

## **Submission on the Potential Revision of rNRVs in the Code**

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**27 July 2010**

This submission is made on behalf of the Infant Nutrition Council (INC), representing the collective views of its members. The INC represents the significant majority of companies marketing and manufacturing infant formula in Australia and New Zealand.

The INC welcomes the opportunity to comment on the potential revision of Nutrient Reference Values (NRV) in the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (the Code) and supports the underlying principles listed in the Potential Revision Consultation Paper (the Consultation Paper)<sup>1</sup>.

The INC notes that, at present, there are no listed regulatory Nutrient Reference Values (rNRVs) in the Code that are applicable to infant formula products. The INC further notes from the Consultation Paper that it is not the intention of the FSANZ to introduce rNRVs for infant formula products. The INC supports this approach.

The INC believes that breastfeeding is the normal way to feed infants as it has numerous benefits for both mothers and babies. When an infant is not breastfed the only suitable and safe alternative is a scientifically developed infant formula product. For these infants, infant formula is the sole nutrition for infants less than 6 months old.

Currently, the 2006 NRVs provide recommendations in the form of Adequate Intakes for infants of 0-6 months. These AIs are based on the composition of breast milk from healthy mothers. The 2006 NRVs state that “*the bioavailability of nutrients in formulas may vary from that in breast milk, so formula-fed babies may need higher nutrient intakes. As formulas can vary in the chemical form and source of the nutrients, it is not possible to develop a single reference value for all formula-fed infants.*” However, the NHMRC’s 1991 publication did in fact have separate RDIs for breastfed and bottle-fed infants. Hence, the INC is of the view that if in the future, regulatory NRVs are introduced in the Code for infants aged 0-6months, that these

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<sup>1</sup> Food Standards Australia New Zealand, *Nutrient Reference Values in the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code – Potential Revision Consultation Paper*, & May 2010 at p5.

must be based on the nutritional requirements of formula-fed infants. It is the view of the INC members that the 2006 NRVs are not suitable for infant formula products, as they only provide AIs for breast-fed infants and there is a lack of information within this document to base recommendations for formula-fed infants.

When transition timings for implementation of any new rNRV's are being considered we would request that the longest possible transition be allowed to minimize cost impact to industry. Factors such as time and cost required to re formulate product recipes and amend labels are important to consider.

It is important to ensure any changes to rNRV's are considered with the intention of harmonizing with international regulations such as CODEX wherever possible to reduce regulatory burden on industry. This is vital given that many infant formula products sold in Australasia are manufactured overseas and conversely infant formula products are manufactured locally for export.

If FSANZ undertakes a review of the compositional requirements for infant formula products that are prescribed in the Standard 2.9.1, as a result of the Infant Formula policy review, then the INC recommends that any changes to this standard in relation to rNRV's is done at the same time - taking into consideration the comments we have made above about the applicability of the 2006 NRVs to infant formula. This will include all changes proposed to be covered by the same consultation processes and amendments promulgated to be managed within the same transition arrangements.