In 2013, several organizations—including the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service (USDA ARS), the Institute for the Advancement for Food and Nutrition Sciences (IAFNS), GS1 US®, 1WorldSync, NielsenIQ Label Insight, and the University of Maryland—formed a collaborative public-private partnership to deliver “A Partnership for Public Health: USDA Global Branded Food Products Database,” with the goal of strengthening public health and the open sharing of food composition data.

The USDA Global Branded Food Products Database enhances the existing USDA FoodData Central, which serves as a main source of food composition data for governments, the public health research community, the food industry and consumers. It also provides public access to nutrient composition and ingredient information on branded foods and store-brand foods provided voluntarily by the industry.

The composition of the food supply and consumer dietary choices are key inputs for agricultural and food policy decisions. Comprehensive data can inform these decisions, but the volume and fluidity of branded food products in the U.S. marketplace are key challenges. This database allows for real-time linkage of food intake and nutrient composition to dietary pattern recommendations. Dietary guidance software benefits from this resource. Brand owners can control the information that goes into the database and provide real-time updates through the GS1 Global Data Synchronization Network™ (GDSN®) or by leveraging NielsenIQ Label Insight to ensure product accuracy. In addition, food and beverage manufacturers can benefit from using the latest version to develop new product formulations and support overall industry goals to provide information transparency.

The USDA Global Branded Food Products Database includes the following information:

- Global Trade Item Number (GTIN) which is embedded in a U.P.C or EAN barcode.
- Brand and product description
- Nutrients, including those shown on the Nutrition Facts Panel
- Ingredients
- Serving size and Standardized Weights/Volumes
- Date stamp associated with current formulation
- Market Country

*Now an independent organization, IAFNS evolved from ILSI North America*
This public-private partnership was critical in bringing together the public and private sectors to realize a solution that could not be achieved by a single organization. Collaborations with USDA sister agencies include ERS Consumer Food Data Systems, USDA Foods for the National School Lunch Program, and FNS Child Nutrition Programs.

Today, government agencies around the world are looking at their transparency efforts, and there is complementary engagement across multiple fronts. Endorsed by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) INFOODS, the USDA Global Branded Food Products Database is currently expanding beyond foods consumed in the U.S.

How to Submit Your Product Information to the USDA Global Branded Food Products Database

Please consider publishing your branded and private label food and beverage products to the USDA via the GS1 GDSN or NielsenIQ Label Insight. This program is an important addition to transparency initiatives and programs.

Learn more or view the database at https://fdc.nal.usda.gov