

CSPI Calls 'Facts Up Front' a Joke

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The leading food industry organizations' front-of-package nutrition labeling initiative announced Monday produced a public scoff from a consumer watchdog group.

The Center for Science in the Public Interest says ["Facts Up Front,"](#) [1] the voluntary program led by the Grocery Manufacturers Association and the Food Marketing Institute, is merely aimed at preempting a government-designed labeling system.

"Facts Up Front is a joke that should be roundly ignored by the FDA and the Administration," says CSPI Executive Director Michael Jacobson. "We need an FDA-designed front-of-package system that is mandatory, easily understood by even less-educated consumers and science-based."

This statement comes in response to Monday's announcement from the GMA and the FMI of a national consumer education campaign designed to boost awareness of Facts Up Front. According to the release, Facts Up Front labels display information from the [Nutrition Facts](#) [2] Panel in a "simple and easy-to-use format" on the front of food and beverage products.

The basic design of the Facts Up Front label lists information about calories, saturated fat, sodium and sugar content found in products. Food manufacturers may also elect to include information on nutrients, including potassium, fiber, protein, vitamin A, vitamin C, vitamin D, calcium and iron.

Jacobson maintains that, while this information can be informative, Facts Up Front is not a "nutrition in a nutshell" solution. Due to its voluntary nature, the label may not be applied to all products, especially unhealthy items, he said.

[CSPI](#) [3] supports the [revised Nutrition Facts label recently proposed by the Food and Drug Administration](#) [4]. The updates would include larger, bolder calorie information, as well as added sugar content. Serving sizes also would be updated to more realistic measurements.

Despite the FDA proposal, it appears that Facts Up Front participants plan to move forward with the initiative.

Pamela G. Bailey, president and CEO of the GMA, says that front-of-package labels can be effective, particularly when they are combined with an education program.

"With more than 50 companies voluntarily implementing Facts Up Front on their branded and private label products, it's important for shoppers to know this tool is out there and that they understand how to use it. With Facts Up Front, we're simplifying nutrition so everyone has the essential information needed to help build more healthful diets," Bailey says.

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Links:

[1] <https://twitter.com/FactsUpFront>

[2] <http://www.foodmanufacturing.com/news/2014/03/consumer-trends-consumer-interest-nutrition-facts-waning>

[3] <https://www.cspinet.org/new/201402271.html>

[4] <http://www.foodmanufacturing.com/news/2014/02/fda-propose-nutrition-facts-makeover>

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