

## Dietary Fiber Definition Task Force Submits Comments on Nutrition Labeling

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The AACC International Dietary Fiber Definition Task Force submitted a letter in response to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)'s call for comments on the revised reference values and mandatory nutrients on food labels. Approved by the AACC Intl. board, the letter was submitted to the FDA on January 30, 2008.

The Institute of Medicine (IOM)'s definition of dietary fiber includes two categories: dietary fiber and functional fiber. AACC Intl. opposes the use of the term "functional fiber" on food labels because current analytical methods cannot discriminate between dietary fiber that is naturally present in a food and isolated fiber that is added to a food. The IOM definition may also confuse consumers who perceive functional fiber to be healthier than dietary fiber due to confusion with the term functional foods.

The continued use of AOAC Intl. analytical methods for dietary fiber measurement is recommended. These methods are also AACC Intl.-approved methods. Both organizations are working together to develop an improved procedure that measures all compounds that are included in both the AACC Intl. and the 27th Session of the Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses (CCNFSDU) definitions of dietary fiber.

The task force also supported the voluntary labeling of insoluble and soluble fiber because research indicates that the two general categories of dietary fiber have distinct health benefits. The inclusion of viscous and nonviscous fiber on the Nutrition Facts Panels is not warranted, however, because precise methods for measuring viscosity have not been validated by interlaboratory evaluation.

Other nations look to U.S. food labeling policies to guide their own programs; therefore AACC Intl. has an obligation to its members both in the United States and abroad to advocate for sound science in federal rule making.

The task force's full letter and the FDA's call for comments are available at [www.aaccnet.org/definitions/labeling.asp](http://www.aaccnet.org/definitions/labeling.asp). The FDA has extended the deadline to submit comments on this issue to April 30, 2008, for those who would like to make additional comments.

AACC Intl. members are invited to submit suggestions on additional issues that the association should address by contacting Susan Kohn, AACC Intl. membership and communications director, at [skohn@scisoc.org](mailto:skohn@scisoc.org) or +1.651.994.3812.

### Members of the Dietary Fiber Definition Task Force

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### Did you know that AACC International has an approved definition of dietary fiber?

In 2000 AACC International approved the following definition after gathering input through member teleconferences, interactive workshops for scientific input, and an interactive website for global contribution:

*"Dietary fiber is the edible parts of plants or analogous carbohydrates that are resistant to digestion and absorption in the human small intestine with complete or partial fermentation in the large intestine. Dietary fiber includes polysaccharides, oligosaccharides, lignin, and associated plant substances. Dietary fibers promote beneficial physiological effects including laxation, and/or blood cholesterol attenuation, and/or blood glucose attenuation."*

For more details on this definition and related reports, visit [www.aaccnet.org/definitions](http://www.aaccnet.org/definitions)

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