

CONSUMERS UNAWARE 'LOWER IN SUGAR' CAN MEAN 'HIGHER IN CALORIES'

Reformulation not a straight-forward solution to UK obesity

London, 23 September - New research from AB Sugar, who recently launched the Making Sense of Sugar campaign, reveals that the UK's health-conscious consumers may unknowingly be increasing their calorie consumption by actively choosing low-sugar or low-fat products.

Over half (**56%**) of consumers polled said they expected reformulation – the process of replacing, reducing or removing an ingredient such as sugar – would lead to a reduction in calories in a product. And of those who favoured low-fat or low-sugar food and drink products (**55%** and **29%** respectively), almost two thirds (**66%**) viewed them as 'healthier'*.

However, many consumers are unaware that, for example, when removing sugar (four calories per gram) the fat content (nine calories per gram) can become a higher proportion of the product, which may result in an increase in total calories per 100g.

According to the OnePoll survey of 2,000 people, when consumers realised that reformulation could increase calories, over half (**51%**) of them were against the process, with **56%** of women claiming they would stay clear of such products altogether. In addition, if reformulation changed the overall taste of a product, **48%** of people surveyed said they would be unsupportive.

Misconceptions around reformulation are a real problem. Although more than 4 in 5 people (**82%**) in the UK deem themselves to be 'healthy', three out of five (**57%**) admit they're trying to lose weight. But rather than looking at wider diet and lifestyle factors, such as how to balance how much energy (calories) people consume versus the energy (calories) they burn off, a third of those (**34%**) trying to shed the pounds do so by cutting down and focusing on just one ingredient.

Dr Julian Cooper, Head of Food Science at AB Sugar, commented:

*"The food and drinks industry has actively been looking into reformulating products for a number of years, in order to offer consumers a greater choice and, more recently, as one of the options available to help tackle obesity. ** However, reformulation is not a straightforward solution to creating lower calorie products.*

"When sugar is removed or reduced in a product, in order to replicate its many properties, you will need to replace that sugar with alternative, often artificial, ingredients that you wouldn't normally see on your kitchen shelf. And if, for example, the fat content rises as a result of reformulation, you may even see an increase in the calories you are eating per 100g.

"We are in favour of reformulation – including the removal of sugar – but only when it results in a total calorie reduction. So, it's of upmost importance for consumers to take

into consideration total calories when looking at labels, rather than just focusing on one ingredient."

Dr Roberta Re, Scientist from the nutrition department at Leatherhead Food Research, commented:

"It makes little sense to focus solely on one ingredient when considering how we tackle an issue like obesity. It is a very complex and multi-faceted matter. What's more important than anything else is to help people understand how they can achieve a healthy balanced diet.

"Focus should be put on energy intake overall. Consumer's perception can mislead their food choices. And consumption of 'low and light' can lead to overconsumption. This is known as the 'Halo Effect'. It's therefore important that we all consider our total calorie consumption when thinking about our diet."

To help inform and educate people about sugar, the role it can play as part of a healthy balanced diet, and to help people to make better informed choices about what they consume, AB Sugar launched the new campaign, *Making Sense of Sugar*.

Visit the Making Sense of Sugar website www.makingsenseofsugar.com, watch our informative new video and follow the campaign at @senseofsugar.

For more information on AB Sugar, please visit absugar.com/news

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Notes to editors

For further information, please call 0207 492 0975 or email press@absugar.com.

The online survey was conducted by OnePoll amongst 2,000 UK adults 18+ between 5th June 2014 and 9th June 2014.

*The respondents stated they want to reduce an ingredient to be 'healthier'. However, what respondents determined to be 'healthier' may vary according to their own interpretation of the term.

**Recent data shows rising obesity figures in the UK. Source: Health and Social Care Information Centre: Statistics on Obesity, Physical Activity and Diet: England 2014: Key findings showed a marked increase in the proportion of adults that were obese between 1993 and 2012, from 13.2% to 24.4% among men and 16.4% to 25.1% among women. <http://www.hscic.gov.uk/catalogue/PUB13648/Obes-phys-acti-diet-eng-2014-rep.pdf>

Making Sense of Sugar video standard embed code:

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<iframe width="560" height="315" src="//www.youtube.com/embed/To3ikORsVno"
frameborder="0" allowfullscreen></iframe>
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Contextual information

- Leatherhead Food Research (2012): Consumers expect a reduction in calories when they see a 'reduced sugars' claim.

About AB Sugar

AB Sugar is one of the largest sugar producers in the world and has operations in 10 countries, from Europe to southern Africa to China, and employs around 40,000 people. The company is also involved in the developing bioethanol industry and in seed coating and enhancement technology, as well as non-sugar products including animal feed, soil conditioning and landscaping products, electricity and even tomatoes. AB Sugar has the capacity to produce over five million tonnes of sugar and around 600 million litres of ethanol each year.

British Sugar (part of AB Sugar) is the leading supplier of sugar to the UK market and is the sole processor of sugar beet in the UK, producing more than one million tonnes of sugar at its four factories from around seven million tonnes of sugar beet.

AB Sugar is an advanced and sustainable manufacturer with a real commitment to its people. The company believes its business decisions should simultaneously benefit the environment, its stakeholders and the communities in which it operates.

AB Sugar is a wholly owned subsidiary of international food, ingredients and retail group Associated British Foods (ABF) with sales of £13.3bn and over 113,000 people in 47 countries.

For more information, visit www.absugar.com.

About Making Sense of Sugar

AB Sugar recently launched a new campaign, *Making Sense of Sugar*, to help inform and educate people about sugar, the role it can play as part of a healthy balanced diet, and to help people make better informed choices about what they consume.

The campaign provides information about sugar in a way which is simple, straightforward and informative, while ensuring facts are always based on robust science. It also addresses the myths around sugar and obesity and help people better understand the link between the energy (calories) they consume versus the energy (calories) they expend.

To find out more about the campaign, visit makingsenseofsugar.com and for all the latest campaign news follow @senseofsugar.

About Leatherhead Food Research

Leatherhead Food Research provides expertise and support to the global food and drink sector with practical solutions that cover all stages of a product's life cycle from consumer insight, ingredient innovation and sensory testing to food safety consultancy and global regulatory advice.

A not-for-profit, membership-based organisation, Leatherhead represents a who's who of the global food and drink industry and supports all members and clients with consultancy

and advice. Alongside member support and project work, Leatherhead's world-renowned experts deliver cutting-edge research in areas that drive long term commercial benefit for the food and drink industry.

Leatherhead runs regular training courses on topics of interest to the industry and issue publications, white papers and newsletters.

For more information, visit www.leatherheadfood.com.