

Topic: Trans Fat

Relevance to GFF

Trans fat is an ingredient that is largely found in non-staple grain products. Although trans fat is already limited in consumer food products, the nutrition science and public health communities are demanding that trans fat be entirely eliminated from the food system, given that accumulation of any trans fat in the diet leads to heart disease and inflammation. Because GFF represents both non-staple and staple grain products and our messaging ultimately reaches consumers, we will need to address the use of this ingredient and the health ramifications.

Issue at Hand: Trans Fat Policy

In November of 2013, the FDA issued a Federal Register notice with its preliminary determination that partially hydrogenated oils (PHOs) are no longer “generally recognized as safe,” or GRAS for short. If this preliminary determination is finalized, then PHOs would become food additives subject to premarket approval by the FDA. Foods containing unapproved food additives are considered adulterated under U.S. law, meaning they cannot legally be sold. If the FDA determines that PHOs are not GRAS, it could, in effect, mean the end of artificial, industrially produced trans fat in foods.

The FDA required in January 2006 that trans fat be listed on the Nutrition Facts label, and consumers took the health warnings to heart early. They started turning away from foods containing trans fat soon after publication of the FDA’s final rule in 2003. Taking the lead from consumers, many processed food manufacturers followed suit and voluntarily changed their food formulations to reduce or eliminate trans fat.*

*Source: Food and Drug Administration

Why GFF Should Be Concerned

Trans fats found in pizza, pizza dough and other shelf-stable grain and bakery products will likely be an issue for the GFF membership; however, should the FDA list PHOs as a banned additive this will be both a positive and a negative for GFF health messaging. The GFF membership will need to address the use of this ingredient and determine its alignment with government and third-party health recommendations on trans fat in the diet.

Furthermore, if the GRAS status of PHOs is revoked, it could set a precedent that could impact other ingredients used in food production. GFF will continue to work closely with the American Bakers Association which has been an industry leader on this topic and navigating the status of ingredients used by the industry.



Articles of Interest

Harley Pasternak: How to Avoid Trans Fats in Your Diet

People magazine, 8/6/14

Instead of banning them outright, in 2006 the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) required that manufacturers of packaged foods had to list on the Nutrition Facts panel the number of grams and the percentage of trans fat in a single serving. However, a loophole in the requirement allows a manufacturer to indicate there is zero trans fat if the amount is less than half of 1 gram. So trans fats were not banned outright — instead, the responsibility for seeking them out fell on the consumer. Foods like French fries, canned frosting and frozen waffles may still contain trans fats and should be avoided if possible.

Beware of These High Trans Fat Foods

Fox News, 5/12/14

A diet high in trans fats can lead to high blood pressure, obesity and heart disease. Studies have also indicated that increased trans fat consumption may lead to Alzheimer's disease, prostate and breast cancer, Type 2 diabetes, liver dysfunction, infertility, depression and even aggression. Deep-fried foods, pie crust, margarine, Bisquick, frosting and nondairy creamer may all contain trans fats.



General Mills Slashes Trans and Sat Fats in Dough

Bakery and Snacks, 4/14/14

General Mills has filed a patent to lower the trans fatty acid and saturated fat content in dough shortenings using a blend of nontropical oils and hard stock fat.

Understanding Trans Fats

WebMD, 4/2/14

This article summarizes the dangers of trans fats and provides advice on how to check if food products contain them.

The Scientific Case for Banning Trans Fats

Scientific American, 3/1/14

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has estimated that the 25 percent of trans fats still coursing through the American food supply account for approximately 7,000 premature deaths a year. The FDA's recent decision to ban trans fats would prevent those deaths.

Here Comes the FDA with New Nutritional Labels

SF Weekly, 1/28/14

If you find yourself perversely hate-reading the side of cereal boxes to feel good about what you're not putting in your body, or if you genuinely use them as guideposts when comparison shopping, there's good news for you. The FDA is revamping its labeling system to reflect contemporary food science.





Ready or Not, Local Food Shops Brace For FDA's Trans Fat Purge

St. Louis Public Radio, 1/28/14

The Food and Drug Administration has a plan in the works that may affect your appetite. It wants to ban partially hydrogenated oils — the major source of artificial trans fats in the U.S. food supply.

Trans Fats, PHOs Appear Destined for Ban

Food Processing, 1/2/14

They seemed like such a great idea when introduced widely early in the past century. But trans fats and their precursor, partially hydrogenated oils (PHOs), appear destined to be banned following a November 7 statement by the FDA that PHOs are no longer “generally recognized as safe” (GRAS).

AAFP Supports FDA Proposal to Reclassify Trans Fats as Food Additives

AAFP, 12/13/13

The AAFP notified the FDA of its strong support for a tentative determination by the agency that, when finalized, stands to severely restrict manufacturers' ability to market foods that contain partially hydrogenated oils. These oils represent the chief dietary source of industrially produced trans fatty acids, commonly known as trans fats.

FDA Moves to Take Trans Fat Out of Food

USA Today, 11/7/13



The Food and Drug Administration's plan announcement to take artificial trans fats entirely out of the food supply is pushing the industry to reformulate the remaining products that still contain them.

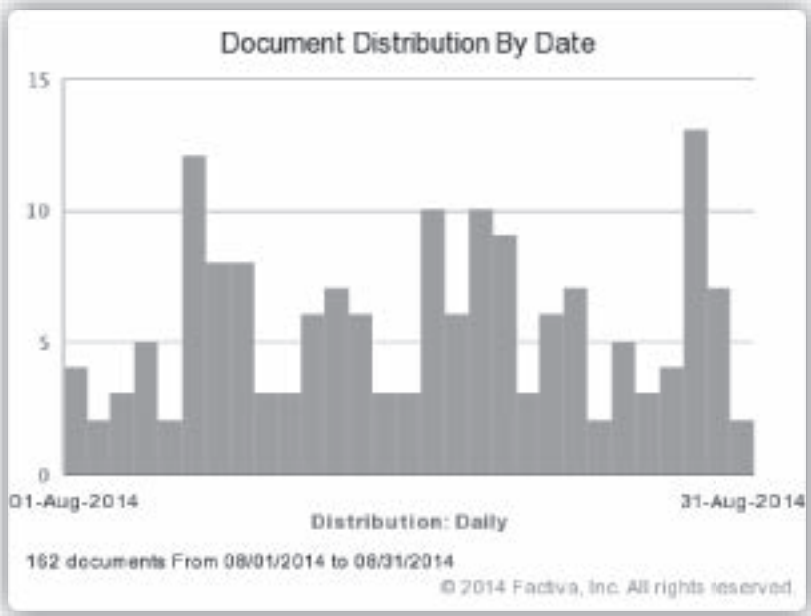


Topic: Trans Fat

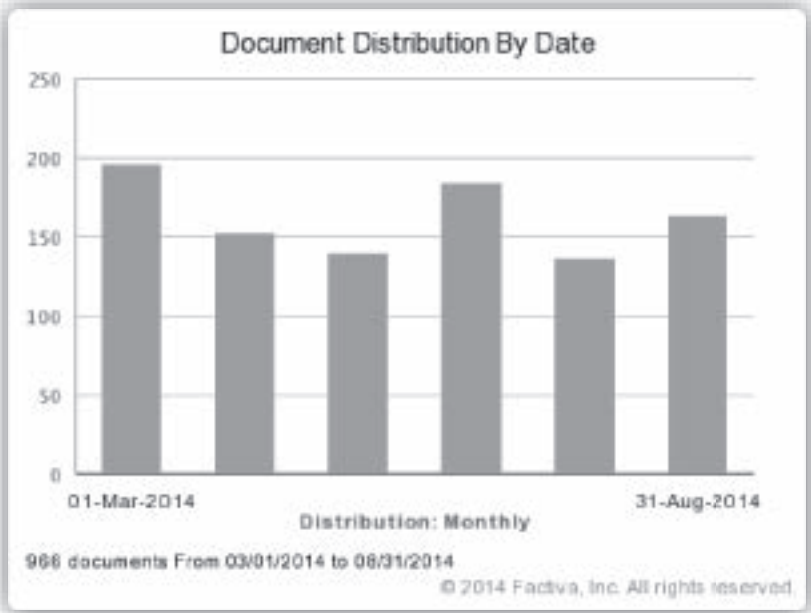
Media Charts

Over the 2014 fiscal year, trans fat saw relatively low coverage on average, with the exception of the proposed removal of trans fat GRAS status in November of 2013.

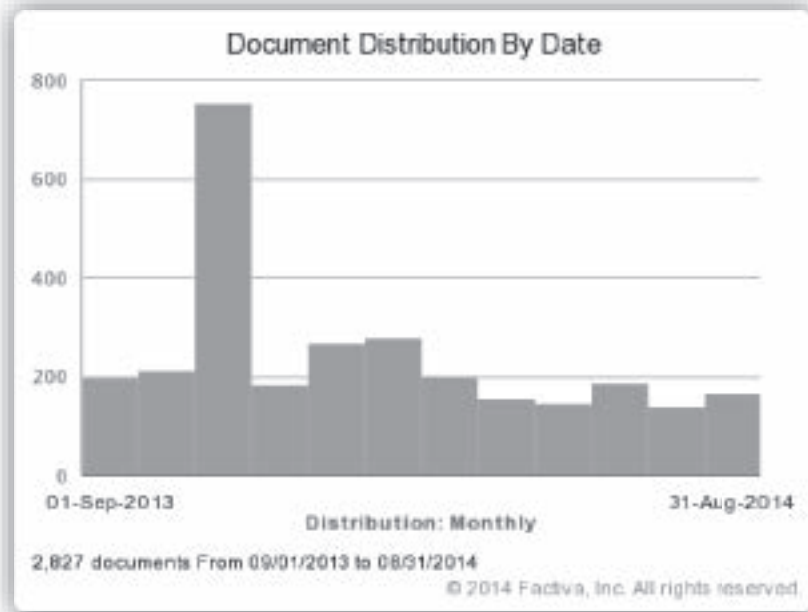
Trans Fat Mentions (Past Month)



Trans Fat Mentions (Past 6 Months)



Trans Fat Mentions (Past Year)



Topic: Trans Fat

GFF Positive Platform: Trans Fat

The GFF is in support of public health efforts to minimize trans fat in the diet in order to confidently communicate the positive nutritional benefits of grain products. That said, GFF is committed to working with the American Bakers Association and the industry in general to identify ways to attain the right balance of ingredients while complying with the FDA requirements and consumer preferences.

Questions and Answers

Why is trans fat an issue for the grains industry?

Trans fat is an ingredient that is largely found in non-staple grain products. Although trans fat is already limited in consumer food products, the nutrition science and public health communities are demanding that trans fat be entirely eliminated from the food system, given its connection to heart disease and inflammation.

Most companies stopped using trans fat in 2003 after the FDA published a rule that trans fat be listed on the Nutrition Facts label. Why is this still an issue?

In November of 2013, the FDA issued a Federal Register notice with its preliminary determination that partially hydrogenated oils (PHOs) are no longer “generally recognized as safe,” or GRAS for short. If this preliminary determination is finalized, then PHOs would become food additives subject to premarket approval by the FDA. Foods containing unapproved food additives are considered adulterated under U.S. law, meaning they cannot legally be sold. If the FDA determines that PHOs are not GRAS, it could lead to the end of industrially produced trans fat in foods.

Should GFF be concerned about trans fat?

Trans fats found in pizza, pizza dough and other shelf-stable grain and bakery products will likely be an issue for the GFF membership; however, should the FDA deem PHOs a banned additive this will be both a positive and a negative outcome with respect to GFF’s health messaging. The GFF membership will need to address the use of this ingredient and determine its alignment with government and third-party health recommendations on trans fat in the diet.

