

Final Report on 2004 Low-Carb Forum

The Low-Carb Forum was convened at the end of the 2004 Annual Meeting (San Diego, CA) to provide a venue whereby different constituents of AACC International could express their insights, concerns, and recommendation with regard to the “low-carb” trend and its impact on the cereal foods industry.

The Low-Carb Task Force summarizes its conclusions from the Forum as follows:

- **Definitions & Labeling:** The Forum identified a clear role for AACC International to contribute a science-based definition and accurate and consistent analytical methods for the determination of carbohydrates and fiber, expressing broad dissatisfaction with the general quality of independent laboratory analyses of these variables. Nutritional labeling software programs were identified as a particular source of misinformation. There was a consensus that current FDA labeling designations of 4 cal/g of “carbohydrate” are misleading and confusing to consumers...and should be changed. However, some participants indicated that getting the FDA to move on this issue at this time was unlikely, given its resource constraints. Consequently, AACC International and like-minded organizations, such as the Calorie Control Council, may want to undertake their own initiatives for change.

- **Obesity, Diabetes, Glycemic Response & Foods:** The Forum agreed that there should be a focus on determining the glycemic response of foods, as well as the effect of different processing conditions on glycemic index. This would be of value to low-carb dieters and the growing population of type II diabetics and insulin-resistant prediabetics. The current term “net carb” is probably not sufficiently descriptive. In addition, “slow carb” may be more useful than “low carb,” because the rate of digestion and glucose release is as—and may be even more—important to health and nutrition as the total amount of carbohydrate consumed. In addition, a number of conference participants indicated that issues of low net carbs and weight control should not be divorced from issues of individual eating habits and (restaurant and retail product) portion control. Consequently, it is recommended that AACC International adopt a broad perspective on carbohydrate nutrition and obesity that incorporates the full spectrum of salient issues, including glycemic index and portion control.

- Public Education: Participants indicated that AACC International could play a valuable role in educating the public and industry on issues pertaining to whole grains, fiber, glycemic index, dietary fiber, the role of carbohydrates in human nutrition, and other issues. There was also a general consensus that AACC International should avoid appearing to be an advocate for any particular point of view or industry group. Instead, AACC International could make a valuable public contribution to the public discourse by helping consumers better understand how to make sensible and balanced nutritional decisions.

Submitted by the Low-Carb Task Force

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