Making healthier choices easier
Tick turns 21 and introduces Two Ticks

Meaning

• The Tick allows consumers to identify healthier choices within specific food categories.
• Two Ticks signposts core foods for a healthy diet.

Products with the Tick or Two Ticks have been independently reviewed and proven to meet the Heart Foundation’s comprehensive, category-specific nutrient criteria. They should be consumed as part of a balanced diet and healthy lifestyle.

The Heart Foundation Tick is New Zealand’s longest-standing front of pack food labelling system. Since its introduction 21 years ago, the Tick has become a trusted, independent symbol helping Kiwis easily recognise healthier food choices within a specific food category.

In April 2014, the Heart Foundation was proud to introduce the newest member of the Tick family, Two Ticks.

The additional tier was developed in response to what consumers wanted and needed from the programme - to easily and quickly identify foods that are the healthier products within a category (Tick) and to be able to identify the core foods for a healthy diet (Two Ticks).

This update is to provide health professionals with important information about the Tick Programme. In particular, we want to explain the aim of the programme, the criteria development and review process, and information about how food companies earn the Tick.
82% of household grocery shoppers recall having bought food with the Tick on it*

Mission

The Tick Programme’s mission is to improve the nutritional profile of New Zealand’s food supply, in a direction that is consistent with the Heart Foundation and Ministry of Health nutrition policies and dietary recommendations for the general population.

Who sets the criteria?

The Tick nutrient criteria are developed and reviewed by a Criteria Working Group (CWG), comprising honorary external experts in nutrition, food technology and public health, from both Australia and New Zealand.

Tick licensees and food manufacturers are excluded from the CWG. This means information provided by the industry is confidential and used solely for the purpose of understanding the food category under review.

Currently, Two Ticks is a New Zealand-only initiative. The criteria for Two Ticks are set and reviewed using a similar process to the Tick.

The main principles behind the criteria are that they must reflect the nutritional objectives for the category, and be challenging yet achievable. If they are not realistic, then the food industry will not be encouraged to reformulate and our efforts to improve the food supply will be ineffective. Only by engaging food companies can we achieve our public health goals.
Within the first three weeks of launching Two Ticks, 8% of shoppers were already aware of it* 

How is the Tick Programme evaluated?

We are continually evaluating the Tick Programme, taking on board the feedback of consumers, health professionals and the industry. The Tick is collaborating with New Zealand universities to evaluate its impact on food-product reformulation and formulation.

Tick Programme Publications


Current Tick Research


There are over 1100 products across 60 different food categories that meet the Tick’s strict nutrition criteria*

Setting the nutrient criteria

The strong, dynamic nutrient criteria behind the Tick Programme are founded in science with a deliberate dose of reality. Across 60 different food categories, the Tick criteria aim to encourage appropriate serve size and decrease levels of one or more of:

• Saturated fat, trans fat, partially hydrogenated fat
• Sodium
• Energy density (kJ)

They also aim to increase levels of one or more of:

• Dietary fibre and/or vegetables and/or wholegrains
• Calcium (for dairy and soy products and other dairy alternatives)
• Percentage key ingredients (e.g. fruit, vegetable, seafood content)

Which criteria for which foods?

The Tick sets specific nutritional objectives for each category. For example, Tick dairy products such as milk and yoghurt should contain minimum levels of calcium and be low in saturated fat and kilojoules, while Tick table spreads must meet criteria for trans-fat, saturated fat and sodium.
Tick is important and has a role for nearly two-thirds of grocery shoppers*

Setting the nutrient criteria continued

Setting and reviewing the criteria for each category is a comprehensive process, involving:

- An audit of nutritional values of products in the current marketplace
- Establishing nutritional objectives for each category (based on consumption patterns, category nutritional attributes, healthy eating policies and recommendations from authoritative bodies)
- Considering relevant food regulations
- Setting values for the selected nutrients
- Assessing these against current market nutritional values to determine the feasibility of the proposed criteria
- Consulting with the industry over technological issues, constraints and consumer acceptance factors

Two Ticks looks at foods as a whole (rather than just specific nutrients) and, like the Tick, does not dictate frequency of consumption. It will, however, include a sugar criterion for relevant categories, such as breakfast cereals and yoghurt. Due to its stricter criteria, there will be a limited number of food categories included in Two Ticks (currently 19 categories).
The Tick is trusted by 79% of household grocery shoppers*

The Tick Programme and Health Star Rating system

On 27 June 2014, the New Zealand Government announced that Australia’s (voluntary) Front of Pack Nutrition Labelling system will be adopted. The ‘Health Star Food Rating’ system aims to make it quicker and easier for New Zealand consumers to make better-informed, healthy food choices.

The Health Star Rating system uses a star rating scale of ½ to 5 stars and is able to be used on most packaged food products for retail sale. Exclusions include alcohol and kava, or foods which have set compositional requirements to meet a special purpose, such as formulated supplementary foods for young children, formulated supplementary sports foods, foods for special medical purposes and infant formula.
The Tick Programme and Health Star Rating system continued

Foods with more stars are said to have better nutritional value. The number of stars associated with each food is determined by an algorithm that considers the overall nutritional value of the food product – not just one nutrient, such as sugar or fat.

The Tick Programme will complement the Health Star Rating system and continue helping New Zealanders to make healthier food choices.

71% of main grocery shoppers would buy a food product with the Tick over a similar product without the Tick*
### Health Star Rating system

- Applies across all foods and beverages in six broad categories
- Considers four negative aspects of food content – energy, saturated fat, sodium and total sugars. It also looks at certain positive aspects of food, such as fruit, vegetable, nut and legume content, and protein and dietary fibre
- Voluntary, also aims to drive reformulation to healthier (more stars) profiles
- Self-administered by food companies
- Overseen by government

### Tick Programme

- A two-tier system:
  - Tick focuses on 60 specific food categories
  - Two Ticks identifies core foods for a healthy diet
- Focuses on food category specific nutrient criteria to help consumers identify healthier choices within a food category
- Voluntary but aims to drive positive reformulation in specific food categories e.g. reduction of trans-fats in margarines and sodium in breads
- Tick Programme is endorsed and administered by the Heart Foundation

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- FREE Tick Tools including our Shopping Guide and Recipe Guide full of tasty and affordable meals
- The latest nutrition insight from our Tick Dietitian
- Updates on the latest Tick products
- The chance to enter our Tick Club competitions to win fantastic prizes

* Reference: Phoenix Research, Awareness, Usage and Attitudes of the Tick, July 2014