LOCAL HEALTH AUTHORITY ANALYTICAL COMMITTEE

COORDINATED SAMPLING PROJECT 13 – READY TO EAT MEALS

(Conducted June 2014)

Introduction

This report summarises the findings from the LHAAC Co-ordinated Sampling Project 13 on Ready to Eat Meals (RTEM) products. This targeted the more common products sold in the major supermarkets of Coles, IGA and Woolworths, with some Local Governments being asked to collect a range of samples from a particular manufacturer.

Consignment Details

At the end of the survey, 82 samples had been submitted by 11 participating municipalities.

The breakdown of the number of samples submitted by each Local Government is presented in Appendix 1.

Testing Methodology

Agrifood Technology and ChemCentre looked at the following areas when assessing each sample.

1. The NIP where NIP information was provided on the product, or by the producer.
2. The food label was checked for content, the calculations used, formatting of the NIP and also legibility (font size, language, etc.)

Disclosure

1. This survey sought to examine a variety of Ready to Eat products from a broad range of manufacturers to determine the level of consistency and accuracy between the disclosed product information and actual results of analysis. In many instances only one sample of a specific product was taken so results could vary slightly over a larger sample size.
2. Due to the high number of different products analysed they are summarised by the food outlet they were purchased from (Coles, Foodworks, IGA or Woolworths). The food outlet **is not** the food manufacturer and this should be borne in mind when viewing results of the analysis.

Products Types Submitted

The product types identified prior to the survey were listed in the introduction above. These product types made up the majority of products submitted. Table 1 shows the breakdown of all samples received by vendor:

Table 1 – Samples by Vendor

Product	Number of Samples
Coles	35
Foodworks	2
IGA	7
Woolworths	38

Test Results

The following pages will summarise inconsistent results for products collected for this survey. The number of samples considered sub-standard was 44 (54%) of the 82 products submitted.

NOTE:

A sample is considered inconsistent when the chemical analysis results for a nutrient differ from the nutrient content on the product NIP by greater/less than 20% or a sample contravenes product standards specified in the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code.

Coles Outlets

Of the 35 products obtained from Coles outlets, 19 (54%) were considered inconsistent. The breakdown of inconsistent tests can be categorised as follows:

- 19 samples had information on their product that was inconsistent with laboratory analysis, as follows:
    - 1 samples had significantly higher protein content than declared on the NIP
    - 4 samples had significantly lower protein content than declared on the NIP
    - 4 sample had significantly higher fat than declared on the NIP
    - 1 sample had significantly lower fat than declared on the NIP
    - 4 samples had significantly higher saturated fat than declared on the NIP
    - 1 sample had significantly lower saturated fat than declared on the NIP
    - 11 samples had significantly higher carbohydrate than declared on the NIP
    - 1 samples had significantly lower carbohydrate than declared on the NIP
    - 8 samples had significantly higher simple sugar than declared on the NIP
    - 1 samples had significantly lower Dietary Fibre than declared on the NIP
    - 4 samples had significantly higher sodium content than declared on the NIP
    - 2 samples had significantly lower sodium content than declared on the NIP

The total number of errors (42) is more than the 19 inconsistent results due to some samples being inconsistent in more than one category.

Foodworks Outlets

Of the 2 products obtained from Foodworks, there were no samples which were inconsistent.

IGA Outlets

Of the 7 products obtained from IGA outlets, 3 (43%) were considered inconsistent. The breakdown of inconsistent tests can be categorised as follows:

- 3 samples had information on their product that was inconsistent with laboratory analysis, as follows:
    - 1 sample had significantly higher sodium than declared on the NIP
    - 1 sample had significantly higher carbohydrate than declared on the NIP
    - 1 sample has significantly higher fat than declared on the NIP

Woolworths Outlets

Of the 38 products obtained from Woolworths outlets, 22 (58%) were considered inconsistent. The breakdown of inconsistent tests can be categorised as follows:

- 22 sample had information on their product that was inconsistent with laboratory analysis, as follows:
    - 12 samples had significantly higher carbohydrate than declared on the NIP
    - 4 samples had significantly higher sodium content than declared on the NIP
    - 3 samples had significantly higher fat than declared on the NIP
    - 5 samples had significantly lower fat than declared on the NIP
    - 1 sample had significantly higher energy than declared on the NIP
    - 2 samples had significantly higher protein than declared on the NIP
    - 2 sample had significantly lower protein than declared on the NIP
    - 1 sample had significantly higher saturated fat than declared on the NIP
    - 7 samples had significantly lower saturated fat than declared on the NIP
    - 1 sample had significantly higher monounsaturated fat than declared on the NIP
    - 1 sample had significantly lower monounsaturated fat than declared on the NIP
    - 2 samples had significantly higher polyunsaturated fat than declared on the NIP
    - 4 samples had significantly higher simple sugar than declared on the NIP
    - 2 samples had significantly lower simple sugar than declared on the NIP
    - 1 samples had significantly higher dietary fibre than declared on the NIP

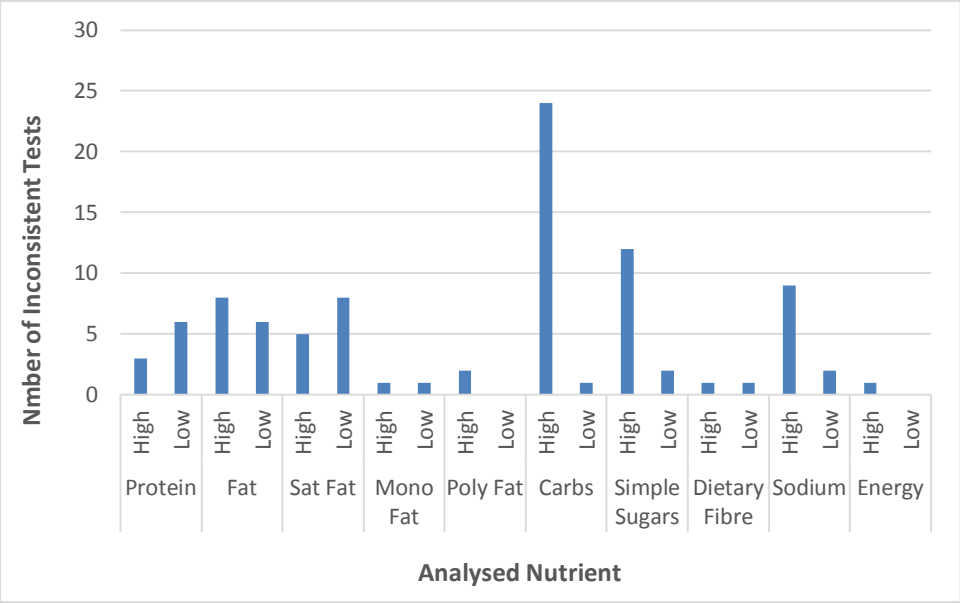
The total number of errors (48) is more than the 22 inconsistent results due to some samples being inconsistent in more than one category.

Observations

1. The number of inconsistent samples (54%) is regarded as high in a survey of this nature. The majority of inconsistencies were classified as such due to differences in the results of LHAAC analysis when compared to the declared nutrition information on the product NIP.
2. The largest area of inconsistency was in the reading of carbohydrates with a total of 25 inconsistent results (28% of inconsistent readings), the majority of the results being higher level of carbohydrates than stated on the NIP.
3. Other nutrients with high levels of inconsistency were Fat (14 instances, 16%), Protein, Simple Sugars and Sodium (all with 11 instances, 12%).
4. Local Governments are encouraged to refer to/implement the Follow-Up Actions summarised in the instructions for participation in this CSP, which were issued to all Western Australian LGAs.

Further Analysis

Agrifood Technology and ChemCentre are both able to provide further testing and data analysis to LHAAC should this be required.



Graph 1 – Variation between the product NIP and LHAAC test results

Appendix 1: Number of Samples submitted by participating Local Councils

Council	Number of Samples
Canning	6
Cockburn	8
Fremantle	4
Gosnells	10
Joondalup City	8
Kalamunda Shire	3
Mandurah	8
Rockingham	10
South Perth	3
Swan	20
Wanneroo	2
TOTAL	***82***