



## TICK PROGRAM

**National Heart Foundation of Australia**

ABN 98 008 419 761

PO Box 2222

Strawberry Hills BC NSW 2012

Level 4

407 Elizabeth Street

Surry Hills NSW 2010

**Telephone +61 (0)2 9219 2444**

Facsimile +61 (0)2 9219 2424

[www.thetick.com.au](http://www.thetick.com.au)

**Media Release**

**Embargo 14 May, 2006**

### Healthier foods vital in shaping up Australians

Advertising restrictions and obesity summits may have a role to play in Australia's big health battle, but any success will be limited if food companies don't provide healthier foods, says the Heart Foundation Tick Program.

The Heart Foundation strongly supports the need for healthy eating messages, but it believes a combined strategy – education, physical activity and the provision of healthier foods across the board – is the key to real success.

Ms Susan Anderson, National Manager, Heart Foundation Tick Program said wagging a finger and telling people they should only eat certain foods is not going to solve our health problems because it's not dealing with reality.

"Reality is people eating a steak and salad most days but occasionally grabbing a ready meal; mums putting a piece of fruit in their child's lunchbox and sometimes adding a cereal bar.

"We need food companies to provide healthier choices across the board. In fact, Australians expect it, as shown by a recent survey by the Heart Foundation which found that 93 per cent of people surveyed said food companies had a role to play in addressing Australia's weight problem<sup>1</sup>," said Ms Anderson.

"We want a healthier option available when people are trying to make a healthier food choice and that includes foods people should only eat occasionally. The reality is they do eat them and that's why you'll find Tick on ready meals, cereal bars and ice cream, as well as milk, bread and lean meat."

The difference the Tick makes is very real. Most recently Unilever, as part of their global salt reduction initiative used Tick's new targets as a benchmark to reformulate 130 Continental foods – soups, pasta and sauces, rice and instant sauces – which cut 36 tonnes (two semi-trailer loads) of salt from the Australian food supply.<sup>2</sup>

The Heart Foundation has made it harder than ever before to earn the Tick with foods having to meet tougher targets, pass independent tests and random audits to qualify for the Tick.

"Now, we also want them to add more of the good things to their foods like vegetables, calcium and fibre. For example, milk and ice cream with the Tick must meet minimum calcium standards and ready meals must contain a full serve of vegetables," said Ms Anderson.

<sup>1</sup> Newspoll market research, April 2006

<sup>2</sup> 37 of the 130 reformulated foods qualified for the Tick. This clearly shows that seeking the Tick has a direct impact on foods beyond those with the Tick.

Ms Anderson said 60 foods were unable to meet Tick's new targets and consequently lost the right to carry the Tick.

"This is all part of the new, tougher Tick. We knew we'd lose some companies by raising the bar again, but it's encouraging that so many companies - big and small - went back to the drawing board and reformulated their foods to meet the stricter targets and keep the Tick," she added.

One example of this was when Australian company, Patties Foods, developed a Tick approved pie with 46 per cent less saturated fat, 31 per cent fewer kilojoules and 51 per cent less salt than its standard pie.

"Given Australians eat 240 million meat pies annually, it's vital that Tick is providing a healthier choice in this category," said Ms Anderson.

"With the shape of Australians today, the Tick's role in healthier eating is more important than ever, so people need to know that the Tick is a food guide companies must earn to put on their foods," she added.

That's one message the 17 year old program is hoping people will hear when it runs its first television commercial in almost 10 years.

"Tick is only there to improve the health of Australians by pushing food companies to make healthier foods," said Ms Anderson.

"Tick has to fund itself so we charge companies who earn the Tick, a fee. Almost half the companies pay just \$3,000 a year, while the rest pay less than a quarter of a per cent of sales of their Tick foods," she added.

"Most importantly, every cent coming into the Tick Program benefits Australians as it all goes back into making the foods we eat healthier, teaching Australians about healthy eating and funding vital Heart Foundation nutrition research," said Ms Anderson. "So, Australians are the only ones who profit from the Tick."

For more information please call Heartline on 1300 362 787 for the cost of a local call or visit [www.heartfoundation.com.au/tick](http://www.heartfoundation.com.au/tick).

## ***Ends***

### **Editor's Note:**

Peppercorn Gourmet Meats is a NSW-based sausage company. General Manager, Rod Blay can tell you exactly what's required to earn the Tick and is available for interview. Here's a taste:

### ***How can sausages earn the Heart Foundation Tick? By having saturated fat levels in line with lean meat and poultry.***

"When the Heart Foundation announced its revised, tougher nutrition requirements for sausages I didn't think it was possible to make a flavoursome sausage with less than three per cent saturated fat. But as a company driven by an obsession for quality and healthy eating, working closely with the Heart Foundation, we've achieved a range of extra-lean sausages made from premium meat and vegetables."

---

***Issued by Growing Daily Communications on behalf of the Heart Foundation Tick Program. For further information, or if you would like to arrange an interview with Susan Anderson or a food company representative, please contact Jeanne LaBash Lewis on 02 9949 9566 / 0411 718 910 or Maria Padua on 02 9554 8057.***



## TICK PROGRAM

**National Heart Foundation of Australia**

ABN 98 008 419 761

PO Box 2222

Strawberry Hills BC NSW 2012

Level 4

407 Elizabeth Street

Surry Hills NSW 2010

**Telephone +61 (0)2 9219 2444**

Facsimile +61 (0)2 9219 2424

**[www.thetick.com.au](http://www.thetick.com.au)**