

FWS¹ request for consideration to the International Scientific Committee on Nutri-Score: *Adaptation of the Nutri-Score system for beverages*

The proposals in this submission aim to initiate dialogue and engagement with public health experts - as relevant and appropriate - in order to identify the most appropriate optimization of the Nutri-Score system for beverages in line with the dual public health objectives of helping consumers make more informed choices and incentivizing product reformulation.

1. Why does the current system of Nutri-Score for beverage require adaptation?

Following an extensive, fact-based evaluation as outlined in a report written by public health consultancy LinkUp Factory that was requested by EU soft drinks association Unesda, it can be concluded that the current Nutri-Score system for soft drinks is not optimized to support the two key objectives for a front of pack nutrition labelling scheme:

- a) to incentivize reformulation; and
- b) to help consumers make more informed choices.

The LinkUp Factory analysis of the impact of the current Nutri-Score scheme for beverages on soft drinks in Belgium, France and Spain showed:

1. **A misalignment between Nutri-Score and the EU Nutrition and Health Claims Regulation** resulting in contradictory on-pack messages for the consumer and potential confusion. For example, a product with a “low energy” claim is assigned a ‘D’ ranking according to the current Nutri-Score algorithm, giving consumers conflicting messages on the same product.
2. **An imbalance in the distribution of products within the same category, in this case soft drinks, across the Nutri-Score scale** (i.e. A-E rankings, with A being the highest ranking). As a result, consumers are not provided with the appropriate information to select the soft drink containing less sugar. This is particularly striking for France, where more than 80% of soft drinks are ranked D or E even with an extremely wide variation in sugar content.
3. **The current Nutri-Score scheme does not incentivise soft drinks producers to reformulate products** and pursue improved rankings of B or C², even with reformulations as high as 50%. Once a soft drink exceeds 0 grams of sugar, it is immediately given a C ranking, even for a sugar content as low as 0.1 grams. This is not the same approach as

¹ FWS is the Dutch association of producers and importers of soft drinks, waters and juices.

² The A ranking does not apply for soft drinks as it has been allocated to water only in the current Nutri-Score algorithm for beverages.

applied to foods and does not provide consumers with the appropriate information to choose the soft drink with less sugar.

This document shows some real-life examples of soft drink and juice to illustrate the shortcomings of the current system for beverages.

2. FWS proposals and request

To optimize the Nutri-Score algorithm for beverages, FWS proposes, for consideration, four alternative approaches, as outlined in scenarios 1, 2, 3 and 4. Scenario 1, 2 and 3 are the scenario's that were also submitted to the Steering Committee by Unesda and have been developed specifically for soft drinks. In scenario 1, the scoring system for sugar is aligned to the values defined in the Claims Regulation 1924/2006. In scenarios 2 and 3, the scoring system for sugars remains unchanged but the threshold for the attribution of the final score is slightly adapted with the same objective to obtain a better alignment with the Claims Regulation.

Scenario 4 has been developed as an extra scenario by FWS and is in line with the Unesda approaches. In this 4th scenario, the scoring system for energy, sugar, fruit and vegetable content, fibres and proteins is adapted.

Each of these slightly different approaches would:

- align the Nutri-Score scheme for beverages more closely with the EU Nutrition and Health Claims Regulation and thereby reduce the potential for contradictory information to the consumer;
- improve the distribution of products across the various Nutri-Score rankings; and
- provide a greater incentive for soft drinks producers to reformulate and pursue improved rankings.

Explanatory note: Scenarios 2 and 3 would each lead to fairly minor adjustment of the algorithm, whereas scenario 1 would represent a more fundamental change compared to the current system. Scenario 4 would change the algorithm to lead to a more logical differentiation for the consumer and an incentive for reformulation. In scenario 4, products with a maximum of 1kcal/100 ml should score an A, in line with the three Unesda scenarios.

FWS thereby requests that the International Scientific Committee on Nutri-Score, bearing in mind the issues outlined above, considers adjusting the current Nutri-Score system for beverages along the lines of one of the above-mentioned scenarios in order to reflect more accurately to the consumer the nutritional content of soft drinks.

3. Three scenario's developed by Unesda to optimize the algorithm for beverages (scenario 1, 2 and 3)

NUTRI-SCORE® RATING	INITIAL NUTRI-SCORE®	SCENARIO 1	SCENARIO 2	SCENARIO 3
A	Waters only	Waters Less than 0.05% sugars Waters (natural mineral water, spring water, table water and drinking water), including those for which the only added ingredients are carbon dioxide and/or flavourings (acc. to Annex V number 3, EU Food Information Regulation 1169/2011)	Waters Less than 0.05% sugars Waters (natural mineral water, spring water, table water and drinking water), including those for which the only added ingredients are carbon dioxide and/or flavourings (acc. to Annex V number 3, EU Food Information Regulation 1169/2011)	Waters Less than 0.05% sugars Waters (natural mineral water, spring water, table water and drinking water), including those for which the only added ingredients are carbon dioxide and/or flavourings (acc. to Annex V number 3, EU Food Information Regulation 1169/2011)
B	Min to 1 point (FSA score)	0.05-2.5% sugars Beverages qualifying for the following nutrition claims as per the EU Claims Regulation 1924/2006: "sugars free" (max 0.5g sugars/100ml) "energy free" (max 4 kcal (17 kJ)/100ml) "low in sugars" (max 2.5g sugars/100ml)	Min to 2 points (FSA score) Current Nutri-Score system + 1 pt Content of sugars: 0-1.5%	Min to 3 points (FSA score) Current Nutri-Score system + 2 pts Content of sugars: 0-1.76%
C	2 to 5 points (FSA score)	> 2.5 – 5% sugars Beverages qualifying for "low in calories" as per the EU Claims Regulation 1924/2006 - max 20 kcal (80 kJ)/100ml	3 to 6 points (FSA score) Current Nutri-Score system + 1 pt Content of sugars: 1.55-4.5%	4 to 7 points (FSA score) Current Nutri-Score system + 2 pts Content of sugars: 1.77-5.29%
D	6 to 9 points (FSA score)	> 5 – 7% sugars Beverages that may qualify for "reduced sugars" as per the EU Claims Regulation 1924/2006	7 to 10 points (FSA score) Current Nutri-Score system + 1 pt Content of sugars: 4.55-7.5%	8 to 10 points (FSA score) Current Nutri-Score system + 1 pt Content of sugars: 5.30-7.5%
E	10 to max points (FSA score)	> 7% sugars Other beverages	11 to max points (FSA score) Current Nutri-Score system + 1 pt Content of sugars: ≥7.55%	11 to max points (FSA score) Current Nutri-Score system + 1 pt Content of sugars: ≥7.55%

Some real-life examples to illustrate the need for alignment with the Claims Regulation (based on the Belgian market)

To improve consumer understanding by avoiding conflicting information between Nutri-Score rating and nutrition claims: For example, a product with a "low energy" claim is assigned a 'D' ranking according to the current Nutri-Score algorithm, giving consumers conflicting messages on the same product

Fuze Tea Peach Hibiscus
 Labelled 'low in calories'



100ml :
 79kJ / 19kcal
 4.3g sugar

Current Nutri-Score



UNESDA approaches 1, 2 or 3



May Tea (blackberry/blueberry)
 Labelled 'low in calories'



100ml :
 78kJ / 18kcal
 4.3g sugar

Widen consumer choice of low- and no-calorie products by enhancing the incentive for soft drink producers to reformulate

Fanta Orange
'No calories'



100ml :
11kJ / 3kcal
0.4g sugar

Current Nutri-Score



UNESDA approaches 1, 2 or 3



When a soft drink exceeds 0g of sugar, it is immediately given a C ranking, even for a sugar content as low as 0.1g. This is not the same approach as applied to foods and does not provide consumers with the appropriate information to choose soft drinks with less sugar. The scheme does not provide producers with an incentive to continue to reformulate or to innovate with new low-sugar soft drinks. The Nutri-Score thresholds should more accurately reflect the nutritional content of soft drinks.

More effectively guide consumers in their choices by achieving a more even distribution of Nutri-Score ratings for soft drinks



MayTea (blackberry/blueberry)
Labelled 'low in calories'

FAIBLE EN CALORIES

NUTRITION / VOEDING	100 ml
Energie/Energie	78 kJ 18 kcal
Matières grasses/Vetten	0 g
dont acides gras saturés/ waarvan verzadigde vetzuren	0 g
Glucides/Koolhydraten	4,4 g
dont sucres/waarvan suikers	4,3 g
Protéines/Eiwitten	0 g
Sel/Zout	0,03 g

Score 6

Dr Pepper



DECLARATION NUTRITIONNELLE VOEDINGSWAARDEVERKLARING NUTRITION DECLARATION	100 ml
ENERGIE / ENERGY	118 kJ 28 kcal
MATIÈRES GRASSES (DONT ACIDES GRAS SATURÉS) VETTEN (WAARVAN VERZADIGDE VETZUREN) FAT (OF WHICH SATURATES)	0 g (0 g)
GLUCIDES (DONT SUCRES) KOOLOHYDRATEN (WAARVAN SUIKERS) CARBOHYDRATES (OF WHICH SUGARS)	6,9 g (6,8 g)
PROTÉINES / EIWITTEN / PROTEINS	0 g
SEL / ZOUT / SALT	0,02 g

Score 9

Current Nutri-Score (both products):



UNESDA approaches 1, 2 or 3



Same Nutri-Score rating despite significantly different sugar content - 4.3g/100ml v 6.8g/100ml (+58%).

The consumer may mistakenly consider that the two products with a Nutri-Score D rating have the same nutritional quality.

Soft drinks are constrained mainly to the C, D and E Nutri-Score classes as the A class is only for waters and the B class excludes soft drinks with ANY sugar content over 0g. In France, for example, more than 80% of drinks are ranked in the D or E class, thereby negating the ability of Nutri-Score to identify to the consumer differences between products according to nutritional content.

Some real-life examples to illustrate the effect of allowing flavoured waters to receive Nutri-Score A

Some real-life soft drink examples: Flavoured waters

Perrier Citron



100ml :
2kJ/0kcal

Ingredients

Naturally sparkling mineral water 99.9% (source: Perrier)
Natural flavour of lemon with other natural flavours

Current Nutri-Score



UNESDA approaches 1, 2 or 3



Spa 'Touch' Lime/Jasmine



100ml :
2kJ/1kcal

Ingredients

Natural mineral water 99.7% (source: Reine)
Lemon juice (from concentrate)
Natural flavours of lime and jasmine

Those flavoured waters which are exempt from nutrition labelling requirements (Regulation 1169/2011) are proposed to be A-rated. These products do not contain any sugars, low-calorie sweeteners or any other additives. Note: these products would qualify for the claims "energy free" and "sugar free".

4. Scenario developed by FWS: proposal for the adjustment of positive and negative points (scenario 4)

Under to this approach the positive and negative points given by the algorithm are adjusted in order to Nutri-Score more with the criteria for the nutrition claims in Regulation (EU) 1924/2006 and to stimulate reformulation efforts. This approach contains the following adjustments:

1. Adjustment of the table with points for energy density (kJ/100g or 100ml) and sugars (g/100g or 100 ml):

Current Score			Proposal			
Points	Energy density (kJ/100g or 100ml)	Sugars (g/100g or 100ml)	Points	Energy density (kJ/100g or 100ml)	Sugars (g/100g or 100ml)	
0	≤0	≤0	0	≤17	≤0,5	(4,06 kcal)
1	≤30	≤1,5	1	≤50	≤2,5	(11,9 kcal)
2	≤60	≤3	2	≤80	≤4	(19,1 kcal)
3	≤90	≤4,5	3	≤90	≤4,5	(21,5 kcal)
4	≤120	≤6	4	≤120	≤6	(28,7 kcal)
5	≤150	≤7,5	5	≤150	≤7,5	(35,8 kcal)
6	≤180	≤9	6	≤180	≤9	(43,0 kcal)
7	≤210	≤10,5	7	≤210	≤10,5	(50,2 kcal)
8	≤240	≤12	8	≤240	≤12	(57,3 kcal)
9	≤270	≤13,5	9	≤270	≤13,5	(64,5 kcal)
10	>270	>13,5	10	>270	>13,5	(64,5 kcal)

Sugar free
Low energy
Low sugar

Arguments for proposed adjustment:

- Scale adjusted in line with Nutrition claims. Claims 'energy free, and/or ,sugar free' do not get negative points.
- Claim 'Low in sugar' (sugar content max. 2,5 g/100ml) and 'Low energy' (less than 80kJ/100ml) incorporated in the scale.
- Algorithm of the scale only adjusted for the nutrition claims.

2. Adjustment of the table with points for fruit, vegetables, pulses, nuts and rapeseed, walnut and olive oils:

Current Score		Proposal	
Points	Fruits, vegetables, pulses, nuts, and rapeseed, walnut and olive oils (%)	Points	Fruits, vegetables, pulses, nuts, and rapeseed, walnut and olive oils (%)
0	≤40	0	<10
1		1	≥10
2	>40	2	≥20
3		3	≥30
4	>60	4	≥40
5		5	≥50
6		6	≥60
7		7	≥70
8		8	≥80
9		9	≥90
10	>80	10	≥100

Arguments for proposed adjustment:

- Nectars 25-50% fruit are rewarded better in this proposal. Fruit has added value.
- Beverages containing ≥ 100% fruit juice are rewarded with the highest positive score, fruit juice <10% with the lowest.
- Logical scale.

3. Adjustment of the table with points for fibre/100g:

Current Score		Proposal	
Points	Fibre (g/100g) AOAC method	Points	Fibre (g/100g) AOAC method
0	≤0,9	0	≤0,4
1	>0,9	1	>0,4
2	>1,9	2	>1
3	>2,8	3	>2
4	>3,7	4	>3
5	>4,7	5	>6

Differentiates clear juices like apple juice from orange juice
 stimulates innovation
 source of fibre
 high fibre

Arguments for adjustment:

- Scale adjusted according to nutrition claims. Claims 'source of fibre' and 'high in fibre' incorporated in the scale.
- To get distinction between clear apple juice and more healthy juices a.o. orange juice the lower limit is set to ≤0,4 g.
- In order to stimulate innovation the stack of 2 and 3 points is set at respectively >1 and >2 g.

4. Adjustment of the table with points for protein/100g

Current Score		Proposal		
Points	Protein (g/100g)	Points	% energy delivered by protein	
0	≤ 1.6	0	≤6%] stimulates innovation stimulates innovation stimulates innovation stimulates innovation
1	> 1.6	1	>6%	
2	> 3.2	2	> 8%	
3	> 4.8	3	> 10%	
4	> 6.4	4	> 12%	
5	≥ 8.0	5	≥20%	source of protein high protein

Arguments for adjustment:

- Scale adjusted according to nutrition claims, based on percentage of energy delivered by proteins.
- Claims 'source of protein' and 'high in protein' incorporated in the scale.
- In order to stimulate innovation the stack of 2 and 3 points is set at respectively >6%, >8% and >10%.

On the next page some examples of the effects of scenario 4 are depicted.

Examples of the effects of scenario 4 (based on some products on the Dutch market)

- Orange juice is better rated than apple juice:



- A logical differentiation between DubbelFriss regular (23kcal), DubbelFriss Ice tea (19kcal) and DubbelFriss 1 kcal:

DubbelFriss regular



DubbelFriss Ice tea



DubbelFriss 1 kcal



- An equal score for 100% juice and juice with added water instead of a lower score for juices with added water:

Current situation:

Per 100 ml
134 kJ / 32 kcal
7,2 gr. sugar
Nutri-Score D

Per 100 ml
197 kJ / 47 kcal
10,5 gr. sugar
Nutri-Score C

Situation in scenario 4:

Per 100 ml
134 kJ / 32 kcal
7,2 gr. sugar
Nutri-Score C

Per 100 ml
197 kJ / 47 kcal
10,5 gr. sugar
Nutri-Score C

