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Large-scale consumer survey by Sciensano: Nutri-Score contributes to healthier food choices

A recent study commissioned by the FPS Health, Food Chain Safety, and Environment and conducted by Sciensano sheds light on the impact of Nutri-Score on how Belgian consumers perceive the nutritional value of food items and make purchase decisions.

A new study conducted by Sciensano, in which more than 3 000 Belgian adults participated, investigated the influence of the Nutri-Score logo on perceptions of nutritional quality and on purchase intentions in the presence and absence of nutrition and health claims on a variety of food products, such as breakfast cereals, fruit juices and dairy products.

With over 3,000 Belgian adults participating, this Sciensano study delved into how the Nutri-Score logo affects perceptions of nutritional quality and purchase intentions in the presence and absence of nutrition and health claims on a variety of food products, such as breakfast cereals, fruit juices and dairy products.

The findings underscore that consumers are more inclined to choose healthier options labelled with Nutri-Score A and B, regardless of additional nutrition or health claims. In contrast, for less healthy items rated D and E, the presence of the Nutri-Score logo led to lower perceptions of nutritional quality and reduced purchase intention among Belgian consumers. Notably, this effect remained consistent regardless of the presence of supplementary claims.

The results of this study will be discussed at a scientific symposium (*Sharing experiences and perspectives on Nutri-Score and other front-of-pack nutrition labelling systems*) at the Residence Palace, organised by the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, addressing complementary front-of-pack nutrition labelling.

In addition to this study, another food consumption survey (also conducted by Sciensano and to be published shortly) shows that a majority of Belgians support mandatory Nutri-Score labelling, with 66% endorsing this initiative. Moreover, about a quarter of Belgians respondents acknowledge that the Nutri-Score logo occasionally influences their shopping decisions, with 17% and 4% reporting frequent or consistent impact, respectively.

These findings emphasize Nutri-Score's pivotal role in helping consumers make healthier food choices while also underscoring the importance of effective communication strategies to maximise its impact on purchasing behaviour.

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