Food Labels: Fact and Fiction
Confusing

• Goal of this presentation:
  – To clarify – not really
  – To depress – most likely
  – To confuse – most definitely
Even With that Said - You will be Enlightened!!!!!

Most Definitely
So, where do we start?
Let’s get to know each other

• Me
  ▪ Background
  ▪ NYS certified Agriculture Teacher
  ▪ Teach Animal Science at a high school vocational school in Western NY
  ▪ Farm to Table program with Culinary Arts
  ▪ Question from Chef – What are vegetarian fed chickens?
  ▪ Lead me to question labeling
To state - As a Group, Look at the Items in Your Bag

- For this lesson ignore the nutritional labels
- Brainstorm a list from the labels in front of you words that you feel indicate:
  - Product quality/value
  - Product origin
  - Product acceptance
  - Worthwhile information
  - How product was raised/produced
  - Helpful information
Confused Already????

So... in general **Labels** are confusing

• First:
  – Labels in general can be
    • Helpful unrelated
    • Misleading
    • Propaganda

• Second:
  – Important to understand some labels are regulated and some are not
    • Some regulated by USDA – certain organic labels
    • Some certified by a third party
    • Some self claims
    • Some capitalize on regulated labels outside of regulation area

• Our goal today

  **To understand the meaning behind labels to help our students understand what they eat and make smart choices**

• Lets get started
The Labels that Tell A LOT

ORGANIC

- 3 years with only approved pesticides or herbicides
- Inspected
- Animals have access to outdoors
- Sustainable practices in place
- Individual products are certified – not whole farm production
Organic

Means NO

- Synthetic pesticides
- Herbicides
- Antibiotics
- Hormones
- Irradiation
- GMO’s/GE
- Cloning

Does not mean

- Small
- Healthy
- Animals treated humanly
- Low carbon footprint
- Acceptable working conditions
- Low environmental impact
- Low impact on water supply
3 classifications of **Organic**

100% organic
- Strict labeling
- All ingredients certified
- Processing certified

Organic
- 95% organic
- Up to 5% can come from approved list
- Does not include water and salt

Made with Organic
- 70% organic
- Rest are not
- No GMO/GE
- No radiation
- Non ag products come from a list
Organic Fish/Seafood

- No such thing
- No US standard
- No way to monitor
Tell A LOT

FAIRTRADE

- Ethically minded label

- Looks at
  - Economics
  - Social issues
  - Environmental issues
  - Large scope practices
  - Living wage
  - Child labor prohibited
  - All GMO/GE banned
  - Emphasis on proper use of pesticides
  - Must invest % income back into community

- Products in US
  - Coffee
  - Tea
  - Herbs
  - Cocoa
  - Chocolate
  - Fresh frit
  - Sugar
  - Rice
  - Vanilla
Tell A LOT

BIRD FRIENDLY

• Independently certified

• Third party certification for organic shade grown coffee

• Developed by Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center

• Criteria

• Tree canopy height

• Plant diversity

• Shade coverage

• Streamside plant borders
Tell A LOT

FOOD ALLIANCE

3rd party sustainable certification
- Safe, fair working conditions
- Land and water stewardship
- Reduced use of toxic materials
- Protection of wildlife habitat
- Waste reduction and reuse
- Humane animal treatment
- Continual improvement of practices
- 20 year old North American certification

Value of certification
- Sets the bar for sustainable agriculture
- Working for Traceability and Transparency
- $160 million worth of Food Alliance Certified products sold in 2016.
Tell A LOT

RAIN FOREST ALLIANCE

- Independent Certification
- Mostly
  - South America
  - SE Asia
  - Africa
- Focus
  - Reduce water pollution
  - Reduce soil erosion
  - Protect human health
  - Conservation of wildlife habits
  - Reduce waste
  - Improve livelihoods

- Products in the US
  - Coffee
  - Cocoa
  - Tea
  - Nuts
  - Fruits
Tell A LOT

100% GRASS FED

- Related to ruminants
- Diet
  - 100% forage
    - Pasture
    - Grass
    - Forage
    - Except milk prior to weaning
Tell A LOT

BIODYNAMIC

• Beyond organic
• Farm/farmer/consumer/earth friendly
• Required to set aside 10% of each farm’s acreage for biodiversity
• Entire farm certified – not only a crop
• Annual inspections
• Based on philosophy of Austrian Rudolf Steiner early 20th century
• Precursor of organic movement
Labels that are **Ethnic or Religious**

**Kosher**
- In accordance with Jewish law
- Involved with
  - Ingredients
  - Processing
  - Slaughter house inspection

**Halel**
- In accordance with Islamic law
- Concerned with
  - Food preparation
  - Food practice
  - Food processing
  - Food ingredients
Labels that are Misleading

NATURAL

• Misleading
• FDA does not regulate
• No criteria for any processed food as processed is not natural
• Concerns
  – 1/3 off all food sold since 2008 carries this label

• If looking for meaning
• No artificial color
• No artificial flavor
• No synthetic substances
Labels that are Misleading

Naturally Raised Meat

- Unregulated
- Implies
  - Grow without growth hormones
  - Antibiotics
  - not fed animals by-products
- Missing any requirements on animal welfare
Labels that are Misleading

**FRESH**

- Only regulated for poultry
- Internal temp never below 26 degrees F
- Not labeled frozen until 0 degrees F
- Now you know how all those fresh turkeys are available for Thanksgiving
Labels that Are Misleading

Free Range / Cage free

- Only on poultry for meat
- “access to outside for a significant amount of time”???
- No guidelines to define access or significant

- Raised without cages
- No standard or verification
- Provides an impression
- 98% US eggs from caged birds
  - 67 to 86 square “/bird – less than the size of a sheet of paper
  - Cage free may have less due to no standard
Labels that Are Misleading

DIET

• Low calorie but........
  – Indications are diet foods may increase weight as consumers consume more – “No Guilt”
  – Concerns about health aspects of artificial sweeteners
Labels that Are Misleading

**DOLPHIN SAFE**

- Partially certified
- National Marine Fishers Service verifies only Tuna caught in a specific part of the Pacific of the coast of California
- Caught elsewhere, can carry label but meaningless
  - change is happening, but slowly
- Standards are site specific to California Pacific fisheries
Labels that Are Misleading

**LOCAL / ARTISAN**

- No legal regulations
- Defined as “locality or region where final food product is marketed”
- Some places 400 miles
- Vermont – 30 miles of where sold
- Produced?? Or Processed??
- Does not mean
  - Small
  - Organic
  - Sustainable

- Who Knows????
- No regulations
- Implies hand made in small batches

**BE LOCAL**

**BUY LOCAL**

**PROUD TO SUPPORT LOCAL**
Labels that Are Misleading

**ANGUS CERTIFIED**

- Developed by BLACK Angus Association
- Criteria
  - 50% black Angus
  - Greater than 51% hide black
  - Under 30 months at slaughter
  - Same meat grading criteria as most choice or prime beef
  - NOTE – Red Angus not eligible
Labels that Are Misleading

COOL

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN LABEL

Required on

- Single ingredient products
  - Meat – beef, poultry, lamb, goat
  - Fish
  - Fresh/frozen produce
  - Peanuts
  - Pecans
  - Macadamia nuts
  - Ginseng

Loop holes

- Not required if processed
- Not required if combined with one or more other ingredients
Labels that Are Misleading

**DOCTOR RECOMMENDED / KID APPROVED**

**Doctor Recommended**
- Implies healthy
- No substance
- No regulations

**Kid Approved**
- Unregulated
- No meaning
Labels that Are Misleading

**MILK**

No Fat  | 1%  | 2%  | Whole | ½ & ½ | Heavy Cream

- 0% fat
- 1% fat
- 2% fat
- 3.2% fat
- 10-18% fat
- >36% fat
### Labels that Are Misleading

#### Sugar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sugar Free</th>
<th>Lightly Sweetened</th>
<th>No Added Sugar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Not necessarily fewer calories</td>
<td>• Unregulated</td>
<td>• <em>None</em> added in processing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• &gt; 0.5 mg /serving</td>
<td>• No standard</td>
<td>• <em>Maple</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Often contain sugar alcohols</td>
<td>• May be more sugar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– 2c/g vs 4c/g</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Mannitol</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Xylitol</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Sorbitol</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Often contain sugar alcohols:
  - Mannitol
  - Xylitol
  - Sorbitol
• Sweet Talk: FDA's 'Added Sugar' Label Hits Sour Note With Maple Syrup Makers

• "My first reaction when I heard about it was: 'Boy, great, right?'' he said. "Added sugar is going to have to be labeled, and maple syrup, obviously, there's no added sugar, so it's not going to have to have the labeling."

• Intent - 'no, added sugar' doesn't mean sugar added to food, it means sugar added to your diet in excess of what's nutritionally appropriate.

• https://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2018/06/06/615827531/maple-syrup-makers-dont-want-an-added-sugar-label
Labels that Are Misleading

Fiber

- To be labeled needs to be 10% of daily dose (25-30 g)
  - So < 2.5 g / serving
    - Not very much
- Does not indicate
  - Natural
  - Beneficial
  - Usable
  - 7 g fiber
  - 4 g sugar
  - 11% sodium
Labels that Are Misleading Fat

NO FAT
• No relationship to calories
• No fat and others 10 calorie difference

Low FAT
• Can make person eat more
  – Encourages 50% more consumption
    • Feel less guilty
  – Assume lower calories
  – Fat often replaced with sugar
    – Ie – Honey Grahams
      • Low fat
        – 130 c/serving
Labels that Are Misleading

Fat

- **0 TRANS FAT**
- Process that adds hydrogen to liquid vegetable oils to make them more solid
  - partially hydrogenated oils
  - Increase risk of heart attack
- Ingredients reduced to round to ZERO
  - 0.5% can round to 0
- Daily allowance 2g
  - 4 - “0 servings” = 2g
- Often replaced with saturated fats, sugars and salt
Labels that Are Misleading

**Whole Grain / Multigrain**

- **WHOLE GRAIN**
  - No minimum required
  - Only has to be some
  - May be down list
    - First ingredient whole wheat flour
    - 3rd oats
    - 5th sugar

- **MULTIGRAN**
  - More than one grain
  - Does not have to be whole
  - Implies healthy
    - 1st ingredient whole wheat
    - 11th multigrain blend after high fructose corn syrup
Labels that Are Misleading

Low Salt / Reduced Salt/Sea Salt

REDUCED SALT
• Recommendation – no more than 1500 mg and up to 2300 mg /day
• 140 mg/serving

LOW SALT
• 25% less than original

SEA SALT
• * Same as table salt
Labels that Are Misleading

Made with Real Fruit

- No requirements on minimum or type
- Does not have to correlate with picture
- Mostly fruit juice concentrate
- Think of as “no real fruit”
Labels that Are Misleading

**Cholesterol Free**

- Cholesterol only comes from animal products
- Not same as NO cholesterol
- Means >2 mg/serving

**Low Cholesterol**

- > 20 mg/serving

**Reduced Cholesterol**

- 25% less than original

**Lowers Cholesterol**

- Medical term - not allowed as it labels food as a medicine
Labels that Are Misleading

Gluten Free

• BUZZ word
• Not needed for everyone
  – Effects people with Celiac Disease
• Major sources of gluten
  – Wheat
  – Barley
  – Rye
  – Some oats
  – Malt
  – Brewers yeast
Labels that Are Misleading

No Added Nitrates

• Cured with ingredients that produce nitrates in final product
  – Celery powder

• Still cured

• Still need to pay attention to nitrate values
Labels that ARE Confusing

Sustainable

•JUST CONFUSING

As defined by Congress, sustainable agriculture is an integrated system of plant and animal production practices having a site-specific application that will, over the long term:

– Satisfy human food and fiber needs
– Enhance environmental quality and the natural resource base upon which the agricultural economy depends
– Make the most efficient use of nonrenewable resources and on-farm resources and integrate, where appropriate, natural biological cycles and controls
– Sustain the economic viability of farm operations
– Enhance the quality of life for farmers and society as a whole
So What do We Want in A Label?

Meaningful

Truthful

Verifiable

Transparent
Activity: Create a snack

• Select from the available ingredients and create a snack

• Make 2 labels for the snack you create:
  – One for an informed mother to share after a soccer game (using things we want to see in a label)
  – One to attract a teenager to purchase for a snack (using some of the misleading/only tell a little buzz words)

• Discuss which label will sell more product, why?

• Eat

• Enjoy
QUESTIONS??????

THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING