

# Communicating Whole Grain Content to Shoppers: What Food Makers Need to Know

April 6, 2022

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# Housekeeping

- Attendees will receive an email within ONE WEEK with **CPEU certificate, slides, and recording**
- Visit [oldwayspt.org/CPEU](http://oldwayspt.org/CPEU) to register for upcoming webinars or view recordings of previous webinars
- Please submit any questions using the CHAT function in Zoom

Next Webinar: 4/14 at 2PM ET

Webinar

**From Policy to Plate**

The Role of Child Nutrition Programs in Filling Nutrition Gaps and Promoting Whole Grain Intake



April 14  
2:00 PM E.T.

OLDWAYS

OLDWAYS WHOLE GRAINS COUNCIL

# About Oldways

- **Our Vision**  
A healthier, happier life through cultural food traditions.
- **Our Mission**  
We inspire people to embrace the healthy, sustainable joys of the old ways of eating.
- **Best Known for**  
Creating the Mediterranean Diet Pyramid and other Heritage Diet Pyramids, Creating the Whole Grain Stamp, Culinary Travel



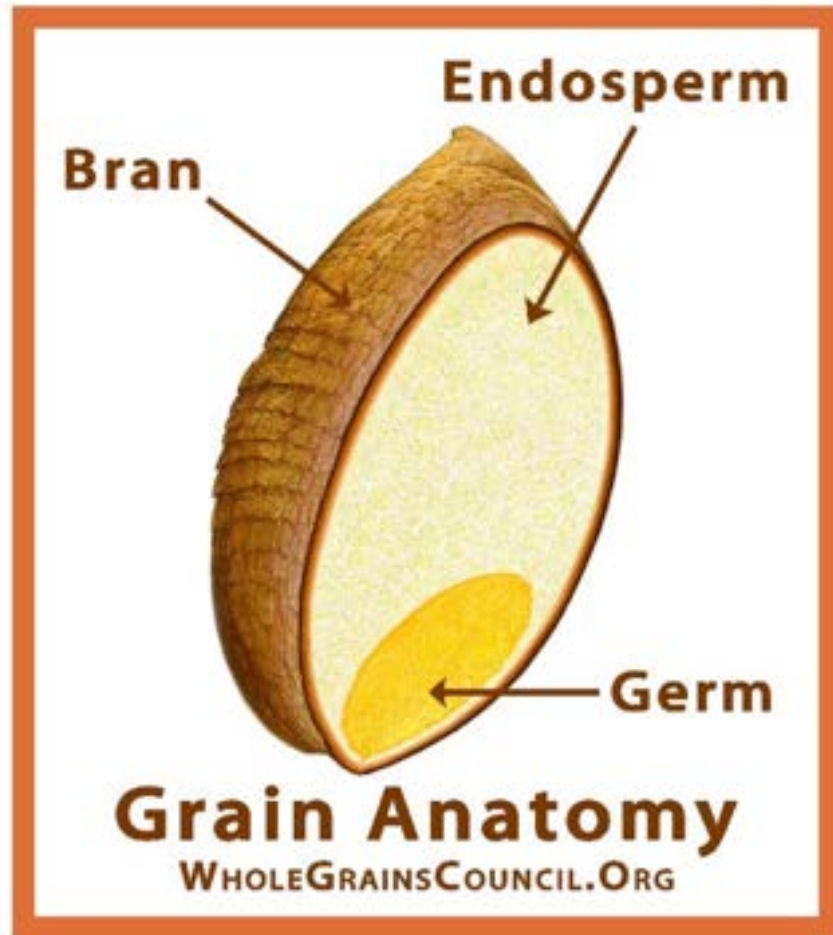
# About the Oldways Whole Grains Council

## Our three-part mission:

- To help consumers find whole grain foods and understand their health benefits
- To help manufacturers and restaurants create delicious whole grain foods
- To help the media write accurate and compelling stories about whole grains



# What is a whole grain?



## Germ

- **healthy fats**, protein, vitamin E

## Bran

- **fiber**, protein, B vitamins, most other vitamins, minerals

## Endosperm

- **mainly starch**, 70-75% of protein

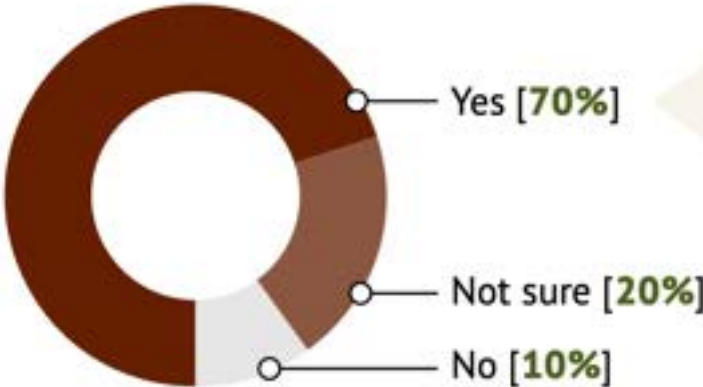
# Consumers Overwhelmingly Recognize Whole Grains as Healthy

- **Nearly 80%** of consumers perceive whole grains as healthful, more than all other food groups and nutrients listed except fiber (IFIC, 2020)
- **More than half** of consumers are trying to eat more whole grains (IFIC, 2021)
- Respondents found grains to have the **smallest negative impact on the environment** of all foods listed (IFIC, 2021)
- **62% of millennials** and **52% of baby boomers** report that the “perfect dish” that is healthy, tasty, and good for the planet would contain whole grains (Gervis, 2021)



# People Want to Know Whole Grain Content of Foods

Consumer interest in seeing whole grain content displayed on packaging



Health-conscious consumers and consumers who frequently read the Nutrition Facts Panel are even more likely to want the whole grain contents of foods to be included.



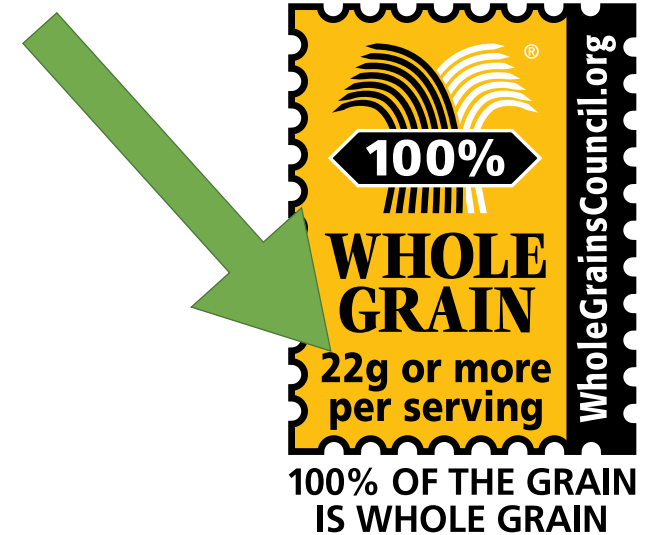
(WGC, 2021)



# About the Whole Grain Stamp



The different gram amount on each Stamp tells you how many grams of whole grain are in one serving of a product.



- ALL grain is whole grain
- Minimum of 16g whole grain per serving
- At least 50% of grain is whole grain
- Minimum of 8g whole grain per serving
- More refined grain than whole grain
- Minimum of 8g whole grain per serving



# No Lab Test Exists to Quantify Whole Grain Content

- WGA (wheat germ agglutinin) is a lectin in the germ tissue of wheat, and is an **unreliable indicator** of whole wheat content
  - Wheat flour could be sifted to remove the bran particles (and thus, most of the healthful fiber), and yet WGA levels would not indicate this refining step
  - WGA is only found in wheat – results can't be extrapolated to other grains
  - WGA content of different wheat varieties varies up to 24%, making it an unreliable marker
  - WGA content is degraded by temperature, making it unsuitable for products like pasta, and possibly industrial milled flour also

(Killilea, 2021)



# Complexity of Determining the Whole Grain Content of Products

- No quick lab test to quantify whole grain content
- Determining whole grain content requires:
  - expertise in what counts as a whole grain versus a refined grain (and what doesn't count as a grain at all), knowledge of FDA standards & definitions
  - product formulation information
  - nutritional profile of product
- There is significant confusion about what counts as a whole grain ingredient, even among manufacturers

# The Advantage of Whole Grain Certification

- Our team of whole grain experts individually reviews each and every product submitted for Whole Grain Stamp approval
  - Products are resubmitted for review every time there is a change in ingredients, formulation, nutrition facts, serving size, or UPC code.
- We routinely find and correct calculation errors during our review process.
- The expertise of a team like ours is vital to maintaining the integrity of whole grain claims, thereby maintaining consumer confidence



# How the Whole Grain Stamp Program Works

- Companies apply to become members of the Oldways Whole Grains Council by filling out an application, signing the Stamp agreement form and paying dues
  - Sliding scale based on revenue, from \$500/yr for small companies to \$15,000/yr for large companies
- Companies register individual products with us which we review to determine approval to use the Whole Grain Stamp
- Membership supports our educational outreach on whole grains, including writing email newsletters, blogs, recipes, articles, and much more!
  - To learn more, contact [aclement@oldwayspt.org](mailto:aclement@oldwayspt.org)

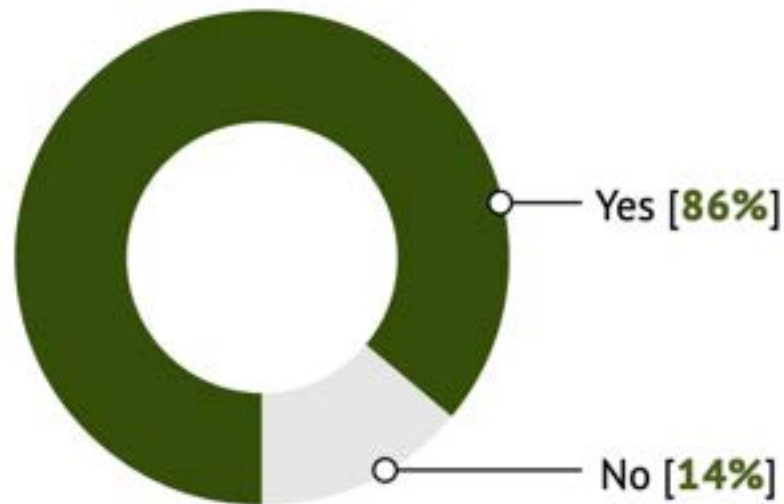


# Why Food Companies Value WG Certification



# Consumers Overwhelmingly Trust the Stamp

Percentage of consumers who trust the Whole Grain Stamp to accurately state whole grain content



Over the past six years, trust in the Stamp has steadily increased.

2015: **82%**

2018: **83%**

2021: **86%**

- Gen Z and Millennials are more likely [**89%**] to trust the Whole Grain Stamp than Gen X, Boomers, and the Silent Generation [**84%**].
- **91%** of parents with young children (age 0–12) say they trust the Stamp!

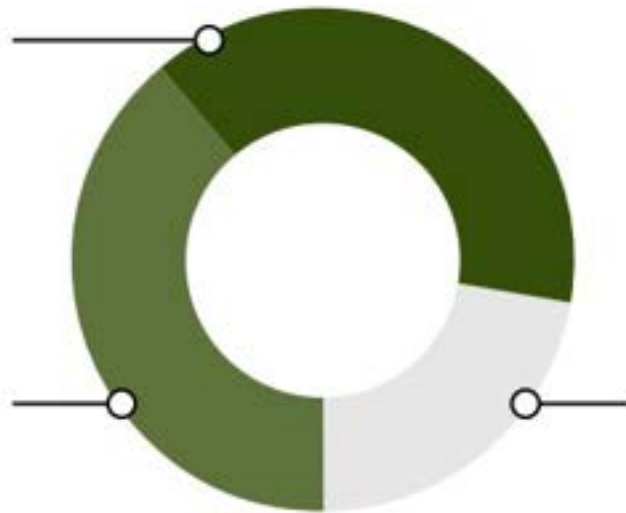
(WGC, 2021)

# The Whole Grain Stamp Helps Drive Sales of Whole Grain Products

## Consumer likeliness to purchase a product with the Whole Grain Stamp

Yes, seeing the Whole Grain Stamp would make me more likely to buy a product [39%]

Yes, but I would also consider other factors (sugar, sodium, etc.) [39%]



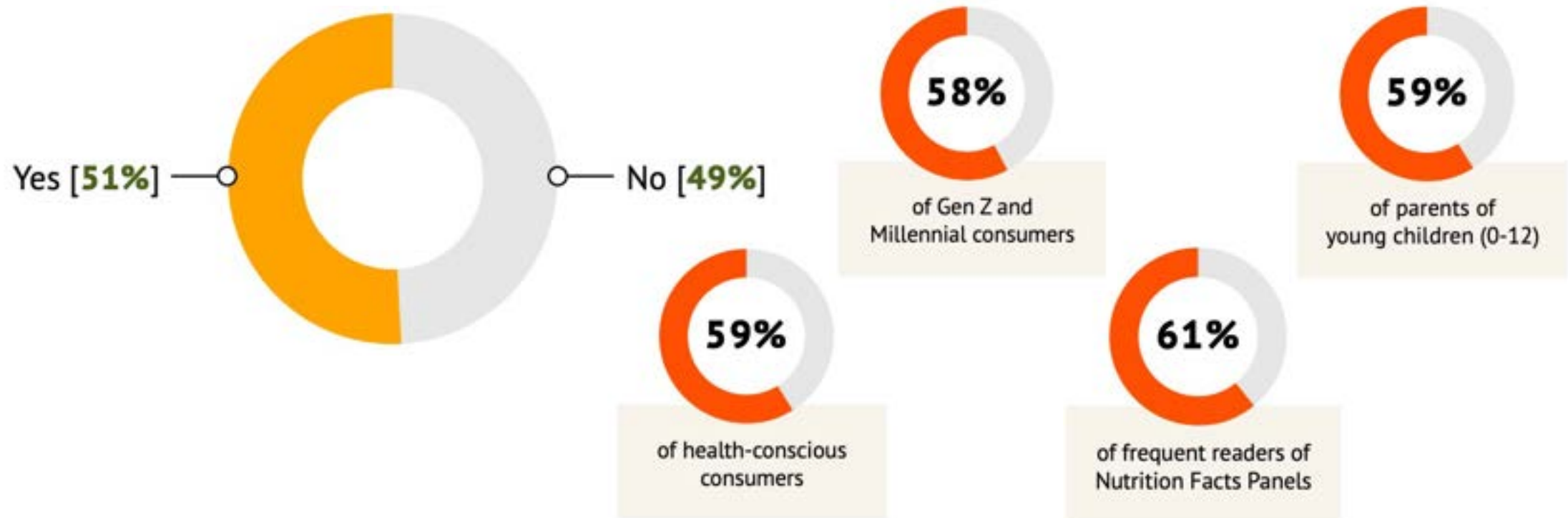
No, seeing the Whole Grain Stamp would not sway my purchasing decision [22%]

(WGC, 2021)



# Consumers Are Skeptical of Claims Made by Manufacturers *Without Certification*

Percentage of consumers who would question whole grain claims on products without the Stamp



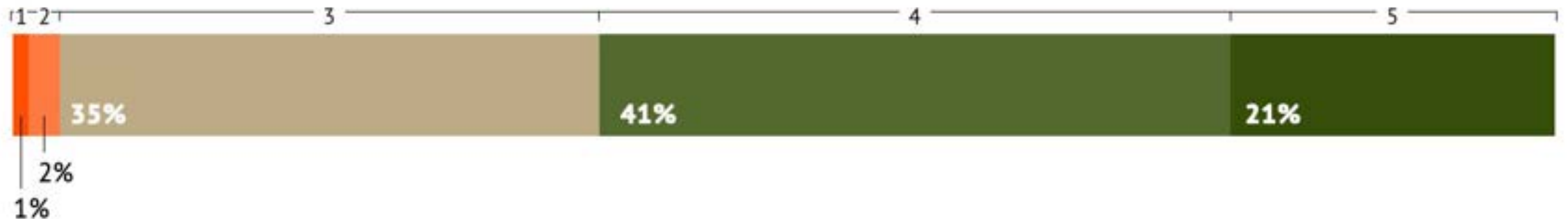
(WGC, 2021)





# Third-Party Certification, like the Whole Grain Stamp, Boosts Confidence

**Consumer confidence in products with independent, third-party food packaging symbols  
Ranked on a scale of 1 (Much less confidence) to 5 (Much more confidence)**



Two-thirds of consumers say third-party packaging symbols give them more confidence in the products they are buying.

(WGC, 2021)



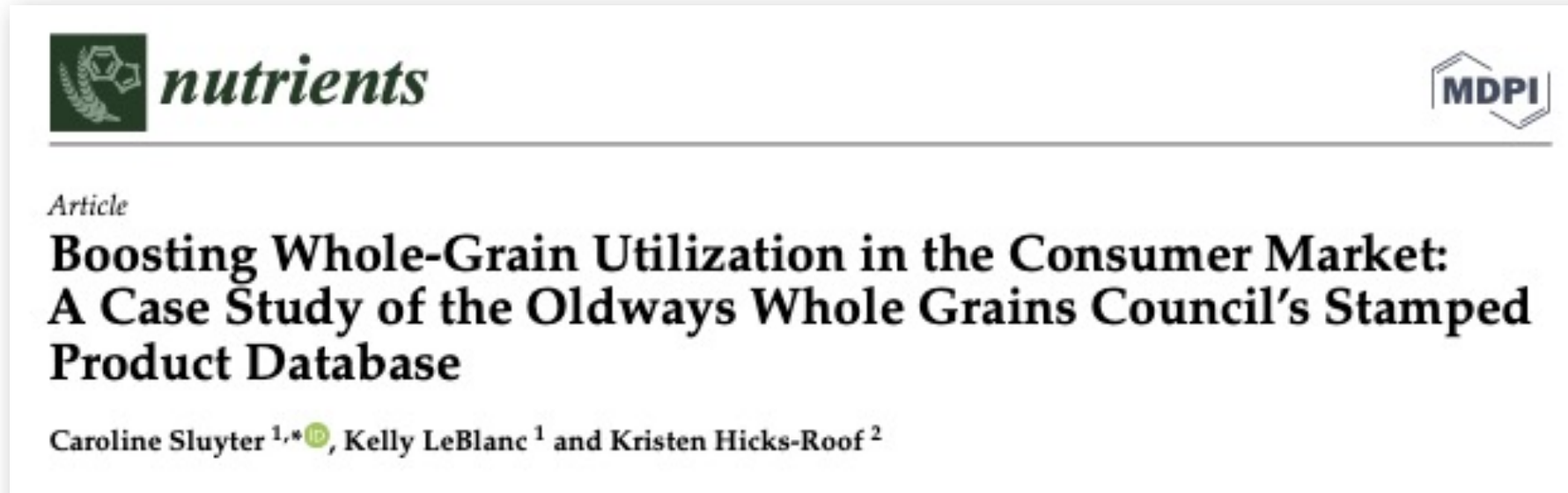
# Ingredient-Specific Labels Are Most Helpful to Consumers

- Consumers report that ingredient-specific labels that identify ingredients that are included or excluded are seen as the **most helpful packaging labels on foods** (IFIC, 2021)



# New Study

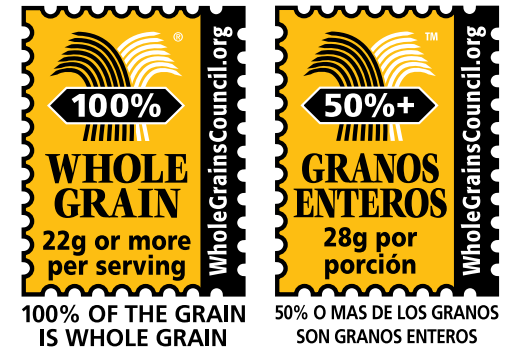
# Why Did We Publish A New Study?



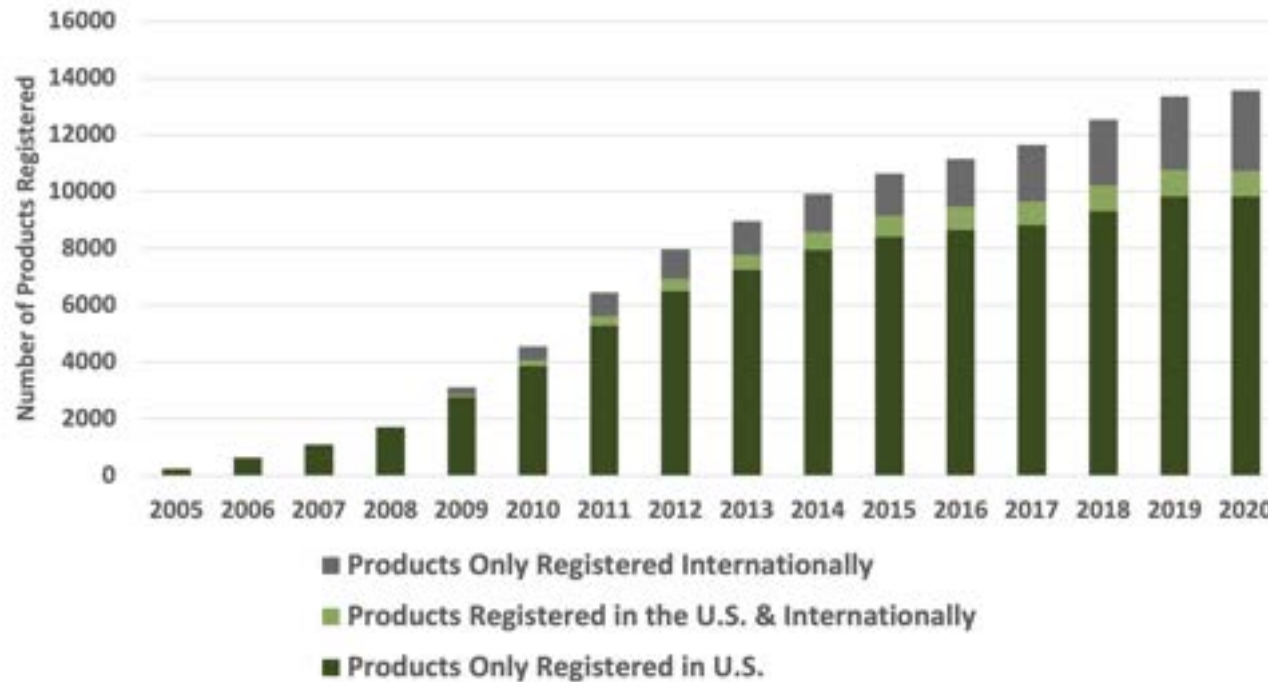
- “Nutrition programs and policies endorsing whole-grain consumption can only be successful if whole-grain products are readily available in the consumer marketplace.” (Sluyter, 2022)

# Study Findings

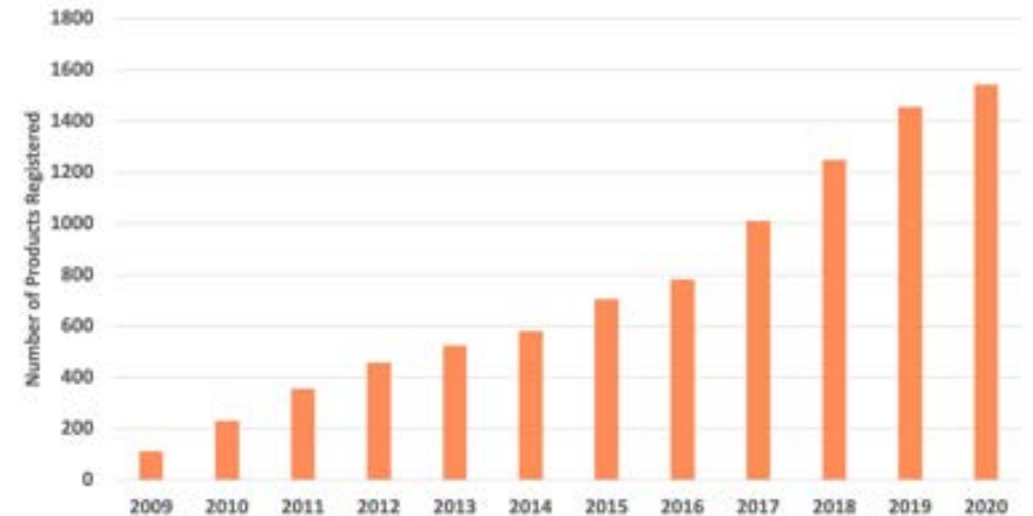
**#1:** Whole Grain Stamp use continues to grow.



Whole Grain Stamp use in the US and internationally



Whole Grain Stamp use in Latin America



# Study Findings

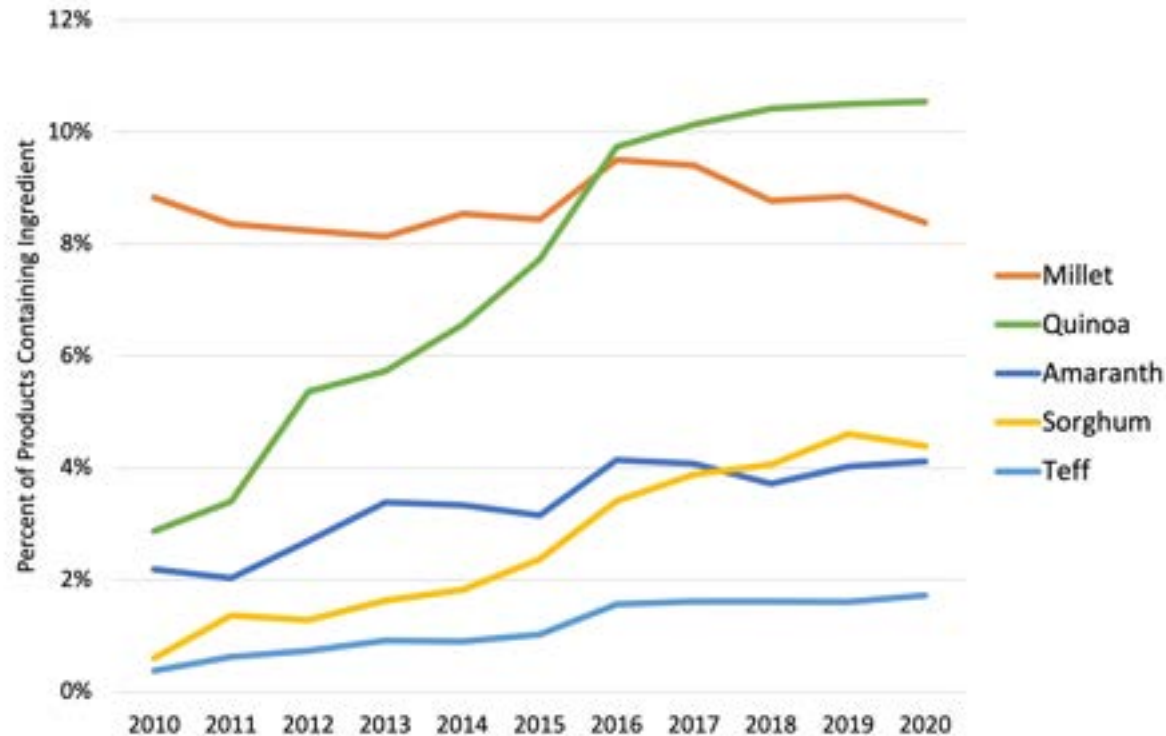
**#2:** “**Cold cereals**”, “**bread**s”, and “**snacks & crackers**” are the most common Whole Grain Stamped product categories.

Whole grains are underutilized in “**baking mixes**”, “**pizza & pizza crusts**”, and “**waffles, pancakes & French toast**”.

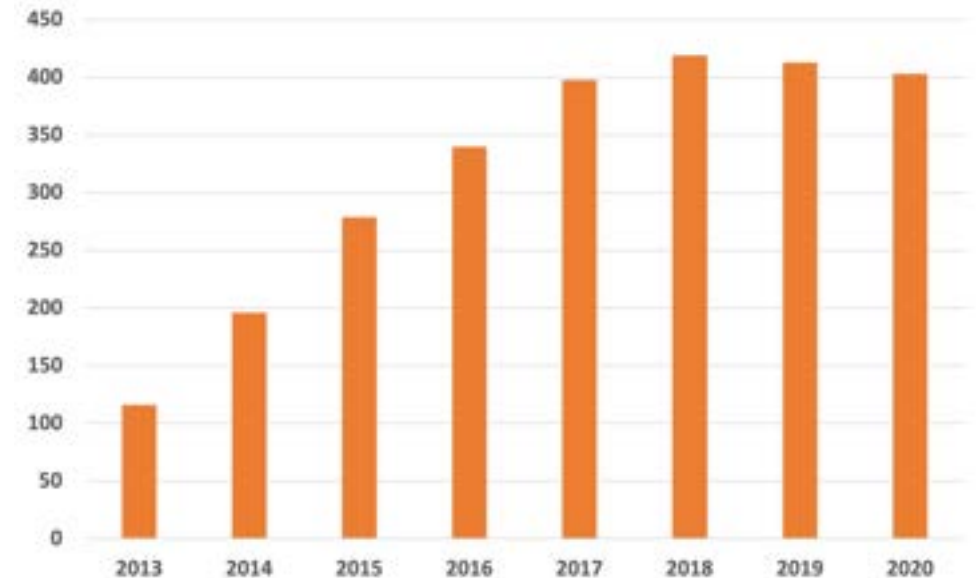
# Study Findings

## #3: Use of ancient grains and sprouted grains has increased.

Prevalence of ancient grain ingredients in products



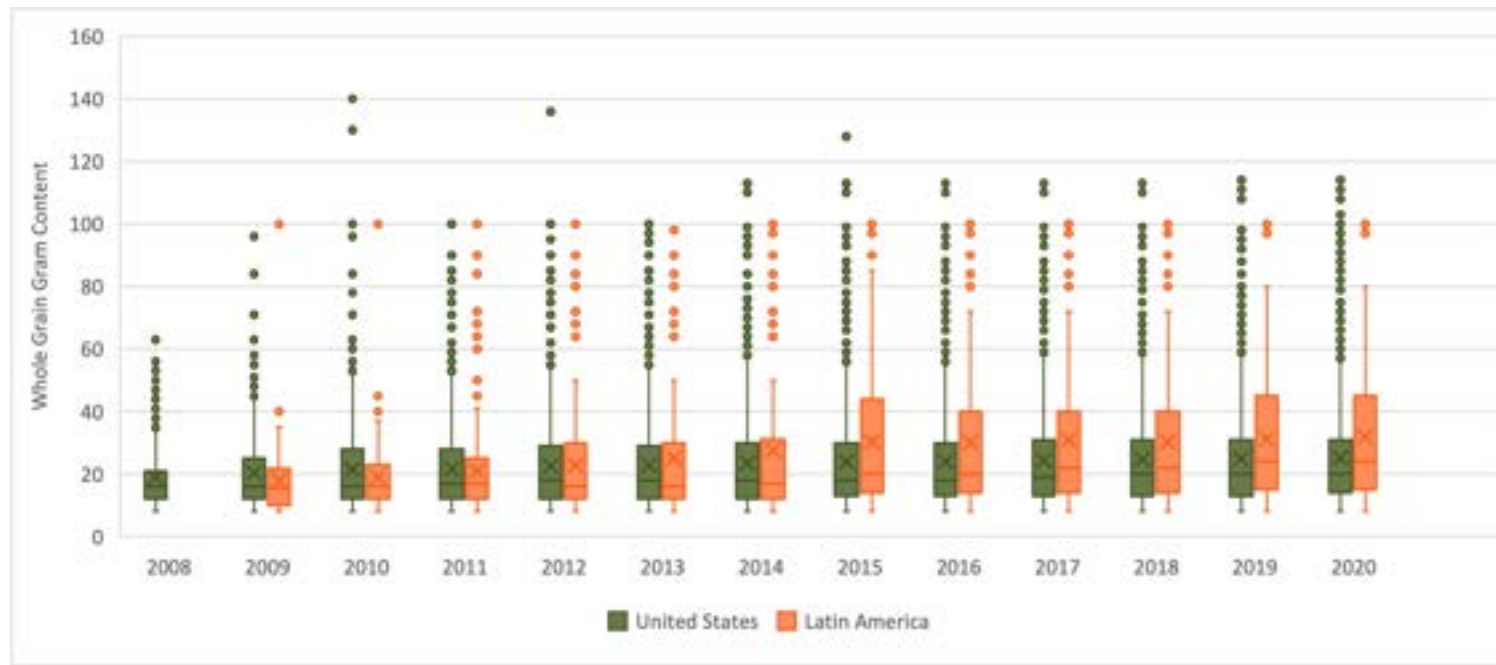
Prevalence of sprouted grain ingredients in products



# Study Findings

**#4:** The whole grain content of products is increasing.

Whole-grain gram content of Whole Grain Stamped products



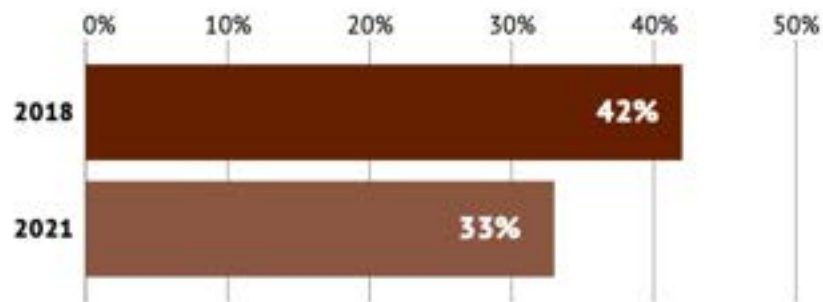


# Findings from WG Consumer Insights Survey

- Those who seek out whole grains are also:
  - Much more likely to avoid added sugars
  - More likely to seek out “healthy foods”
  - More likely to try foods and ingredients that are new to them
  - More likely to buy organic foods
  - More likely to shop with the environment and sustainability in mind
  - More likely to say that the taste and flavor of the product is a major factor in their purchasing decision.

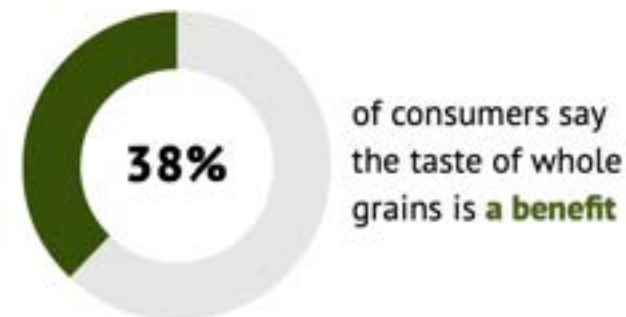
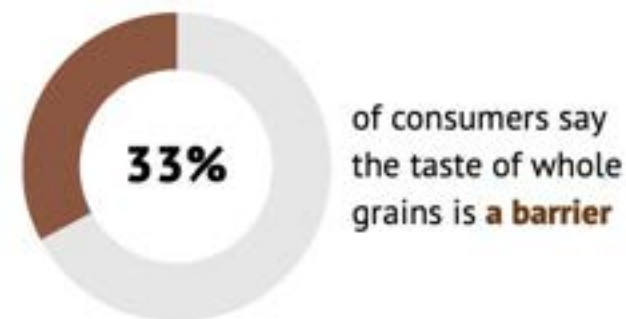
# People Consider the Flavor of WGs to Be a Benefit More Than a Barrier

Percentage of consumers who cite taste as a barrier to higher whole grain consumption



Of those who say they nearly always choose whole grains (Q6), **45%** see taste as a benefit and only **18%** see it as a barrier, suggesting that the more exposure you have to whole grains, the more you come to appreciate the nuttier, more robust flavors.

In 2021,



# Regulatory Differences in Whole Grain Labeling

# Using the Stamp to Comply with Local Guidance: Brazil

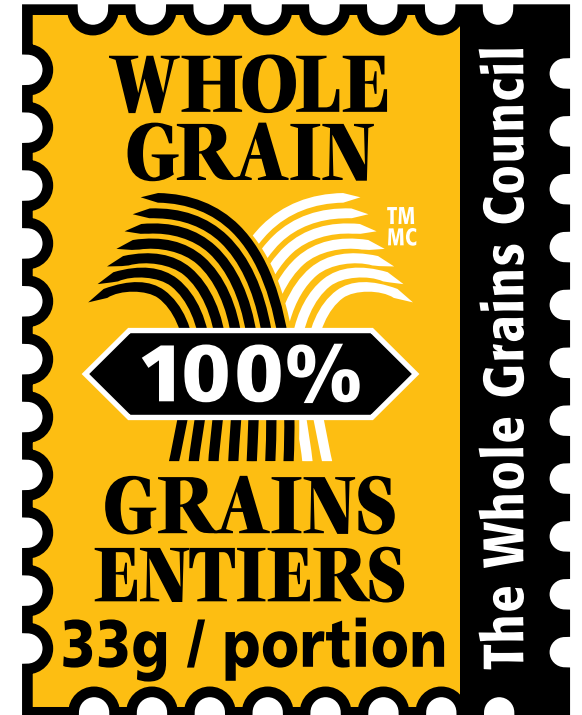
There are three guidelines specific to Brazilian whole grain labeling regulations that must be followed when using the Whole Grain Stamp on products sold in Brazil:

- The product's whole grain ingredients must make up at least 30% of the final product weight.
- The product must contain more whole grain than refined grain.
- The % of the product that is whole grain must be stated on the package close to the Whole Grain Stamp.



# Using the Stamp to Comply with Local Guidance: Canada

- In Canada, Stamp qualification is based on the % of the **product** that is whole grain (by weight), rather than the % of the **grain** that is whole grain.
- The Canadian Stamp uses the same colors and key graphics as the US Stamp, in bilingual form.



# Including Whole Grains in Nutrient Profiling Systems and Front-of-Pack Labeling

# What Are Nutrient Profiling Systems?

Each serving (150g) contains

| Energy            | Fat         | Saturates   | Sugars      | Salt        |
|-------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1046kJ<br>250kcal | 3.0g<br>LOW | 1.3g<br>LOW | 34g<br>HIGH | 0.9g<br>MED |
| 13%               | 4%          | 7%          | 38%         | 15%         |

of an adult's reference intake

Typical values (as sold) per 100g: 697kJ/ 167kcal



# The Nordic Keyhole Symbol

- Was introduced in Sweden in 1989
- Originally included fiber in its criteria, but not whole grains
- Whole grains were added as criteria in 2009



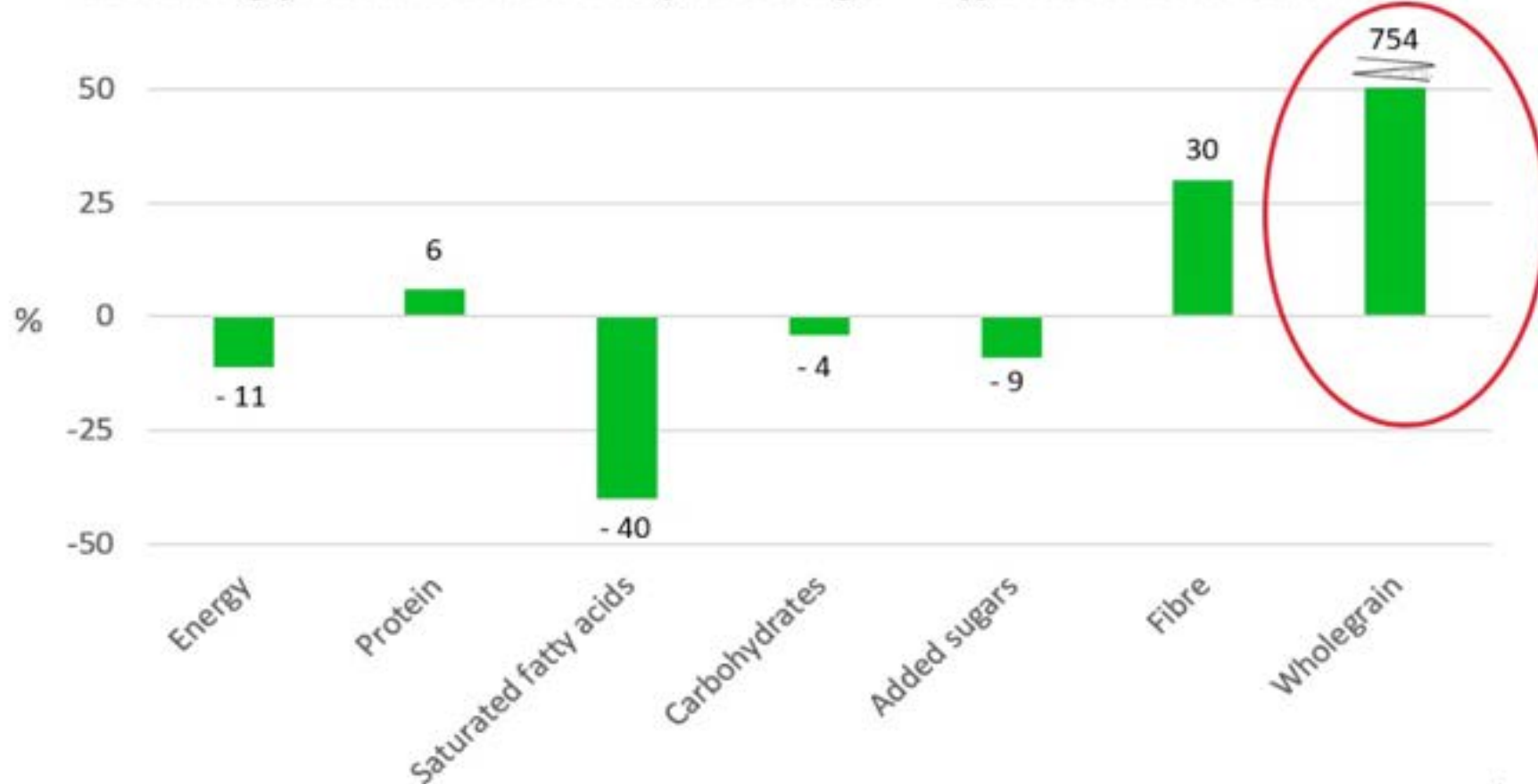
## *Current Criteria for the Keyhole:*

- Less and healthier fat
- Less sugar
- Less salt
- More dietary fiber
- **More whole grain**
- More fruits and vegetables



# Impact of the Keyhole on Nutrient Intake

Choosing foods with the Keyhole logo – effect on nutrient intake



Reference : Byta till Nyckelhålet – så påverkar det näringsintaget.  
(Choosing foods with the Keyhole logo– effect on nutrient intake)  
Swedish Food Agency 2015

# The Example of Nutri-Score



- Currently supported by 7 European countries
- Implemented by several food manufacturers
- Well-understood by consumers
- Potential for EU-wide adoption



- Unfortunately, whole grain content is not recognized by Nutri-Score
- Huge potential for consumer confusion about WG products & lack of incentive for manufacturers to use WG

# Suggested Modifications to Nutri-Score

## Whole grain scoring



DEFINITION OF A WHOLE-GRAIN FOOD

| Score               | 0   | 1  | 2 | 3  | 4 | 5   |
|---------------------|-----|----|---|----|---|-----|
| WG%<br>(dry weight) | <25 | 25 |   | 50 |   | 100 |

→ Modification leads to higher associations with dietary guidelines

(Kissock, 2022)



# Where Things Stand Now

## Do Not Currently Include WGs



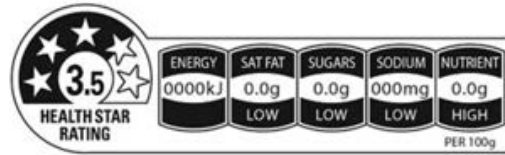
Nutri-Score – France, considered for EU-wide adoption



Stop Sign Symbols – Mexico, Argentina, & Chile



Heart Symbol - Finland



Health Star Rating - Australia

Each serving (150g) contains

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Traffic Light Symbol - UK

## Include WGs



Nordic Keyhole Symbol – Requires 30% min WG for breads, 55% min WG for cereals, etc.



Healthier Choice Malaysia – Requires 25% min WG



Healthier Choice Singapore – Requires 25% min WG



# Summary

- Unlike nutrient claims (such as low fat), whole grain claims cannot be externally verified through lab testing – determining whole grain content is complex and requires expertise and knowledge
- The strength of the Whole Grain Stamp program derives from its robust review and certification process
- The whole grain content of products is increasing, and manufacturers are using more ancient and sprouted grains, but there are still opportunities for innovation in categories where whole grains are underutilized
- Whole grain shoppers are more health-conscious, more concerned about sustainability, and more likely to value flavor – which makes sense since whole grain products are increasingly chosen for their great taste
- FOP labeling can be a great tool for encouraging whole grain intake among consumers – we just have to make sure WGs get included!



# References

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Questions?