheel of Health labelling scheme and found that it encouraged half the sample to make healthier choices.

**Asda** found that its customers preferred a front-of-pack, colour-coded signposting system.

**GDAs aren't enough**

GDAs that use industry based criteria, but are not colour-coded, are not particularly helpful to customers. Research carried out by NCC, other consumer groups<sup>(5)</sup> and the FSA shows that shoppers find a front-of-pack multiple traffic light, at-a-glance scheme to be the easiest to use when making healthier choices.

# 3 In-store promotions

As in 2005 we have compared the number of price promotions of ‘healthy’ and ‘less healthy’ foods. This year we looked at price promotions for foods high in fat and sugar and for fruit and vegetables.

**Indicator:** the proportion of in-store price promotions for healthy (fresh, frozen or canned fruit and vegetables) and less healthy foods (fatty and sugary foods).

**Target:** 33 per cent, the percentage we are advised that fruit and vegetables should make up of our total diet, and seven per cent, the percentage of our total diet that fatty and sugary foods should make up, respectively.

**Indicator:** the presence of sweets and ‘less healthy’ snacks at the checkout

**Target:** no checkouts to display sweets, unhealthy snacks or drinks (particularly at child height)

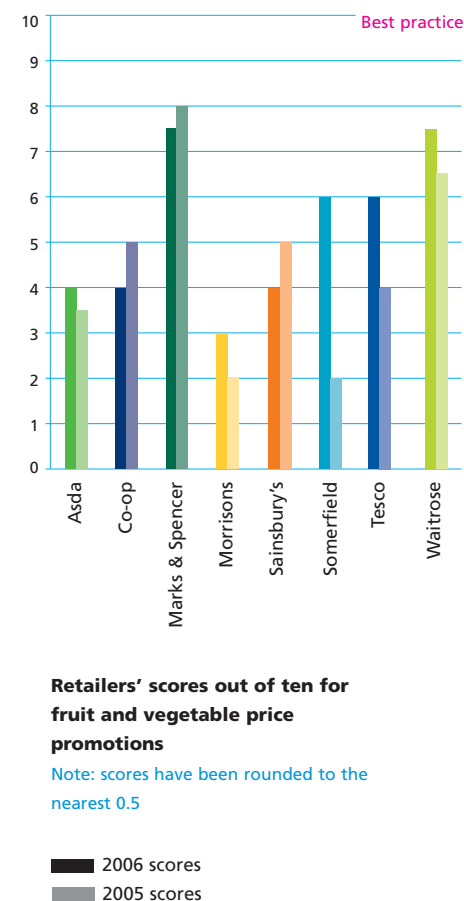
We counted over three and a half thousand price promotions, an increase of 27 per cent on last year – 810 in Asda alone. Products promoted with price discounts or ‘buy one, get one free’ deals in the stores surveyed ranged across ready meals, meal components, ‘healthier’ and ‘less healthy’ foods. We are pleased to report that four supermarkets – M&S, Waitrose, Tesco and Sainsbury’s – had reduced the marketing of foods high in fat and sugar.

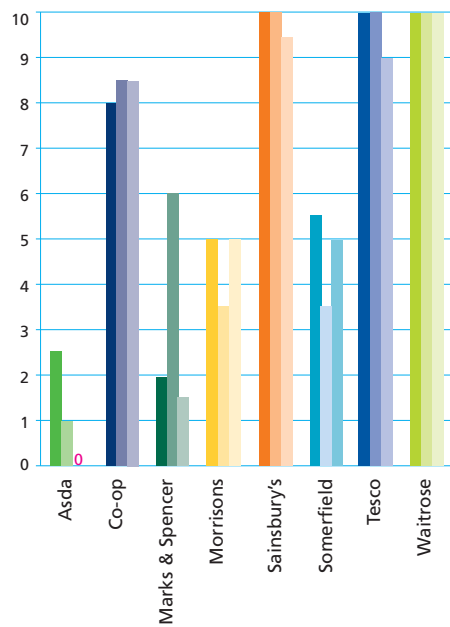
We were disappointed to find that for some the story was worse than last year: 39 per cent of Morrisons’ price promotions were for fatty and sugary foods, nearly six times more than the recommended advice for a healthy diet<sup>(6)</sup>, and only ten per cent featured fruit and vegetables. Both Somerfield and Waitrose were big improvers in the promotion of fruit and vegetables. Somerfield featured fruit and vegetables in 19 per cent of its promotions but, with the second highest promotion of fatty

and sugary foods (33 per cent), it clearly still has a lot more to do.

Most stores are still undermining nutrition and health goals with their promotion of less healthy products. These promotions may contribute to inequalities in health – a real concern with Morrisons, in particular, which featured the greatest number of fatty and sugary products, and serves a largely lower-income customer base.

Some improvements have been made in the balance of the types of products promoted, but nearly all retailers, with the exception of M&S and Waitrose, continue to promote twice as many fatty and sugary products compared with fruit and vegetables. There is a long way to go if retailers are to genuinely offer a healthy balance of foods and market them accordingly.





**Retailers' scores out of ten for snacks at the checkout**

Note: scores have been rounded to the nearest 0.5

■ 2006 scores  
 ■ 2005 scores  
 ■ 2004 scores

**Snacks at the checkout**

Like last year, we scored for the number of checkouts which featured displays of confectionery, crisps and soft drinks. Retailers also received penalty points for positioning such displays at child height, thus encouraging 'pester power'.

Waitrose, Tesco and Sainsbury's maintain their joint first position in having no checkouts that promote unhealthy snacks. This is Waitrose's third consecutive year of full marks on this, and the second for Tesco and Sainsbury's.

Somerfield and Asda were the only two supermarkets to have improved since last year. We were disappointed to see that the greatest offender this year was last year's biggest improver last year. In 2005, M&S had made the biggest improvement, offering more snack-free checkouts overall than in 2004. However, as our results for 2006 show they were the worst offenders this year with 83 per cent of checkouts having displays of

confectionery at child height, many of which were promoted by links to children's films and cartoons.

All 28 checkouts in Morrisons promoted snacks and confectionery, though not all at child height.

Asda, with the lowest score in 2004 for having snacks at all checkouts (and all at child height) had improved slightly in 2005 and 2006. However, together with M&S, it is still lagging way behind. In this year's survey all of Asda's main checkouts had sweets and snacks: only some of its 'quick-check' customer operated facilities were snack-free.

**What the companies told us: Price promotions and snacks at the checkout**

**Somerfield** reports it displays snacks at checkouts due to space restrictions.

**Co-op** has a policy across the retailing year that price promotions are for 25 to 30 per cent 'healthier options', which includes fruit and vegetables, cereal-based products and natural protein. It prohibits the display of child-targeted products high in fat, salt or sugar.

**M&S** aims to have one checkout in four offering healthier choices in 2007.

**Asda** claims to have snack-free checkouts, and offers a balance of 'healthier' and 'unhealthier' product promotions.

**Waitrose, Sainsbury's** and **Tesco** all have a policy to keep checkouts free of snacks and sweets.

# 4 Customer information and advice

**Indicator:** information and advice on healthy eating available through in-store leaflets, magazines and customer services, retailer's websites and national telephone helplines.

**Target:** good availability of accurate information and advice.

This year we modified our indicator to include retailer's websites and re-introduced 2004's monitoring of customer help-desks. As last year, we used an 'anonymous shopper' to ask questions about salt and health and the '5 a day' message. The quality and quantity of nutrition advice varied a great deal among our surveyed retailers. We expected to find helpful and accurate information from friendly, trained staff. Unfortunately, this was not always the case.

## In-store helpdesks

### Surveyor's question:

'I've been told by my doctor to cut down on salt. Can you tell me if this product is high or low in salt?'

### Asda

'I would think that a lower-fat product would have less salt.'

### Sainsbury's

'We haven't been trained.'

### Co-op

'They should be low [in salt] because they are the healthy living range.'

## Telephone helplines

### Surveyor's questions:

'Can I ask about 5-a-day? Do you have any information you can send me by post?'

'Do you have information on what foods this includes?'

### Co-op

'I can send you recipes – but they won't be helpful.'

'No, it's just down to you really. I know I'm bad at doing it...'

### Morrisons

'Fruit and vegetables.'

### Somerfield

'Good question. I've never heard of that. Is it something to do with cornflakes?'

### Surveyor's question:

'Does it [5 a day] include frozen sweetcorn?'

### Morrisons

'I'm not sure. You should see your doctor and he will put you in touch with a dietician.'

Asked about salt in cornflakes:

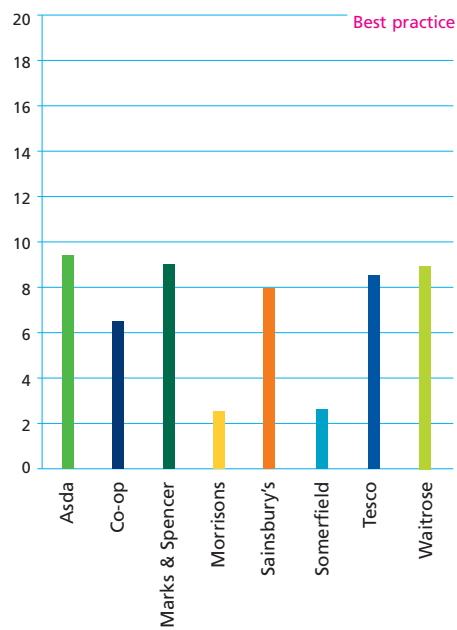
### Sainsbury's

'That's our Wheel of Health. Orange means it's ok, you should have no more than 6g of salt a day.'

### Somerfield

'If you had a bowl of cornflakes with semi-skimmed milk, it would be 0.7g fat.'





**Retailers' scores out of twenty for customer information and advice.**

Includes scores for: telephone helplines; in-store customer information; websites; and in-store leaflets and magazines.

No retailer scored full marks in all four categories, and no retailer scored more than half of the total score for information provided. No supermarket performed particularly well on the helpline survey or on in-store customer services.

Asda came top mainly because of its excellent website, which provides detailed material on a number of topics including salt, '5 a day', labelling and corporate responsibility. It failed to score one point for its in-store customer services. Morrisons and Somerfield provided no healthy eating information on their websites. Tesco had the best in-store information, with a number of good leaflets and a useful magazine. The Co-op provided no in-store information.

Sainsbury's and M&S help-lines gave the most helpful and accurate information when answering our questions. It was particularly disappointing that four supermarket help-lines – the Co-op, Tesco,

Waitrose and Somerfield – were unable to give the correct figure for the recommended adult daily salt intake or even to provide partial information.

The standard at all supermarket help-desks was very low. Four supermarkets could not give any salt or GDA information. M&S and the Co-op managed to provide correct information on the product's salt level but could not go any further. We were disappointed to find that, although the delivery of the '5 a day' message had improved, information concerning portion size was still very poorly demonstrated. Five out of eight supermarkets gave the wrong information as to whether canned and frozen sweetcorn count towards your '5 a day'. These were the Co-op, Morrisons, Sainsbury's, Somerfield and Tesco.

It is clear from our findings that staff training in health and nutrition is urgently needed if customers are to be given the correct advice.

# Our research methods

For this report we used the same research methods as for the last two years, with some minor modifications.

This year we:

- ▶ surveyed eight, rather than nine retailers – Iceland were not included as they are not comparable with other retailers;
- ▶ modified our salt target to use FSA's revised 'target average' sodium levels (2006). These targets were finalised and made publicly available earlier in 2006 and are therefore the most up-to-date guidelines to use for our best practice benchmark;
- ▶ adopted the FSA's new front-of-pack signpost labelling criteria for our interpretative labelling indicator; and
- ▶ extended our indicator for customer service and advice to include in-store help-desks and websites.

As in the last two years, we assigned the Food Commission to undertake indicator development and to conduct the in-store surveys.

In-store surveys took place during July 2006. The retailers have provided us with information on their company policies concerned with food and health.

Summaries of the company policies, and further details regarding our methodology, can be found on our website: [www.ncc.org.uk/food/shortchanged-appendix.pdf](http://www.ncc.org.uk/food/shortchanged-appendix.pdf).

# Notes and references

1. *Rating retailers for health*, NCC, 2004.  
[www.ncc.org.uk/food/rating\\_retailers.pdf](http://www.ncc.org.uk/food/rating_retailers.pdf);  
*Healthy competition*, NCC, 2005.  
[www.ncc.org.uk/food/healthycompetition.pdf](http://www.ncc.org.uk/food/healthycompetition.pdf)
2. FSA 2006 salt targets were put out for public consultation in August 2005. They were finalised and published in March 2006.
3. FSA definitions of 'a lot' and 'a little':  
Fat: 'a little' is less than 3g/100g and 'a lot' is more than 20g/100g.  
Saturated fat – 'a little' is less than 1g/100g and 'a lot' is more than 5g /100g.  
Sugar – 'a little' is less than 2g/100g and 'a lot' is more than 10g/100g.
4. FSA Traffic light labelling criteria:  
[www.food.gov.uk/foodlabelling/](http://www.food.gov.uk/foodlabelling/)
5. NCC press release: *Traffic light food labelling will help busy shoppers make healthier choices, says NCC*;  
[www.ncc.org.uk](http://www.ncc.org.uk); 16 November 2006.  
Which? Campaign report: *Healthy signs*; July 2006.
6. The government's pictorial representation of what constitutes a healthy diet: 'The Balance of Good Health' (Food Standards Agency).