Classification of High Fat, Sugar, and Salt
Food and Drink Advertisements: Methodology

October 2018 – January 2024

Data Wave 1: 2016 – 2017

Summary

TRP Research carried out a process of identifying and classifying all food and soft drink ads aired on any channel from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2017. All ad spots in this period were identified, and non-food/drink advertisements were excluded by category and/or advertiser. The resultant list of food/drink spots were classed as potential HFSS advertising.

Where possible, the BARB advertiser and brand information was used to identify the product advertised. Where this was not possible, video logs were checked to verify both on-screen and audio product identification.

Using the list of identified products, the nutrient values for each was determined. Where it was available, Nielsen Brandbank nutritional data was used. Where it was not, the nutritional data was gathered from the advertiser's website. If no such data was available, a similar product was identified in McCance and Widdowson's The Composition of Food to produce an indicative nutritional composition.

Nutritional data was used to calculate Nutrient Profiling Model scores. Where an ad promoted multiple products, the highest scoring product was used to score the entire ad creative. Using the regulatory thresholds of 1 for drinks and 4 for foods, classifications of 'HFSS' or 'Non-HFSS' were applied. A third category of 'other' was used to identify advertisements where no product could be identified for scoring purposes.

Classification was further split, with '(NC)' added to any ad creatives that did not have a Clearcast code and that were not outside the scope of the Clearcast data provided, such as those ads that first aired before 1 January 2016 and those that only appeared on self-cleared channels.

Identification of Food and Drink Promoting Spots

BARB Spot Data for all channels was extracted from TechEdge's AdvantEdge system for the date range 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2017. This produced a master list of all ad creatives aired during the period.

BARB Film Codes were matched to the Clearcast output supplied by BCAP using the film code. Removing the '/' from the Clearcast Clock Number provides an exact match to BARB film code.

Advertiser	Brand (TVEye)	Film Code	Clearcast Clock Number	Clearcast advertiser	Clearcast Code
LACTALIS UK	MCLELLAND SERIOUSLY STRONG CHEDDAR	AEDLASS004020	AED/LASS004/020	MCLELLAND SERIOUSLY STRONG CHEDDAR	FH
LACTALIS UK	MCLELLAND SERIOUSLY STRONG CHEDDAR	AEDLASS005010	AED/LASS005/010	MCLELLAND SERIOUSLY STRONG CHEDDAR	FH
BIRDS EYE	BIRDS EYE FROZEN PEAS	GRYBEWL001030	GRY/BEWL001/030	BIRDS EYE FROZEN PEAS	FL
BIRDS EYE	BIRDS EYE FROZEN PEAS	GRYBEWL007090	GRY/BEWL007/090	BIRDS EYE FROZEN PEAS	FL
GROCERY DELIVERY E S	HELLOFRESH.CO.UK	HLFHFJO002030	HLF/HFJO002/030	HELLOFRESH.CO.UK	FH
H J HEINZ COMPANY	HEINZ BAKED BEANS	HOGHZBE083030	HOG/HZBE083/030	HEINZ BAKED BEANS	FL

Any film code that had a Clearcast FH/FL coding were automatically included in our master list. Spots that were not matched to Clearcast codes were reviewed to determine whether they should be considered as potential food or soft drink advertisements. To ensure a thorough master list of spots, spots were only excluded where there was certainty that no food or soft drink products would be advertised.

In order to do this, BARB categories were reviewed. Within each category, the Advertiser and Brand (BARB and TVEye) were checked to ensure that miscategorised spots could be reviewed for possible food content.

Channel	Date	Start time	End time	Dur sec	Film Code	Advertiser	Brand (TVEye)	Brand (BARB)	Major category	Mid category	Minor category
PRIME TV	14/02/2016	23:24:04	23:24:33	30	AMVMCGX835030	MARS UK	MARS GALAXY	MARS GALAXY	RETAIL	HOUSEHOLD	DIY STORES
PRIME TV	14/02/2016	22:34:00	22:34:29	30	AMVMCGX835030	MARS UK	MARS GALAXY	MARS GALAXY	RETAIL	HOUSEHOLD	DIY STORES
HOME	11/02/2016	24:09:50	24:10:19	30	AMVMCGX835030	MARS UK	MARS GALAXY	MARS GALAXY	RETAIL	HOUSEHOLD	DIY STORES
FILM4	11/02/2016	23:24:01	23:24:30	30	AMVMCGX835030	MARS UK	MARS GALAXY	MARS GALAXY	RETAIL	HOUSEHOLD	DIY STORES
HOME	11/02/2016	21:49:37	21:50:06	30	AMVMCGX835030	MARS UK	MARS GALAXY	MARS GALAXY	RETAIL	HOUSEHOLD	DIY STORES
EDEN	11/02/2016	12:15:17	12:15:46	30	AMVMCGX835030	MARS UK	MARS GALAXY	MARS GALAXY	RETAIL	HOUSEHOLD	DIY STORES
HOME	11/02/2016	11:51:13	11:51:42	30	AMVMCGX835030	MARS UK	MARS GALAXY	MARS GALAXY	RETAIL	HOUSEHOLD	DIY STORES
BRIT ASIA	14/02/2016	18:39:51	18:40:20	30	AMVMCGX835030	MARS UK	MARS GALAXY	MARS GALAXY	RETAIL	HOUSEHOLD	DIY STORES
VENUS TV	20/02/2016	24:56:10	24:56:39	30	AMVMCGX835030	MARS UK	MARS GALAXY	MARS GALAXY	RETAIL	HOUSEHOLD	DIY STORES
VENUS TV	20/02/2016	22:57:30	22:57:59	30	AMVMCGX835030	MARS UK	MARS GALAXY	MARS GALAXY	RETAIL	HOUSEHOLD	DIY STORES
EDEN+1	18/02/2016	23:27:03	23:27:32	30	AMVMCGX835030	MARS UK	MARS GALAXY	MARS GALAXY	RETAIL	HOUSEHOLD	DIY STORES

Example: Mars Galaxy ads were found under Retail: Household: DIY Stores

At this stage, a policy of inclusion was followed. If an advertiser might sell food, the spot was included. Only if category and advertiser/brand were both not food/drink related would a spot be removed from the list.

The initial spot list included food, drink, and restaurant advertisers, as well as theme parks, gyms, cinemas, certain branded appliances (such as Tassimo and Nespresso coffee pod machines), and food-related toys.

Product Identification

Product identification was handled in two stages. First, BARB advertiser and Brand data were reviewed to find spots with clearly identified products. Where a product was not identifiable from the BARB data, the spot was added to a list for review.

Using the film codes, each ad creative that required review was matched back to a transmission for which a recording was available. Where multiple recordings were available, by default the latest transmission was reviewed. TRP's coding reviewers watched the creative, recording primary product(s) advertised, as well as any background products visible in the ad.

Film Code	Clearcast code	Example Channel	Recent Date	Example start	PRIMARY Product advertised 1	PRIMARY Product advertised 2	PRIMARY Product advertised 3	PRIMARY Product advertised 4	Background Product advertised 5	Back ground Product advertised 6	Back ground Product advertised 7	Back ground Product advertised 8	Advertiser (BARB)	Major category	Mid category	Minor category
MIFMORR327010	FH	ITV	30/09/2017	12:02:29	PRICE CRUNCH - VARIOUS FOODS	READY BREAK	HOVIS BREAD	WARBURTONS ROLLS	DAIRYLEA DUNKERS	YOGHURTS			WILLIAM MORRISON SUP	FOOD	BAKERY	CAKES & TREATS
MEZCOSC703030	FH	ITV	28/10/2016	16:12:07	MCVITIES CARAMEL DIGESTIVE TEACAKES	MCVITIES CHOCOLATE HOBNOBS TEACAKES	MCVITITES DIGESTIVE NIBBLES	OREOS VARIETIES					COSTCUTTER SUPERMARK	FOOD	FOOD BRAND BUILDING	FOOD - MULTI PRODUCT
WPPHHUK063020	-	E4	24/06/2017	12:09:16	VARIOUS TAKE AWAY MEALS				ALCOHOL	ONION RINGS	CHICKEN WINGS	FRIES	HUNGRYHOUSE.COM	ENTERTAINMENT & LEISURE	LEISURE ACTIVITIES	RESTRS/CAFES/BISTROS
AMVSYGG310020	FH	SKY 1	24/12/2016	07:12:03	SAINSBURYS CHRISTMAS				mince pies	ham	jelly	champagne	SAINSBURYS SUPERMARK	FOOD	FOOD BRAND BUILDING	FOOD & DRINK - MULTI PRODUCT
KARICEL151010	FL	SKY 1	05/11/2017	19:59:03	ICELAND SLIMMING WORLD	ICELAND 6 PACK WHITE RICE STEAM BAGS			curry shown but not specificall mentioned				ICELAND FROZEN FOODS	FOOD	FROZEN FOOD	FROZEN READY MEALS

If no product was visible in the ad, the advertiser's brand was recorded, such as 'MCDONALDS – BRAND' with a note about the creative and any campaign it may be linked to. If a particular sub-brand was being advertised (i.e., 'MCDONALDS – MCCAFE BRAND' vs 'MCDONALDS – HAPPY MEAL BRAND') this was recorded to allow for potential nutrient differences between sub-brands of a single advertiser.

Where reviewers found that the spot was not shown in the slot, a different recorded transmission was checked and the same coding process followed.

Reviewers also noted where an ad creative showed a large number of products, such as supermarket basket comparison ads. Any prominent products were recorded, with a list of other visible products. In some cases, it was not possible to identify all products in a basket. In these cases, visible products were selected in order to provide a range of NPM scores. If any presumed HFSS product was visible (i.e., confectionary, ice cream, biscuits), this has been recorded.

Supermarket 'comparison shop' and other 'brand building' ads where no products or product ranges are highlighted and any products in the ad are in the background were identified as Brand ads.

Example: Tesco Clubcard promotion does not promote a particular product but food is visible throughout.

Where a product range is particularly extensive, it was confirmed whether the whole range or a subset of that range was advertised. If it was not possible to identify what part of a range is advertised, the full range was NPM scored to get an inclusive view of the HFSS categorisation for the range. In most cases, it was found that all products within a range fell into the same classification.

Advertisements for fresh fruit, fresh vegetables, and unprepared meats were recorded without any brand identification, unless expressly given in the ad creative.

Ad creatives that only advertised alcohol products, including supermarket alcohol offers, were marked for exclusion from the final data set. For ad creatives that included both food/soft drinks and an alcoholic beverage as primary advertised products, both products have been recorded. NPM scoring has been applied to the food and soft drink products, with additional notation regarding the inclusion of alcohol in the creative.

Example: Asda Mother's Day ad (Prosecco and Lindt Lindor chocolates)

Where ad creatives are predominantly for food but feature background alcohol, the coding and NPM scoring for the food has been used.

Ads for food-related appliances such as Tassimo and Nespresso were included in the final data set if the ad creative was selling both the machines and the associated food products. Where only the machine was on offer, the ad creative was excluded. Where a particular sub-brand was being promoted, this sub-range has been used for the HFSS classification. Where the ad serves

to promote the full range of available products, the full range has been used for the classification, deferring to the highest score for classification.

Example: Bosch Tassimo coffee maker; John Adams Sprinkle Stix toy

Other food-related products, such as ActiFry appliances and Sprinkle Stix toys, were excluded at this stage. Although they required and/or produced foods, the products advertised were not also advertising a particular brand of food.

Nutrient Profile Model Scoring

With the product list derived in the previous stage, advertised products were matched to Nielsen Brandbank data, where available. Brandbank contained nutritional information for the majority of branded products, but did not have many supermarket own-brand products. For these products, where available, nutritional data was taken from the supermarket's own website.

For restaurants, nutritional data was gathered from the restaurants' websites. If nutritional data was available per 100g, NPM scoring was carried out. Where nutritional data was only supplied by serving, the ad creative has been referred to BCAP for review.

Using this nutritional data, Nutrient Profile Model scores were derived. Where multiple varieties of a product were available or a full range was advertised, at least two varieties were selected for scoring. If scoring within a range produced a mix of HFSS and non-HFSS scores and it was confirmed that both HFSS and non-HFSS products were advertised, the ad creative was classed as HFSS.

Calculation notes

For Fibre calculations, Brandbank data has been assumed to be AOAC Fibre, following the guidance provided in 'The 2018 review of the UK nutrient profiling model'.[1]

For fresh fruit, fresh vegetables and unprepared meats, nutrient data can be derived from the McCance and Widdowson's Composition of Foods Integrated Dataset (CoFID), as published by Public Health England,[2] and as referenced in the 2011 Nutrient Profiling Technical Guidance. The nearest record to the product coded by reviewers has been used, with the Food Code noted as a reference.

For products where Brandbank data lacked a sodium value, the calculation of (Salt (g) x 400) was used to derive the Sodium (mg) value. Similarly, where energy in kJ was not provided, the calculation of (Energy (kcal) x 4.184) was used to derive the Energy (kJ) value.

It was found that where Sodium was provided by Brandbank, this was predominantly in g. This was converted to mg for calculation. A check was performed to find any values to find products where Brandbank's Sodium data was provided in mg (as was the case with Coca-Cola products).

Where possible, differences between 'as sold' and 'as prepared' nutritional values have been identified. The Nutrient Profiling Technical Guidance (2011) was followed for products requiring reconstitution. This states that products requiring reconstitution before consumption should be calculated using 'as prepared' values. All other products should be calculated using 'as sold' values. Where the only one type of nutritional data available, this has been used as a default.

Where nutritional values were only available per 100 ml, a density value has been determined using similar products on Aqua Calc (https://www.aqua-calc.com). The density value has been included in NPM calculation sheets for reference.

---

[1]
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6941
45/Annex__A_the_2018_review_of_the_UK_nutrient_profiling_model.pdf, page 91
[2] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/composition-of-foods-integrated-dataset-cofid

For all products, a calculation was run to see if Fruit, Vegetable, and Nut (FVN) points would potentially change the classification (either through these points or, where the A score was 11 or above, where the FVN score would also allow for the inclusion of Protein points in the C score). For these products, percentages provided in ingredients lists were used to determine the FVN score.

Example: Graze.com snack boxes benefitted from FVN scoring, as varieties include high percentages for dried fruit and nuts

Brandbank product categories were not sufficient for determining food vs drink classification. For application of the NPM score threshold of drinks, anything in the Brandbank 'Drinks' category was classed as a drink. Additional categories were identified for other products that should be classed as drinks under the NPM scoring guidance (including a differentiation of yogurt drinks and drinking yogurts).

Included products fell into: Dairy & Bread: Milk & Cream; Dairy & Bread: Yoghurts; Baby: Baby Milks & Juices; Grocery: Hot Beverages; and Off Licence: Spirits & Liqueurs.[3]

## Classification and Quality Checking

With scores calculated, ad creatives were classified as either HFSS or non-HFSS. Initial classification also included a separate 'brand' category where no particular product was advertised. Where there was sufficient product nutritional information to produce an NPM score, the ad creative was referred to BCAP for review. The suggested classification for these ads was HFSS by default, following the same guidelines currently used by Clearcast.

For most products, it was found that the TRP classification was in line with Clearcast. For ad creatives cleared as FL, an additional check was run to confirm that the identified product is in keeping with this score. For advertisers and brands with a range of HFSS and non-HFSS

---

[3] As clarification, the latter category included an incorrectly classified variety of Barr's Irn-Bru; as per the project specifications, no alcohol products have been included in the NPM scoring or HFSS classification.

products, a check was run to confirm whether a non-HFSS product was advertised for the FL-coded creatives.

In cases where TRP classification disagreed with Clearcast's FL coding, the spot was highlighted to BCAP for review. These included ad creatives for Heinz ketchup, Philadelphia cream cheese, John West No-Drain Infusions, and Frijj chocolate milkshakes.
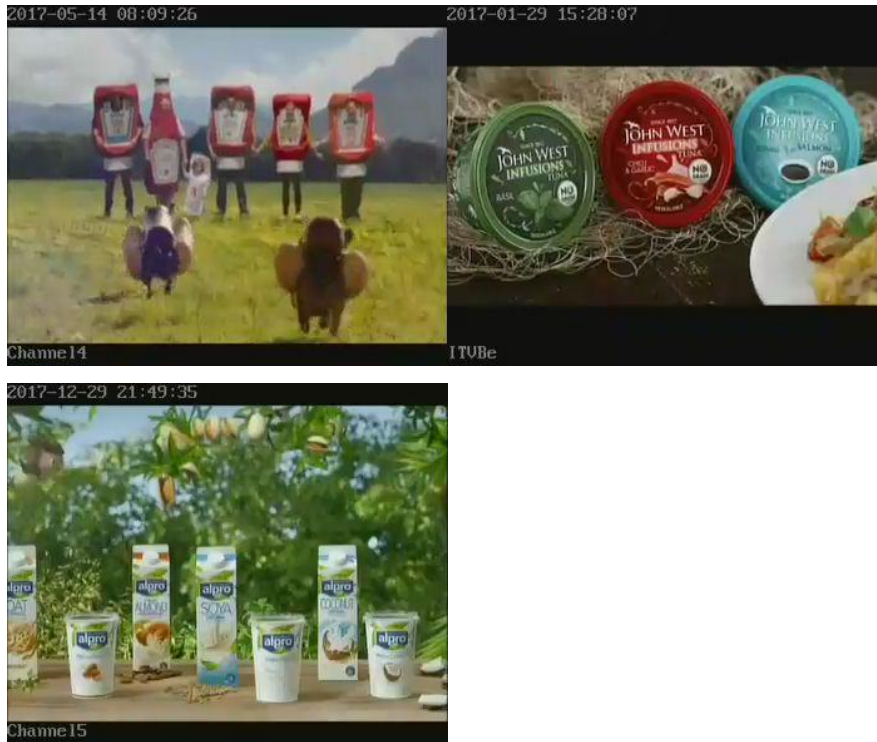
Examples: Heinz ketchup; John West Infusions; Alpro range

As anticipated, a number of ads coded as FH by Clearcast were found to be ad creatives promoting a non-HFSS product or product range.

Additionally, 745 ads without Clearcast codes were identified as promoting food products. This is expected to be due to several reasons: first, clearance before 2016 (214 ad creatives); second, channels not cleared by Clearcast (222 ad creatives); third, due to advertiser category or missing data. This final set was identified in data by adding '(NC)' to the TRP classification.

The (NC) creatives included supermarket Christmas ads where the foods were not directly identified, as well as brand building ads around food quality. These ad creatives were sent to BCAP for review. Where the ad was found to be predominantly brand-building it was excluded from the final data set.

Example: Waitrose Free Range Egg guarantee ad had no Clearcast code

A further 'sense check' was carried out to look for any 'red flag' products (confectionary, ice cream, sausages, etc.) that had been classified as non-HFSS. Ad creatives that had been classified as non-HFSS were also checked against coded lists of background products to ensure that there was not an overwhelming presence of HFSS foods behind a non-HFSS main product.

Where NPM scoring was not possible but a Clearcast code was available, a conservative approach was used and classification was matched to Clearcast's FH code. Where no Clearcast code was available and a product could not be verified for NPM scoring, the creative was coded as 'Other', with the understanding that this classification was to be included with HFSS for any analysis.

2018 and 2019H1 Update

TRP Research carried out a further identification and classification of all food and soft drink ads aired on any channel from 1 January 2018 to 30 June 2019 as a follow up to the classification performed in 2018, which looked at ads from 2016 and 2017.

Where possible, the BARB advertiser and brand information was used to identify the product advertised. Where this was not possible, video logs were checked to verify both on-screen and audio product identification.

Using the list of identified products, the nutrient values for each was determined. Where it was available, Nielsen Brandbank nutritional data was used. Where it was not, the nutritional data was gathered from the advertiser's website. If no such data was available, a similar product was identified in McCance and Widdowson's The Composition of Food to produce an indicative nutritional composition.

Nutritional data was used to calculate Nutrient Profiling Model scores. Where an ad promoted multiple products, the highest scoring product was used to score the entire ad creative. Using the regulatory thresholds of 1 for drinks and 4 for foods, classifications of 'HFSS' or 'Non-HFSS' were applied. A third category of 'Other' was used to identify advertisements where no product could be identified for NPM scoring purposes. As in the previous data set, all ad creatives classified as 'HFSS' or 'Other' were counted as HFSS in analysis.

Classification was further split, with '(NC)' added to any ad creatives that did not have a Clearcast code. In most cases, these appeared only on self-cleared channels.

Due the need for quick completion of this classification, TRP Research used previous years' results to give guidance on scoring and a 'lighter touch' approach was agreed for the methodology. In the earlier data set, 'grey area' ad creatives were flagged for further review by BCAP/ASA, particularly in cases where the creative cross-promoted a range of products or an overall brand message. For the current data set, these were classified based on similar creatives from the previous data set or assigned the 'Other' classification. Where possible, regional ad creatives were classified in line with matching national ad creatives.

In order to calculate NPM scoring and final classification in this faster method, reviewers followed the previous year's methodology for product identification, matching on-screen products directly to Nielsen Brandbank data and/or McCance and Widdowson products. For supermarket basket comparison ads, reviewers recorded any presumed HFSS product (i.e.,

confectionary, ice cream, biscuits, crisps, pizza) and identified the ad creative type, but did not record more than five products per creative.

Additionally, the final product classification has been streamlined for supermarket ads. Where multiple products were shown, the ad creatives have been described as supermarket offers with notation as to whether HFSS products were visible during the creative.

2023 Update

TRP Research conducted a further update to previous identification and classification of food and soft drink ads.

All food and drink ads that were aired on any channel from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023 were reviewed for product identification. Barb and Clearcast brand and advertiser data was used to help identify products. Where products could not be identified from this existing data, the ad was viewed through TRP's video logs. This allowed our team to identify any advertised products in that ad.

TRP Research followed the 2018-19 methodology, outlined above, in order to provide data quickly at the end of the calendar year. Where ads contained many products, such as supermarket basket comparisons, the research team looked to identify products that would likely fall into HFSS classifications.

Using the list of identified products for each spot, the nutrient values were gathered from NIQ Brandbank. Where data was not available in Brandbank, it was gathered from sources including the advertiser's website, restaurant websites, and supermarket websites. For unbranded products, or where no nutrient data was available, the nearest match in McCance and Widdowson's The Composition of Food was used as a nutritional proxy.

This nutritional data was used to calculate Nutrient Profile Model scores, which were used to classify the ad as either 'HFSS' or 'Non-HFSS'. Where multiple products were advertised, the classification has been based on the highest-scoring product advertised. Ads where no specific product could be identified for NPM scoring have been classified as 'Other'. As before, all ads classified as 'HFSS' or 'Other' have been counted as HFSS in analysis.

Clearcast classification data was provided for ads cleared in January – March 2023. Where an ad was cleared outside of this time or had no match to the Clearcast-cleared list, the '(NC)' suffix was added to the classification coding for reference.