

TRANS FAT FREE AMERICAS Declaration of Rio de Janeiro

We, the undersigned public health authorities, representatives of the food industry and cooking oil companies, convened by the Pan American Health Organization in the city of Rio de Janeiro 8 – 9 June 2008, and adherents to the present declaration,

Taking into account:

- That during the last decade conclusive scientific evidence has linked the consumption of industrially produced trans fatty acids (TFAs), with alterations of the metabolism of blood lipids, vascular inflammation and the development of cardio-vascular diseases;
- That the TFAs are, mainly present, in cooking oils, margarines and shortenings which are regularly used in the preparation of pastries, bread and "snacks" among others;

and

Considering the recommendations of international agencies, such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO); in addition to the global trend to replace industrially produced TFAs;

We express the following:

1. Industrially produced Trans fatty-acids (TFAs) should be replaced in manufactured food and we suggest that its presence should not be greater than 2% of total fat in oils and margarines; and not greater than 5% of total fat in processed food. How to achieve this should be defined in accordance with the situation of the food industry and in dialogue with national public health authorities;
2. The nutritional label of processed foods should be obligatory, including the declaration of the content of TFAs and we suggest its harmonization in the Americas;
3. The alternative preferred to TFAs should be the unsaturated fats cis, including the polyunsaturated fatty acids of the family ω -3. The saturated fats¹ should only be used as substitutes of the TFAs, in the absence of a viable alternative for specific applications;
4. It is desirable that restaurants and food service companies advance toward the suggested changes and report on content of TFAs in their preparations. Public funded food programs should be an important part of this effort through food aid programs, hospitals, school feeding programs, etc.;
5. It is suggested that governments establish tax incentives for substitutes of TFAs, including crop production and processed foods. In addition, governments should also ensure funds for

¹ Particularly myristic and palmitic acids

research on such substitutes; ease the transfer of new technology, and the creation of preferential credit schemes, among others;

6. It is desirable that public health authorities in coordination with the private sector, develop programs for educating the population on the different types of fat, the correct way to read labels and their application in everyday life;
7. The participating sectors recognize the need for discussing within their national working groups aspects related to the publicity of food that contains TFAs, in particular advertising that targets children and adolescents;
8. Studies and monitoring of the content of fatty acids should be conducted in the food supply, as well as food intake and biological markers of TFAs in the population. This will permit to identify what is the current situation and also evaluate changes after the adoption of the proposed measures;
9. We wish to maintain this regional and national dialogue, under the auspices of PAHO, with the aim of materializing the objective of Trans Fat Free Americas, in the shortest possible time.
10. We recommend that in order to materialize the present declaration and to adapt it to the reality of every country, that national working teams should be formed with the participation of industry, scientists, and public health authorities. Moreover, PAHO should convene periodically such working teams in order to evaluate progress, difficulties and challenges in their work;
11. Use the WHO Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health as a framework for the national working teams;

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