

## Topic: Sugar

### Relevance to GFF

Sugar is an issue for the grains industry as an ingredient largely found in the non-staple grain products as added sugar. With increasing coverage of added sugar and links between sugar consumption and chronic disease (obesity, diabetes, inflammation, etc.) this ingredient will continually garner attention from the media, healthcare professionals and, ultimately, consumers. GFF supports both staple and non-staple grains, and the general population makes a direct connection between grains/carbohydrates and glucose versus table sugar.

### Issue at Hand: Sugar as Added Calories

The American Heart Association (AHA) recommends limiting the amount of added sugars you consume to no more than half of your daily discretionary calories allowance. For most American women, that's no more than 100 calories per day, or about six teaspoons of sugar. For men, it's 150 calories per day, or about nine teaspoons. The AHA recommendations focus on all added sugars without singling out any particular type, such as high-fructose corn syrup.\*

\*Source: American Heart Association

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010, released on January 31, 2011, emphasize three major goals for Americans:

- Balance calories with physical activity to manage weight
- Consume more of certain foods and nutrients such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, fat-free and low-fat dairy products, and seafood
- Consume fewer foods with sodium (salt), saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, added sugars and refined grains

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010, include 23 key recommendations for the general population and six additional key recommendations for specific population groups, such as pregnant women. The recommendations are intended to help people choose an overall healthy diet.

### Issue at Hand: Sugar Contributing to Addictive Behavior

Initial research on this topic shows mixed outcomes as to whether or not sugar from foods is indeed addictive; however, there are several noisemakers in the public health and media realms that insist the two are linked and are responsible for the obesity of Americans. Studies are being conducted with brain scans of test subjects to determine the brain's affinity for sugar, but to date these findings have not been able to demonstrate applicability to broad populations.



## Articles of Interest

### **The shocking ways sugar can affect your kid's health**

Fox News 8/24/14

Experts say that aside from more obvious affects, such as diabetes, sugar can also cause other chronic health problems, including colds and allergies, a weakened immunity, acid reflux among other symptoms.

### **Sugar: A Love/Hate Relationship. Why We Can't Ever Give Up The Sweet Stuff**

Forbes 8/18/14

Leading the charge on “anti-sugar” is Dr. Robert Lustig, of the 2009 video, Sugar: The Bitter Truth. The article covers the economic state of sugar, and how it affects nearly every food produced.

### **Is Sugar The New Tobacco?**

Huffington Post, 8/5/14

A new theory from a group of progressive medical researchers argue that sugar acts as a toxin in the body and is responsible for not only our rising rates of diabetes and obesity, but also increasing incidences of heart disease, cancer and other chronic illness.

### **Should ‘Added Sugars’ Be Listed on the Nutrition Facts Panel?**

Food Navigator, 8/4/14

A row is brewing over the merits of including “added sugars” on the Nutrition Facts panel, with critics arguing that our bodies don’t distinguish between naturally occurring and added sugar — and neither should food labels — and supporters saying it will help consumers identify foods with more empty calories.

### **Action on Sugar Removes Bread from High-Sugar Hit List: ‘We Acknowledge It Was Not Accurate’**

Bakery and Snacks, 7/15/14

Anti-sugar lobby group Action on Sugar has removed bread from its initial list of products containing “large amounts of sugar.”

### **Is Sugar a ‘Poison’? FDA Seeks Warning Labels**

Illinois Patch, 7/9/14

This article outlines the debate between public health advocates and food industry lobbyists as to whether or not the FDA should include “added sugars” on its revised nutrition label. The overconsumption of sugar, many health experts say, is one of the main factors contributing to the obesity epidemic in America.

### **Time for Action? U.K. Campaign Group Calls for ‘Sugar Tax’ to Slash Child Obesity**

Food Navigator, 6/23/14

Action on Sugar has produced a seven-point plan to discourage children from consuming foods and soft drinks with high levels of added sugar.

### **Sugar May Harm Brain Health**

Scientific American, 6/12/14





A study in *Neurology* helps suggests that eating a lot of sugar or other carbohydrates can be hazardous to both brain structure and function.

#### **Fruit Juice vs. Soda? Both Beverages Pack in Sugar, Health Risks**

National Public Radio, 6/9/14

The sugar, particularly fructose, debate continues in this look at the pros and cons of consuming soda vs. fruit juice. The sugar content of both of these products is often very similar.

#### **Being Happy with Sugar**

*The Atlantic*, 6/5/14

A lengthy exploration of conflicting nutrition advice, largely centered on sugar. Chronicling everything from agave to fructose to HFCS to Dr. Oz to Dr. Lustig, it is a worthy read that ultimately concludes we don't have the answer.

#### **EWG Slams Added Sugar in Kids' Cereals; General Mills Says It's Leading the Way in Sugar Reduction**

Food Navigator, 5/28/14

A recent analysis of more than 1,500 cereals, including 181 marketed for children, by the Environmental Working Group found that a person eating an average serving of cereal a day for a year ends up consuming 10 pounds of sugar.

#### **Breakfast Cereals Loaded with Too Much Sugar for U.S. Kids**

Reuters, 5/15/14



A report released by Environmental Working Group found the average U.S. child who eats a bowl of breakfast cereal each morning consumes more than 10 pounds of sugar annually. The Reuters coverage highlights efforts by cereal makers (namely Kellogg's and General Mills) to reduce the sugar content of common children's cereals.

#### **Sugar Has a Direct Effect on Heart Disease Risk and Blood Pressure: Meta-Analysis**

Food Navigator, 5/16/14

Sugar has a direct effect on risk factors for heart disease, and is likely to impact blood pressure, independent of weight gain, according to new analysis of 39 clinical trials.

#### **Sugar, Come Out with Your Hands Up**

*The New York Times*, 5/8/14

This article discusses recent research that indicates calories in fruit are not the same as those in soda, focusing on how *Fed Up* portrays this finding and related others on the big screen.

#### **What Causes Obesity? Top Cardiology Journal Spreads Confusion**

Huffington Post, 5/6/14

A recently published paper in the *Journal of American College of Cardiology* called "Obesity and Cardiovascular Disease" discusses how we shouldn't be confusing the public by blaming obesity on a lack of physical exercise, rather focusing on sugar and its link to heart attacks, strokes and cancer.

#### **10 Foods with Hidden Sweet Spots**

Huffington Post, 4/30/14



Highlights foods that are "sneaky sources" of sugar, including packaged bread and instant oatmeal.



### **Katie Couric Tackles Bitter Facts about Sugar Addiction: What You Should Know**

Examiner, January 26, 2014

It may seem obvious: If you want to lose weight, stop stirring sugar cubes into your coffee and sprinkling brown sugar on your oatmeal. But as Katie Couric revealed on her Jan. 24 talk show, the problem with sugar extends beyond your weight. And for some people, it can be life-threatening. Katie's guest expert, Dr. Robert H. Lustig, is an American pediatric endocrinologist and author of *Fat Chance: Beating the Odds Against Sugar, Processed Food, Obesity, and Disease*. He warns that much of the sugar in our food is hidden, a result of the food industry's adding the sweet stuff to foods ranging from fruit juice to salad dressing to bread.

### **The Sugar-Addiction Taboo**

*The Atlantic*, 1/2/14

A recent study by Dr. Eric Stice of Oregon Health Sciences University looked at our obsession, by parsing out the fat from the sugar. Subjects lying in an MRI scanner consumed milkshakes in which the fat and sugar concentrations were dialed up or down. The bottom line was that fat stimulated the somatosensory cortex (in other words, "mouthfeel"), but only sugar stimulated the reward center, and adding fat to the sugar didn't increase the reward. This study shows we want sugar way more than we want fat. I've argued previously that excess sugar has been added to processed food because the food industry knows that when they add it, we buy more. And 77 percent of the food items available in the American grocery store are spiked with added sugar.



### **The Extraordinary Science of Addictive Junk Food**

*The New York Times*, 2/20/13

The public and food companies have known for decades now that sugary, salty, fatty foods are not good for us in the quantities that we consume them. So why are the diabetes, obesity and hypertension numbers still spiraling out of control? It's not just a matter of poor willpower on the part of the consumer and a give-the-people-what-they-want attitude on the part of the food manufacturers. What I found, over four years of research and reporting, was a conscious effort — taking place in labs and marketing meetings and grocery-store aisles — to get people hooked on foods that are convenient and inexpensive.



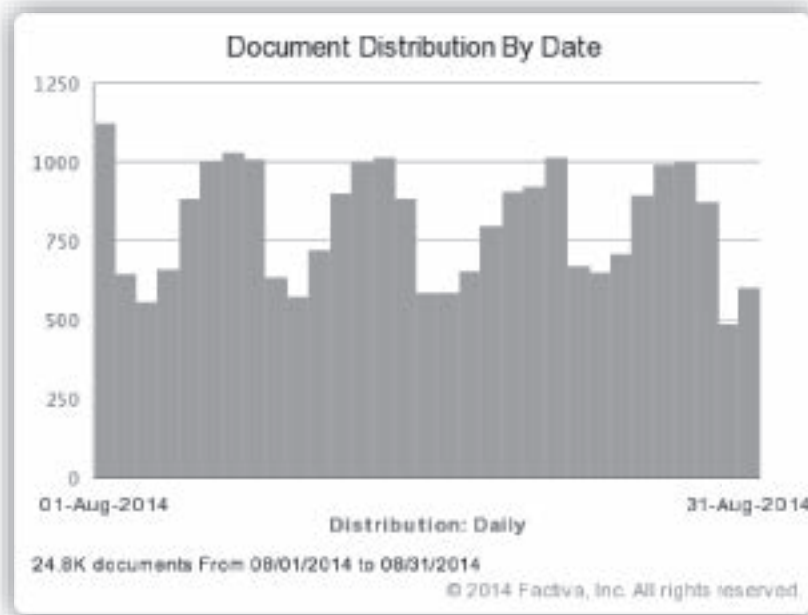
**Topic: Sugar**



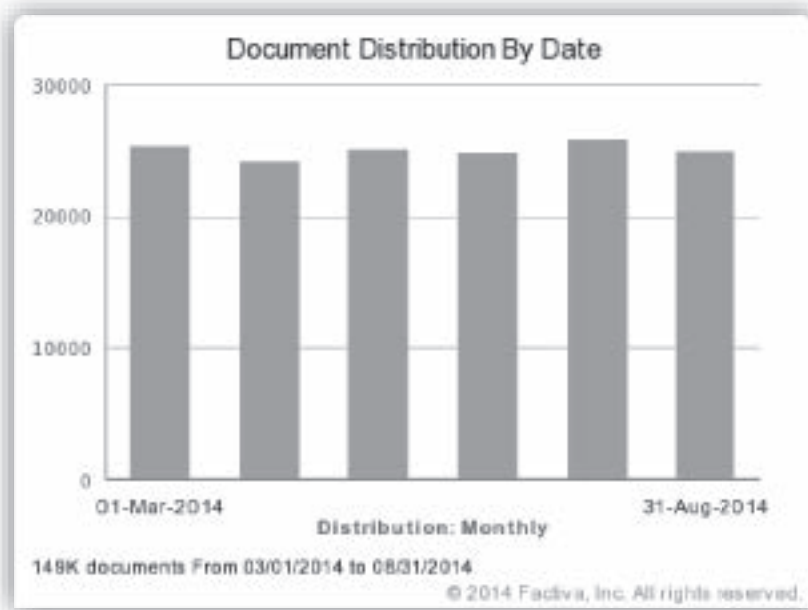
**Media Charts**

Sugar saw a year of consistent coverage with a focus in both foreign and domestic markets. As European markets debated whether sugar taxes would aid in reducing obesity levels, national coverage shared a similar focus, looking at the negative effects sugar has on weight and overall health.

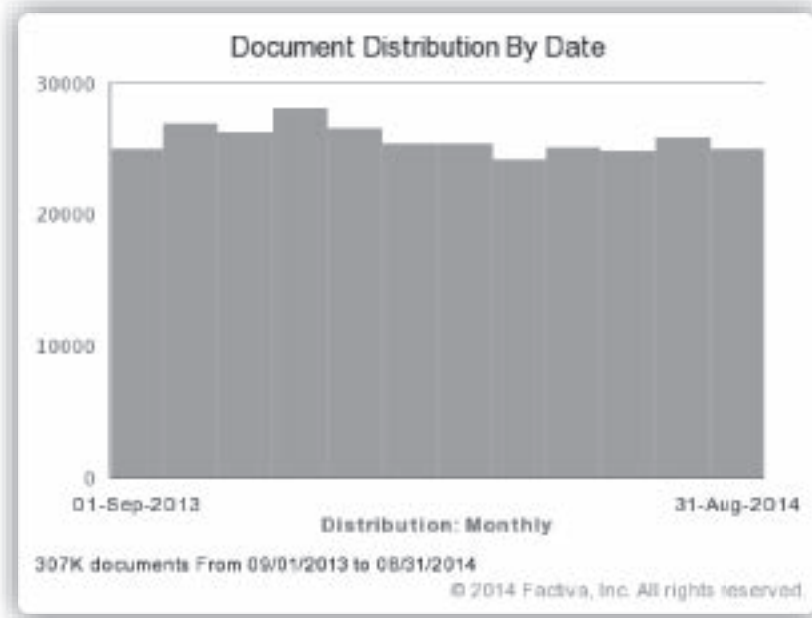
**Sugar Mentions (Past Month)**



**Sugar Mentions (Past 6 Months)**



Sugar Mentions (Past Year)



## Topic: Sugar

### GFF Positive Platform: Sugar

GFF supports both staple and non-staple grains in a balanced diet. Unfortunately, the general population often incorrectly draws a parallel between grains/carbohydrates and “sugar” (including glucose, table sugar and added sugar), meaning this ingredient will be an issue that will continuously be on health influencers’ and consumers’ radar. The GFF believes that all foods fit into a balanced diet — including indulgent grain-based foods — so long as they are consumed in moderation.

### Questions & Answers

*Why is sugar an issue for the grains industry?*

Sugar is largely found in non-staple grain products as added sugar. With increasing coverage of sugar addiction and links between sugar consumption and chronic disease (obesity, diabetes, inflammation, etc.), this ingredient will continually garner the attention of the media, healthcare professionals and, ultimately, consumers.

*Does sugar contribute to addictive behavior?*

Initial research on this topic shows mixed outcomes as to whether or not sugar from foods is indeed addictive; however, there are several noisemakers in the public health and media realms that insist the two are linked and are responsible for the obesity epidemic. Studies are being conducted with brain scans of test subjects to determine the brain’s affinity for sugar; to date, these findings have not been able to demonstrate applicability to broad populations.

*What is the American Heart Association’s position on sugar?*

The American Heart Association (AHA) recommends limiting the amount of added sugars you consume to no more than half of your daily discretionary calories allowance. For most American women, that’s no more than 100 calories per day, or about six teaspoons of sugar. For men, it’s 150 calories per day, or about nine teaspoons. The AHA recommendations focus on all added sugars, without singling out any particular type, such as high-fructose corn syrup.\*

\*Source: American Heart Association

*Should GFF be concerned about sugar in the grains industry?*

The increasing concern over sugar addiction and its potential effects on health is gaining traction in the media despite the nascence of the research. Given that GFF investor companies produce food items that are in the cross-hairs of anti-sugar efforts, GFF will need to decide how to address the protection of indulgent grain products that are tied into this emotionally charged conversation.



**Sugar**

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