

Health Star Rating – Year 5 Monitoring Plan (2025)

Background

The Health Star Rating (HSR) system underwent a major review in 2019 after five years of implementation. The review recommended that the system remain voluntary, but with clear uptake targets. Ministers agreed that if the HSR is not displayed on 70% of intended products within five years they will decide whether to mandate the system.

The following uptake targets have been set by Ministers:

- Interim target 1 (at 3 years): 50% of intended products apply the HSR by 14 November 2023
- Interim target 2 (at 4 years): 60% of intended products apply the HSR by 14 November 2024
- Final target (at 5 years): 70% of intended products apply the HSR by 14 November 2025.

Data collected against interim targets 1 and 2 show that that uptake is off-track to meet the final target. As at November 2024, the HSR was shown on only 35% of intended products in Australia, and 33% of intended products in New Zealand. This is an increase of 3% in both countries from 2023. The uptake reports are available on the Health Star Rating [website](#).

What will be monitored and reported for the final target (Year 5)

As for interim targets 1 and 2, data for target 3 will be collected to show the estimated uptake figure as a percentage of all intended products. Uptake will be reported separately for Australia and New Zealand.

Additionally, consumer research will be undertaken to explore consumers' understanding and perceptions of the HSR system (subject to funding). This work will build on consumer research being undertaken in 2024 and will include a focus on priority populations (as outlined in the Monitoring Framework).

The monitoring outlined in this plan is separate from, but relevant to, work Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) is undertaking to inform Ministers' future decisions on mandating the system.

What are the intended foods?

Foods intended to carry the HSR system are those that:

- Are permitted to use the system; and
- Are required by the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (Code) to have a nutrition information panel (NIP); and
- Can vary in nutritional composition.

Intended products do *not* include the following, even though they are eligible for an automatic 5 star rating:

- fresh fruit and vegetables;
- minimally processed fruit and vegetables that have only been peeled, cut, surface treated, blanched or frozen; and
- plain (packaged) water.

HSRs displayed on permitted, but not intended, foods will not be included in the intended food product count or percent uptake. Previous and now redundant HSR display options (i.e. energy icon) will also be excluded from the final count. More information on the targets and intended products can be found at:

<http://www.healthstarrating.gov.au/internet/healthstarrating/publishing.nsf/Content/target-and-intended-products>

How will data be collected?

Data will be collected to align with the November target date. In Australia, FSANZ will use data provided by retailers and brand owners and in-market data collections. New Zealand Food Safety will use the GS1 On Pack Database to monitor uptake for New Zealand. Data collection will focus on foods available in the major supermarket chains in each country. The data will be cleaned and analysed before being presented to Ministers as a trans-Tasman report and then made public. Further details on the methodology are presented below.

Will the information be published?

The trans-Tasman report is expected to be made public after it has been considered by Ministers in 2026.

What if the final target is not met?

In July 2024, Food Ministers tasked FSANZ with commencing preparatory work to inform Food Ministers' future decision-making on mandating the HSR system. This work will facilitate an efficient process if the final target is not met and Ministers decide to mandate the system. FSANZ's work has commenced, and will include stakeholder consultation. You can subscribe to updates on FSANZ's work at www.foodstandards.gov.au.

Australian Government monitoring methodology

As noted above, data provided by retailers and brand owners and in-market data collection will provide the basis for monitoring HSR uptake across intended products in Australia.

The number of intended products available in Australia will be determined based on products ranged by Australia's major retailers. Products carrying an HSR but not ranged by a major retailer, and therefore not represented in the count of intended products, will be excluded from the uptake number so as to not artificially inflate the uptake percent. The final report on uptake will include observations and information on products and brands excluded from the uptake number with reasons as to why they are excluded.

New Zealand Government monitoring methodology

New Zealand Food Safety will use the GS1 On Pack Database to obtain data to monitor against the HSR uptake targets. This is an inventory of label information from ~58,000 packaged food products that are or were available in the New Zealand market. The database predominantly includes food product information from the two major supermarket retailers and represents over 90% of pre-packaged food sales¹. It also has limited data from other retailers, such as liquor stores and specialty stores where there has been specified collection activity.

All food products in the database which are currently available in the New Zealand market will be extracted and analysed in excel to identify those products intended to carry an HSR and, of those, how many display an HSR on their label. The final uptake report will outline the total number of intended products in the New Zealand market as well as the number and proportion of those displaying an HSR.

¹ As at September 2024