



June 4, 2015

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.  
Ranking Minority Member  
House Committee on Energy and Commerce  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Wegmans Food Markets is a family-owned chain based in Rochester NY since 1916 with 86 stores in six states. We are pleased to offer insight on the FDA Menu Labeling regulations. Although known as a full service supermarket, we are often touted for our restaurant quality foods.

We believe that customers have a right to know what's in food products and consider provision of basic nutrition information a cost of doing business. In fact, Wegmans customers have long asked for nutrition information on our freshly prepared products. Up until 2001, as we expanded our offerings, we produced more and more printed charts and brochures containing info based on calculation (nutrition analysis software). However, with the growth of our in-store food preparation areas, it was impractical to keep various materials updated. In 2001 we added Nutrition Facts pages to [wegmans.com](http://wegmans.com) in the form of category-specific pdfs. Despite the fact that these are difficult for some consumers to find, having them on-line dramatically reduced the number of consumer calls to our corporate office. In 2008 we began placing calorie information on most products at point of sale. This usually is on the tag describing the item but often, such as in a package of sushi, is just below the product name on the scale label (sticker). If anything, having this information more readily available to consumers has increased their interaction with employees. We suspect that it changes purchasing behavior, though we don't have specific studies to share. We know that it is useful information for the product developers who, for example, now offer a smaller portion of sub sandwich allowing a lower calorie option to shoppers.

Today we have thousands of products offered in our stores that we believe are covered by the Menu Labeling regulations. That is, restaurant-style foods prepared and served in the store for immediate consumption. These include pizza, desserts, sushi, bagels and many, many other categories. Our goal is to be in compliance by September 2015, well before the current deadline as well as our busy holiday season.

Although we did not lobby for these regulations, we recognize advantages:

Having a national regulation prevents municipalities from creating a patchwork of different rules. Being in six states including several metropolitan areas, we are relieved to have one set of regulations, not multiple sets, to deal with.

In the past it has sometimes been difficult to get the information needed from our suppliers. Now that everyone must have this data, suppliers more readily provide complete nutrition information.

Having a national standard will result in development of support systems, such as scale-based information systems, that will more readily interface with nutrition analysis software and on-line product catalogs. Our greatest challenge is in simply managing all the detail behind each of these products. Better systems will help.

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Although we hope to be in compliance, we suspect that some aspects might not be in place by December 1<sup>st</sup>. It seems reasonable (in fact typical) for FDA to offer an extension or some kind of grace period. Wegmans has been ahead of the curve in providing this information. Others are in a different situation and could use the extension as well as better guidance documents (with practical examples), yet to be forthcoming, from FDA.

Respectfully,

Jane Andrews, MS, RDN  
Wegmans nutrition & labeling manager