

Response ID ANON-KGW5-JA5Y-Q

Submitted to Public Consultation: Industrially-produced trans fats in processed foods - EXTENDED
Submitted on 2023-09-28 13:54:01

About you

Submitter information

Full name:
Prof Jo Salmon

Yes

Name of organisation:
Institute for Physical Activity and Nutrition (IPAN), Deakin University

What sector do you represent?:
Research/academic

Which country are you responding from?:
Australia

If you selected 'other' please specify country:

Please provide your email address.:
ipandir@deakin.edu.au

An opportunity to provide any other information about your organisation you would like to provide.:

The Institute for Physical Activity and Nutrition (IPAN), Deakin University, is a world-leading research institute committed to improving health and quality of life. We're working to reduce the rates of chronic disease through nutrition and physical activity research excellence.

Our vision is to improve the health of all populations through physical activity and nutrition research excellence.

Our purpose is to conduct high quality multidisciplinary physical activity and nutrition research to actively inform policy and practice to improve health, and build capacity in the field.

You can find out more about IPAN online at: ipan.deakin.edu.au, including details about our research domains and groups. A summary is also available at: https://ipan.deakin.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/sites/101/2022/11/IPAN_Brochure_OCT_2022_FA-digital.pdf

If we require further information in relation to this submission, can we contact you?:
Yes

Privacy and confidential information and permissions

No

If you want all or parts of this submission to be confidential, please state why.:

Have you read the Consultation Options Paper?

Have you read the Policy Options Paper: Improving the composition of the food supply in relation to industrially-produced trans fats? (Please click on the link above to open the document)

Yes

Section 1: Introduction and Statement of the Problem

1 Are there any other estimates of the contribution of trans fat consumption to heart disease in Australia or New Zealand? Please provide references for your response.

No

If yes, please provide details here and justify with evidence.:

We are not aware of another estimate of the contribution of trans fat consumption to heart disease in Australia or New Zealand. Nevertheless, there is evidence of an association between trans fat intake and heart disease risk factors, such as type-2 diabetes (1,2). A systematic review of 46 articles suggests some potential harmful effects of high consumptions of trans fats with higher cancer risks, with significant meta-analysis results for colorectal and prostate cancer (3). They found that the median trans fat intake were often above the WHO-recommended 1% of daily energy intake (3).

Reference:

1. Neuenschwander M, Barbaresco J, Pischke CR, Iser N, Beckhaus J, Schwingshackl L, et al. Intake of dietary fats and fatty acids and the incidence of type 2 diabetes: A systematic review and dose-response meta-analysis of prospective observational studies. *PLOS Medicine*. 2020;17(12):e1003347.
2. de Souza RJ, Mente A, Maroleanu A, Cozma AI, Ha V, Kishibe T, et al. Intake of saturated and trans unsaturated fatty acids and risk of all cause mortality, cardiovascular disease, and type 2 diabetes: systematic review and meta-analysis of observational studies. *BMJ : British Medical Journal*. 2015;351:h3978.
3. Michels N et al. Dietary trans-fatty acid intake in relation to cancer risk: a systematic review and meta-analysis, *Nutrition Reviews*, Volume 79, Issue 7, July 2021, Pages 758–776, <https://doi.org/10.1093/nutrit/nuaa061>

Please attach references here:

IPAN Deakin Uni references q1_FSANZ TFA consultation 2023-09-28.docx was uploaded

Not Answered

2 Is there further data on intake of trans fats in Australia or New Zealand, either at the population level, or population groups? Please provide references for your response.

Not Answered

If yes, please provide details here and justify with evidence.:

Despite Australia having an average intake of trans fats (0.6% of total energy intake) below the WHO recommended limit (1% of total energy intake), analysis of the 2011/12 National Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey shows that increased consumption of ultra-processed foods are driving excessive intake of trans fats in the population (1). Ultra-processed foods are associated with a range of adverse health outcomes, including obesity, cardiovascular disease, cancer and mortality (2). The prevalence of excessive trans fat intake ($\geq 1\%$ of energy) among Australians aged 2 years and above doubles from the lowest to the highest quintile of ultra-processed food consumption (5.6% to 11%, respectively) (1). Hence, intake of ultra-processed food consumption could be considered given the limited data on intakes of trans fat in Australia and New Zealand. For instance, consumption of ultra-processed foods is higher among those experiencing greatest area-level disadvantage, lower levels of education and the second lowest household income quintile (3). Thus, increased ultra-processed food consumption is likely worsening already existing inequalities in trans fat consumption (as per page 14 of the Policy Options Paper).

This is relevant to consider because industrial trans fats are not consumed in isolation, by instead are consumed within foods. Thus, it is important to understand not just how much, but also from what food sources Australians and New Zealanders are consuming industrial trans fats - understanding food sources will help inform food and nutrition policy interventions to reduce industrial trans fats intake.

References:

1. Machado PP, Steele EM, Levy RB, Sui Z, Rangan A, Woods J, Gill T, Scrinis G, Monteiro CA. Ultra-processed foods and recommended intake levels of nutrients linked to non-communicable diseases in Australia: evidence from a nationally representative cross-sectional study. *BMJ Open*. 2019 Aug 28;9(8):e029544. doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2019-029544.
2. Lane MM, Gamage E, Travica N, Dissanayaka T, Ashtree DN, Gauci S, Lotfaliany M, O'Neil A, Jacka FN, Marx W. Ultra-Processed Food Consumption and Mental Health: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of Observational Studies. *Nutrients* 2022;14(13). doi: 10.3390/nu14132568.
3. Marchese L, Livingstone KM, Woods JL, Wingrove K, Machado P. Ultra-processed food consumption, socio-demographics and diet quality in Australian adults. *Public Health Nutr*. 2022 Jan;25(1):94-104. doi: 10.1017/S1368980021003967. Epub 2021 Sep 13. Erratum in: *Public Health Nutr*. 2022 Jan;25(1):205.

Please attach references.:

IPAN Deakin Uni references q2_FSANZ TFA consultation 2023-09-28.docx was uploaded

Not Answered

3 Food manufacturers- Do you have additional data on trans fat content of foods in Australia or New Zealand? Data for individual foods and food companies will be used to inform option analysis but will not be published.

Not Answered

If yes, please provide details here and justify with evidence.:

Please attach references. :

No file uploaded

Not Answered

Section 2a: Actions underway in Australia and New Zealand to support consumers to limit consumption of trans fats

4a Is there any data available on the number or proportion of products that declare trans fat content in the Nutrition Information Panel for Australia and/or New Zealand?

No

If yes, please provide details here and justify with evidence.:

We are not aware of further data available. The absence of requirement to declare whether oils listed in the ingredients list using a generic name (e.g. vegetable oil) have undergone hydrogenation highlights the need for improved labelling to facilitate assessments of trans fats. The number of products with "vegetable oil" in the ingredients list and potentially being a source of trans fats is unknown. Analysis of the Brazilian supply identified other 9 alternative names of components (e.g., margarine, vegetable fat) that are likely sources of iTFA (1). Similar assessment should be undertaken for Australia and/or New Zealand.

References

1. Silveira BM, Gonzalez-Chica DA, da Costa Proença RP. Reporting of trans-fat on labels of Brazilian food products. Public Health Nutr. 2013 Dec;16(12):2146-53. doi: 10.1017/S1368980013000050. Epub 2013 Feb 7.

Please attach references here:

IPAN Deakin Uni references q4_FSANZ TFA consultation 2023-09-28.docx was uploaded

Not Answered

4b Is there any data available on the number or proportion of products that declare hydrogenated oils in the Statement of Ingredients for Australia and/or New Zealand?

Not Answered

If yes, please provide details here and justify with evidence.:

References for data available on the number or proportion of products that declare hydrogenated oils in the Statement of Ingredients for Australia and/or New Zealand:

No file uploaded

Not Answered

4c Food manufacturers- what information do you provide to consumers about the trans fat content of your food products?

Not Answered

If yes, please provide details here and justify with evidence.:

Please attach references here:

No file uploaded

Not Answered

Section 2b: Reformulation activities to reduce trans fat in foods in Australia and New Zealand

5a Food manufacturers- what reformulation activities have you undertaken in the last 10 years to reduce the use of trans fats/partially-hydrogenated vegetable or fish oils?

Not Answered

If yes, please provide details here and justify with evidence.:

Please attach references here:

No file uploaded

Not Answered

5b Food manufacturers- What has been the impact of cooking oil price increases and supply shortages on your products? What alternate oils are being used?

Not Answered

If yes, please provide details here and justify with evidence.:

Please attach references here:

No file uploaded

Not Answered

Section 3: Objectives

6 Do you agree with the proposed objective of this work?

No

If not, what is your proposed alternative?:

We strongly recommend that elimination of trans fats should be explicit aim, as recommended by the WHO (1).

Reference

1. World Health Organization. Technical briefing for Appendix 3 of the Global Action Plan for Non-Communicable Diseases - Interventions to promote healthy diet. 2022. Available from: <https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/ncds/mnd/technical-brief-unhealthy-diet.pdf>.

Please attach references here:

IPAN Deakin Uni references q6_FSANZ TFA consultation 2023-09-28.docx was uploaded

Not Answered

Section 4: Options

7 Are there additional policy options that should be considered? Please provide rationale and the benefits and risks of your suggested option.

Yes

Please provide rationale and the benefits and risks of your suggested option. :

We strongly oppose voluntary reformulation because this is a serious public health concern and as such the reduction in industrial trans fats intake should be managed by government and not be at the discretion of food manufacturers as to if, when and how much reformulation occurs, and strongly recommend that the elimination of trans fats should be the main option considered.

Please attach references here:

No file uploaded

Not Answered

Section 4.1: Policy Option 1 - Status Quo

8a Are the risks and limitations associated with the status quo described appropriately?

Yes

If no, please provide details here and justify with evidence.:

If industrially-produced trans fats will continue to be present in the Australian and New Zealand food supply, current consumption and the associated burden of disease will not be reverted. As ultra-processed foods are the main drivers of industrially-produced trans fats (1), and consumption of these foods continues to grow (2), it is likely that trans fats content and intakes to worsen. Therefore, government and industry action on trans fats may target ultra-processed foods as a driver for trans fat.

References

1. Machado PP, Steele EM, Levy RB, Sui Z, Rangan A, Woods J, Gill T, Scrinis G, Monteiro CA. Ultra-processed foods and recommended intake levels of nutrients linked to non-communicable diseases in Australia: evidence from a nationally representative cross-sectional study. *BMJ Open*. 2019 Aug 28;9(8):e029544. doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2019-029544.

2. Baker P, Machado P, Santos T, Sievert K, Backholer K, Hadjikakou M, Russell C, Huse O, Bell C, Scrinis G, Worsley A, Friel S, Lawrence M. Ultra-processed foods and the nutrition transition: Global, regional and national trends, food systems transformations and political economy drivers. *Obes Rev*. 2020 Dec;21(12):e13126. doi: 10.1111/obr.13126.

Please attach references here:

IPAN Deakin Uni references q8_FSANZ TFA consultation 2023-09-28.docx was uploaded

Not Answered

8b Are there additional risks that have not been identified?

Yes

If yes, please provide details below.:

If industrially-produced trans fats will continue to be present in the Australian and New Zealand food supply, current consumption and the associated burden of disease will not be reverted. As ultra-processed foods are the main drivers of industrially-produced trans fats (1), and consumption of these foods continues to grow (2), it is likely that trans fats content and intakes to worsen. Therefore, government and industry action on trans fats may target ultra-processed foods as a driver for trans fat.

References

1. Machado PP, Steele EM, Levy RB, Sui Z, Rangan A, Woods J, Gill T, Scrinis G, Monteiro CA. Ultra-processed foods and recommended intake levels of nutrients linked to non-communicable diseases in Australia: evidence from a nationally representative cross-sectional study. *BMJ Open*. 2019 Aug 28;9(8):e029544. doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2019-029544.

2. Baker P, Machado P, Santos T, Sievert K, Backholer K, Hadjidakou M, Russell C, Huse O, Bell C, Scrinis G, Worsley A, Friel S, Lawrence M. Ultra-processed foods and the nutrition transition: Global, regional and national trends, food systems transformations and political economy drivers. *Obes Rev*. 2020 Dec;21(12):e13126. doi: 10.1111/obr.13126.

Please attach references here:

IPAN Deakin Uni references q8_FSANZ TFA consultation 2023-09-28.docx was uploaded

Not Answered

Section 4.2: Policy Option 2 - Voluntary reformulation

9a Are the risks and limitations associated with Option 6.2 described appropriately?

Yes

If no, please provide details here and justify with evidence.:

If industrially-produced trans fats will continue to be present in the Australian and New Zealand food supply, current consumption and the associated burden of disease will not be reverted. Previous attempts of voluntary reformulation have not been successful in addressing the problem of the supply and consumption of industrially-produced trans fats, and it is not aligned with international experience with trans fats reduction (1). The limits of current labelling system to identify trans fats makes difficult to establish a robust and appropriate monitoring of this policy. Voluntary reformulation may also be used to create a 'health halo' to ultra-processed foods being marketed as 'reduced' or 'zero' trans fats (2).

References:

1. Downs SM, Bloem MZ, Zheng M, Catterall E, Thomas B, Veerman L, et al. The Impact of Policies to Reduce trans Fat Consumption: A Systematic Review of the Evidence. *Curr Dev Nutr*. 2017;1(12).

2. Scrinis G, Monteiro CA. Ultra-processed foods and the limits of product reformulation. *Public Health Nutr*. 2018 Jan;21(1):247-252. doi: 10.1017/S1368980017001392. Epub 2017 Jul 13. PMID: 28703086; PMCID: PMC10261094.

Please attach references here:

IPAN Deakin Uni references q9_FSANZ TFA consultation 2023-09-28.docx was uploaded

Not Answered

9c Food manufacturers- How likely are you to be involved in this voluntary reformulation program? How many products are likely to be reformulated?

Please provide details below.:

Please attach references here:

No file uploaded

Not Answered

9d Food manufacturers- how would this option impact you (include cost estimates where available)? What would be a suitable time frame for this option to be implemented in your organisation.

Please provide details below.:

Please attach references here:

No file uploaded

Not Answered

9b Are there additional risks and limitations that have not been identified?

Not Answered

If yes, please provide details below.:

If industrially-produced trans fats will continue to be present in the Australian and New Zealand food supply, current consumption and the associated burden of disease will not be reverted. Previous attempts of voluntary reformulation have not been successful in addressing the problem of the supply and consumption of industrially-produced trans fats, and it is not aligned with international experience with trans fats reduction (1). The limits of current labelling system to identify trans fats makes difficult to establish a robust and appropriate monitoring of this policy. Voluntary reformulation may also be used to create a 'health halo' to ultra-processed foods being marketed as 'reduced' or 'zero' trans fats (2).

References:

1. Downs SM, Bloem MZ, Zheng M, Catterall E, Thomas B, Veerman L, et al. The Impact of Policies to Reduce trans Fat Consumption: A Systematic Review of the Evidence. *Curr Dev Nutr.* 2017;1(12).

2. Scrinis G, Monteiro CA. Ultra-processed foods and the limits of product reformulation. *Public Health Nutr.* 2018 Jan;21(1):247-252. doi: 10.1017/S1368980017001392. Epub 2017 Jul 13. PMID: 28703086; PMCID: PMC10261094.

Please attach references here:

IPAN Deakin Uni references q9_FSANZ TFA consultation 2023-09-28.docx was uploaded

Not Answered

9e What implementation issues need to be considered for this option?

Please provide details below.:

Please attach references here:

No file uploaded

Not Answered

Section 4.3: Policy Option 3 - Regulatory limits for industrially-produced trans fats in processed foods

10a Are the risks and limitations associated with Option 6.3 described appropriately?

Yes

If no, please provide details below.:

We caution against regulatory limit for industrial trans fats content as it can increase the burden on government for monitoring and enforcement due to the difficulties to differentiate industrial and natural forms of trans fats. Moreover, allowing reformulation overtime may also be used to create a 'health halo' to ultra-processed foods being marketed as 'reduced' or 'zero' trans fats (1).

References:

1. Scrinis G, Monteiro CA. Ultra-processed foods and the limits of product reformulation. *Public Health Nutr.* 2018 Jan;21(1):247-252. doi: 10.1017/S1368980017001392. Epub 2017 Jul 13. PMID: 28703086; PMCID: PMC10261094.

Please attach references here:

IPAN Deakin Uni references q10_FSANZ TFA consultation 2023-09-28.docx was uploaded

Not Answered

10b Are there additional risks that have not been identified?

Not Answered

If yes, please provide details below.:

Please attach references here:

No file uploaded

Not Answered

10c Food manufacturers- how would this option impact you (include cost estimates where available)? How many SKUs would be affected? What would be a suitable time frame for this option to be implemented in your organisation.

Food manufacturers- how would this option impact you (include cost estimates where available)? How many SKUs would be affected? What would be a suitable time frame for this option to be implemented in your organisation.:

Please attach references here:

No file uploaded

Not Answered

10d What implementation issues need to be considered for this option?

What implementation issues need to be considered for this option?:

Please attach references here:

No file uploaded

Not Answered

10e Food manufacturers- what oils you most likely to use in place of partially hydrogenated oils?

Food manufacturers- what oils you most likely to use in place of partially hydrogenated oils?:

Please attach references here:

No file uploaded

Not Answered

Section 4.4: Policy Option 4 - Prohibiting use of partially-hydrogenated oils in processed foods

11a Are the risks and limitations associated with Option 6.4 described appropriately?

No

If no, please provide details below.:

Ultra-processed foods are associated with a range of adverse health outcomes, including obesity, cardiovascular disease, cancer and mortality (1). Ultra-processed foods are the sources of industrially-produced trans fats (2).

The elimination of industrially-produced trans fats is desirable and a WHO recommendation, and will likely impact on the overall decrease in ultra-processed food consumption.

Nevertheless, iTFA-containing ingredients are not the only harmful ingredients present in ultra-processed foods. These foods harm health through a range of other mechanisms including the presence of toxic compounds (e.g., certain additives, acrylamide, phthalates). To avoid unintended consequences, the replacement of industrially-produced trans fats with other sources of industrial oils common in ultra-processed foods (e.g., interesterified oils) should not be permitted; reformulated ultra-processed food products should not be eligible to display nutrition and/or health claims, as it can create a 'health halo' (mislead consumers about the healthiness of foods) for ultra-processed foods being marketed as 'reduced trans fats' or 'zero trans fats'. The most effective means to reduce iTFA is to reduce the food source of these harmful nutrients and that requires public policies be directed at decreasing overall ultra-processed food consumption (3).

References

1. Lane MM, Gamage E, Travica N, Dissanayaka T, Ashtree DN, Gauci S, Lotfaliany M, O'Neil A, Jacka FN, Marx W. Ultra-Processed Food Consumption and Mental Health: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of Observational Studies. *Nutrients* 2022;14(13). doi: 10.3390/nu14132568.
2. Monteiro CA, Cannon G, Lawrence M, Louzada MLC, Machado PP. Ultra-processed foods, diet quality, and health using the NOVA classification system. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Report, 2019:44.
3. Popkin BM, Barquera S, Corvalan C, Hofman KJ, Monteiro C, Ng SW, Swart EC, Taillie LS. Towards unified and impactful policies to reduce ultra-processed food consumption and promote healthier eating. *The Lancet Diabetes & Endocrinology* 2021. doi: [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2213-8587\(21\)00078-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2213-8587(21)00078-4).

Please attach references here:

IPAN Deakin Uni references q11_FSANZ TFA consultation 2023-09-28.docx was uploaded

Not Answered

11b Are there additional risks that have not been identified?

Not Answered

If yes, please provide details below.:

Please attach references here:

No file uploaded

Not Answered

11c Food manufacturers- how would this option impact you (include cost estimates where available)? How many SKUs would be affected? What would be a suitable time frame for this option to be implemented in your organisation.

Food manufacturers- how would this option impact you (include cost estimates where available)? How many SKUs would be affected? What would be a suitable time frame for this option to be implemented in your organisation.:

Please attach references here:

No file uploaded

Not Answered

11d What implementation issues need to be considered for this option?

What implementation issues need to be considered for this option?:

Please attach references here:

No file uploaded

Not Answered

11e Food manufacturers- what oils you most likely to use in place of partially hydrogenated oils?

Food manufacturers- what oils you most likely to use in place of partially hydrogenated oils?:

Please attach references here:

No file uploaded

Not Answered

Section 4.5: Options considered but not pursued

12 Do you agree that these options should not be pursued further?

Yes

Please provide details below.:

We agree. We also recommend, alongside any option, that the replacement of industrially-produced trans fats with other sources of industrial oils common in ultra-processed foods (e.g., interesterified oils) should not be permitted. Also, reformulated ultra-processed food products should not be eligible to display nutrition and/or health claims, as it can create a 'health halo' (mislead consumers about the healthiness of foods) for ultra-processed foods being marketed as 'reduced trans fats' or 'zero trans fats'.

Please attach references here:

No file uploaded

Not Answered

Section 4.6 Assessment of how well the proposed policy options achieve the objective of this work

13 Do you agree with the analysis of how well the proposed options would achieve the proposed objective?

If yes, please provide details here and justify with evidence. If not, please describe why and provide evidence.:

We strongly agree with the analysis of the options, noting that:

- A voluntary reformulation will not address problems resulted from high industrially-produced trans fat content and consumption, but it may be used in marketing strategies to promote ultra-processed foods with reduced industrially-produced trans fats
- An industrially-produced trans fat content limit may require changes in current labelling system to allow robust monitoring, which can be burdensome for the government. It also does not guarantee that consumption of industrially-produced trans fats will decrease as ultra-processed foods are the source of industrially produced trans fats and the consumption of these foods continues to grow.
- In contrast, a complete prohibition on the use of partially-hydrogenated oils in all settings will address the problem effectively, and it will be easier for government to implement and monitor.

Please attach files here:

No file uploaded

Section 5: Impact analysis (costs and benefits)

14a Do you agree with the description of the possible benefits associated with the proposed options?

Yes

Please provide details below.:

We agree, and would like to add that prohibiting the use of partially-hydrogenated oils can lead to potential reductions in ultra-processed food consumption, if these are not displaced with other sources of industrial oils common in ultra-processed foods (e.g., interesterified oils).

Please attach references here:

No file uploaded

Not Answered

14b Are there additional benefits associated with all or some of the proposed options that have not been captured? Please provide references for your response.

Yes

Are there additional benefits associated with all or some of the proposed options that have not been captured? Please provide references for your response. :

We agree, and would like to add that prohibiting the use of partially-hydrogenated oils can lead to potential reductions in ultra-processed food consumption, if these are not displaced with other sources of industrial oils common in ultra-processed foods (e.g., interesterified oils).

Please attach references here:

No file uploaded

Not Answered

15 Are there additional costs associated with all or some of the proposed options that have not been captured? Please explain your rationale and your calculations.

Not Answered

If yes, please explain your rationale and your calculations.:

Please attach references here:

No file uploaded

Not Answered

Section 6: Preferred option

16 What do you consider to be the preferred policy option(s) to recommend to Food Ministers? Please explain your rationale.

Prohibiting use of partially-hydrogenated oils in processed foods

Please explain your rationale:

We strongly recommend that a complete prohibition on the use of partially-hydrogenated oils in all settings be implemented. This will address the problem effectively, is aligned with international recommendations and best practices, and it will be easier for government to implement and monitor. We do not support the status quo, a voluntary reformulation program, or the mandatory limit on trans fats content and as these policy option will unlikely meaningfully reduce industrially-produced trans fats content and intakes in Australia and New Zealand.

Please attach references here:

No file uploaded

Not Answered

Section 7: Implementation and review

17 Do you have any other comments on this document?

Do you have any other comments on this document? :

Please attach references here:

No file uploaded

Not Answered