

Project Snapshot: Nutrient-Rich Foods Consumer Tool Research

Date: January 2009

Background

As a founding member of the Nutrient-Rich Foods Coalition (NRFC) in 2003, The Beef Checkoff has been advancing scientific and market research to develop tools that help people understand and incorporate nutrient-rich foods (NRF), like lean beef, into their everyday diets. Nutrient-rich foods and beverages are those that provide a high amount of beneficial nutrients per calorie, such as colorful fruits and vegetables, enriched and whole grains, lean meats, and lowfat and fat free dairy foods. The NRFC has invested significant resources in the nutrient-rich foods concept as a solution to the healthful lifestyle challenge facing Americans. In 2008, an important milestone was reached with the development of a NRF Index Score Tool, called my5. Recently, the Market Research team conducted checkoff-funded research to assess several aspects of the NRF program, including the appeal of the NRF concept to consumers as well as their understanding of the score tool.



Methodology

Quantitative research was conducted with adults, 18 to 65 years of age, who are the primary grocery shopper in their homes. Respondents were 80% female, 20% male, and nationally representative of the U.S. population on all other attributes. All interviews were conducted via the internet. Respondents were shown illustrations of how the tool could be used to assess the nutrient richness of:

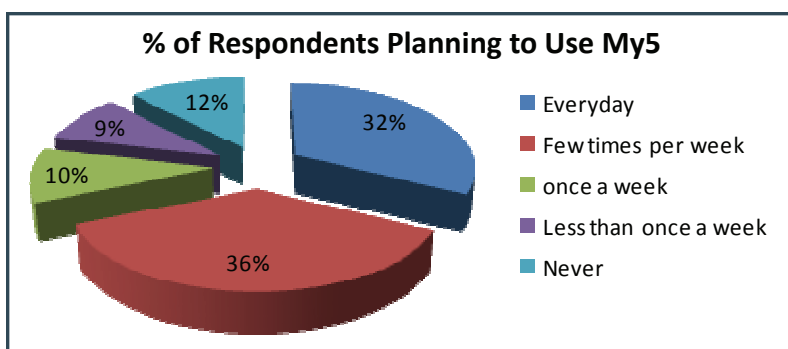
- A. A single food purchased in the store
- B. An assembled meal including several ingredients
- C. A daily score combining all meals and snacks

In all three cases the consumer is able to assess the nutrient richness of their food choices and see where the potential for selecting more nutritious options exist.

The survey was designed to assess the appeal of the overall NRF concept, consumers’ understanding of the tool, their interest in possible touch points, their perceptions of NRF used in conjunction with other dietary guidance systems (e.g. MyPyramid, Nutrition Facts Labels) and the differences among various consumer demographic segments.

Key Learnings

- **Concept Evaluation**—Overall the NRF concept has strong appeal as consumers give an average rating of 7.35 on a 9 point scale in terms of the concept’s importance as an approach to food planning. Positive consumer response to the concept is primarily driven by perceived health benefits. Uninterested consumers report low usefulness and inconvenience as a primary reason.
- **my5 Tool Evaluation**—Consumers give the my5 tool high marks on liking, overall understanding, ease of use and satisfaction with meeting their needs



in choosing foods/beverages. Claims of intended frequent usage of the my5 tool, when available, is high. More than three out of four do not find the tool confusing or difficult to understand. Most consumers believe my5 is a good fit for the NRF concept and say they are equally likely to use the tool for use with a single food group, an entire meal or an entire day of meals.



- **Segment Analysis**
 - ◆ Across age segments as well as personal segments, there is no significant difference in the frequency of intended use of my5.
 - ◆ Households with kids claim they will use my5 often and rate it significantly higher than other segments on liking, comprehension and need satisfaction.
- **Other Dietary Guidance Systems**—Consumers report familiarity with MyPyramid and the Nutrition Facts Label and consider my5 a strong complement to these programs.
- **Touchpoints**—Consumers are most interested in receiving my5 information in store, through a Web site, a grocery brochure or a mailing.

Next Steps

The underlying science and consumer research is being used as the foundation for a dialogue with dietary influencers on the importance of nutrient-rich foods, including beef. A “demonstration” test with consumers is underway to measure the impact of use of the tool on consumer food choices.