



## Heart Foundation Tick

Two decades of helping Australians choose healthier foods.

**Our Mission** is to improve the nutritional profile of the food supply in a direction that is consistent with nutrition policies and recommendations for the general population from the Heart Foundation and the Government.

**The way in which Tick achieves its mission is by:**

1. Influencing food companies and outlets to manufacture and market foods that meet our strict nutrition standards.
2. Signposting and encouraging consumers to purchase these healthier foods.
3. Influencing food policy and legislation.

**Since the Tick was established in 1989:**

- We have 82 companies and more than 800 food outlets providing around 1040 Tick approved healthier foods.
- Levels of salt, saturated fat and trans fat have been reduced in foods Australians love to eat.
- Consumer awareness and trust in Tick has remained high.



# Leadership over two decades

From Dr Lyn Roberts, Heart Foundation CEO-National



2009 was a milestone year for the Heart Foundation, with the organisation celebrating 50 years and our iconic Tick program also marking its 20th anniversary.

Today, 82 companies are providing around 1,040 healthier food choices across supermarkets and more than 800 food outlets, with shoppers clearly able to identify them because of the trusted Tick. Almost eight out of 10 Australians understand that Tick is a healthier option when compared to other similar foods.<sup>1</sup>



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Our Heart Foundation Tick has played an important role in driving nutritional improvements, correcting nutrition myths and clearly identifying genuinely healthier choices. Advising people what to eat and how much physical activity to do is one way we help Australians lead healthier lives, but we know it isn't enough. We've also stuck firmly to the mantra of doing something about it.

The role of the Tick is perhaps even more important today and into the future than it was when we began in the 80s. Nowadays, there are almost 70% more food choices in supermarkets than in 1990<sup>2</sup>, but unfortunately greater choice does not necessarily mean better decisions. Shoppers can be influenced by clever marketing and product positioning, ending up at the checkout with a nutritionally unbalanced trolley of food.

Our unique strategy of working with food companies to innovate or reformulate their foods to provide healthier choices and then highlighting them to Australians has worked, and as you read on you will see it has worked well.

We believe the introduction of Tick in 2006 to meals eaten out was an important initiative to address changing consumer lifestyles.

While the Heart Foundation has and will continue to push for healthier foods, this can only become a reality if food companies continue to get on board.

We're pleased to share some of the results the Tick and the food companies in our program have achieved over the past two decades. Meanwhile, we'll continue getting on with the job – helping Australians choose healthier foods.

## Future focus

With Australia facing a growing burden of chronic disease as the population ages and grows in size, there are huge challenges ahead. The Heart Foundation is committed to an even stronger focus on improving our foods from 'paddock to plate'.

Alone we can only achieve so much, so we're calling on Government and the food industry to join us in these five challenges over the next five years:

- 1. A national food supply strategy** with major food companies, supermarkets and fast food outlets to drive food reformulation, taking the tried and tested Heart Foundation Tick principles and applying them across the board.
- 2. Cut trans and saturated fat** by substituting palm oil and other unhealthy fats and oils with those lower in saturated fat to help Australians achieve less than 8% of total energy intake as saturated and trans fat.<sup>3</sup>
- 3. Reduce salt levels** by incrementally reducing consumption levels of Australian adults to the recommended maximum of 6g of salt a day.<sup>4</sup> Estimates from the UK suggest this could save more than 20,000 premature deaths a year.<sup>5</sup>
- 4. Boost consumption of fruit, vegetables and other fresh foods** like fish, meat, poultry, eggs, nuts and seeds. Recent National Health Survey data showed 86% of people aged 12 years and over are not eating the desired five serves of vegetables a day and almost half are still not eating two serves of fruit.<sup>6</sup>
- 5. Adopt standardised serve sizes** for packaged foods and meals eaten out to assist consumers with energy balance to tackle the rising rates of overweight and obesity.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Instinct and Reason. Tick tracking – market and consumer insights; June 2008.

<sup>2</sup> Freshlogic. A Freshlogic analysis and the factors driving new product growth. Report for the Heart Foundation (Unpublished), Melbourne 2009.

<sup>3</sup> Heart Foundation. Position Statement. Dietary fats and dietary sterols for cardiovascular health. 2009. Available from <http://www.heartfoundation.org.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/Dietary%20fats%20position%20statement%20LR.pdf>. Accessed 9 July 2009.

<sup>4</sup> Heart Foundation. Position Statement. The relationship between dietary electrolytes and cardiovascular disease. 2006. Available from <http://www.heartfoundation.org.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/NHFA%20Dietary%20Electrolytes%20CVD%20Position%20Statement.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> The Strategy Unit. Food matters: towards a strategy for the 21st century. United Kingdom Cabinet Office, 2007. Available from: [www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/~media/assets/www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/strategy/food/food\\_matters1%20pdf.ashx](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/~media/assets/www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/strategy/food/food_matters1%20pdf.ashx). Accessed 4 June 2009.

<sup>6</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW). Australia's health 2008. Cat No. AUS 99. Canberra: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2008. Available from: [www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10585](http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10585). Accessed 15 April 2009.

<sup>7</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2007-2008 National Health Survey: Summary of Results. ABS Cat. No. 4364.0 Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2009. Accessed from [http://abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/4364.02007-2008%20\(Reissue\)?OpenDocument](http://abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/4364.02007-2008%20(Reissue)?OpenDocument) August 26 2009.

# Major impacts helping Australians to eat healthier

1980s

**1989**  
Heart Foundation launches Tick Program, with all foods bearing Tick logo required to display Nutrition Information Panels.

**Industry commitment secured**  
The Tick Program launched in 1989 with 31 companies earning the Tick for 140 products within the first year. Among these founding companies who are still committed to food improvement and earning the Tick today are: Australian Pork; George Weston Foods Ltd; Goodman Fielder; Inghams Enterprises; Meat & Livestock Australia; M.E.B. Foods Pty Ltd; Murray Goulburn Co-op; National Foods; SunRice; Unilever Australia; and Ward McKenzie.

1990s

**1994**  
Heart Foundation calls on food companies and regulators to remove/reduce trans fats.

**Healthier margarine**  
A 1994 Heart Foundation paper on dietary fats and cholesterol called on food companies and regulators to remove trans fat. By 1996, the Tick program introduced saturated and trans fat limits for margarine spreads. The Heart Foundation worked with companies to adapt their processes and encouraged them to make the investment in equipment needed to introduce margarines with less than 1% trans fat. By end 2005, Australians had almost 50 margarines meeting Tick's tough standards for saturated fat, sodium and less than 1% total fat as trans fat.

**1982**  
First Australian Dietary Guidelines published by Commonwealth Department of Health.

**Consumers call for help to choose healthier foods**  
Between 1988 and 1993 there were minor improvements in the diet of Australians, however the majority of the population were still failing to meet the healthy eating targets.<sup>8</sup> The Heart Foundation responded by initiating the Tick program - a world-first program with category-specific nutrition standards, initially for 11 foods. Today, the program provides nutrition standards for 58 different types of foods, including 16 of Australia's top 20 most popular supermarket foods.<sup>9</sup>

**Red meat improvements**  
With the Heart Foundation and other experts encouraging consumers to reduce fat in their diets, Meat and Livestock Australia (20 year commitment to the Tick) was one of the first to act. Butchers introduced a range of different cuts of meat to provide healthier options that suited multicultural tastes and changing lifestyles. Removing visible fat became an increasingly common practice for processors, butchers and consumers. Red meat in retail outlets today is leaner than 20 years ago.<sup>10</sup>

Between the 1983 and 1995 National Nutrition Surveys, the percentage of adults reporting trimming fat from meat and poultry increased from 48% to 55%.<sup>11</sup> A more recent survey commissioned by Meat & Livestock Australia found that in 2007, 90% of adults reported trimming fat off red meat.<sup>12</sup>

**1992**  
Heart Foundation Tick introduces fibre criteria to six food categories to encourage companies to include more of this valuable nutrient.



**Looking beyond the supermarket**  
In 1995, the Heart Foundation urged Australians to speak up and ask for healthy food choices at takeaway food outlets. In 2006, Tick was introduced to meals eaten out to provide genuinely healthier choices.

“Because the Tick is such a well known, well recognised symbol, you can trust it. If I was looking at a shelf of all the same thing, I would just go for one with the Tick.”

Donna Cuffe,  
Admin Assistant,  
wife and mother

<sup>8</sup> Australian Commonwealth Scientific and Research Organisation (CSIRO). Does Five Years Make a Difference? –Results from the CSIRO Australian Food and Nutrition Surveys 1988 and 1993, 1996.

<sup>9</sup> National Heart Foundation of Australia information based in part on data reported by The Nielsen Company through its Grocery MID database for the Total Grocery Category for the 52-week period ending 28 September 2008, for the Australian total grocery market. (Copyright © 2009, ACNielsen).

<sup>10</sup> Williams P, Droulez V, Levy G, Stobaus T. Nutrient composition of Australian red meat 2002. 1. Gross composition data. Food Aust 2006;58: 173-181.

<sup>11</sup> Baghurst K, Record S, Leppard P. Red meat consumption in Australia: intakes, nutrient contribution and changes over time. Aust J Nutr Diet 2000; 4: S1-S36.

<sup>12</sup> Williams, P., & Droulez, V. (2009). 20 year trends in red meat production, composition and consumption: influences of consumer demand, health policy and the Heart Foundation Tick. Poster at Heart Foundation Conference 2009: Hearts in focus - celebration, collaboration and challenges. Sydney: Heart Foundation.

**'The benefit for me of the Heart Foundation Tick is taste and having that healthier choice. I look for it rather than picking something up by chance.'**

Michelle Curtis  
Homemaker and mother of two

2000s

**Less salt for breakfast cereals**

In 1997, Kellogg (15 year commitment to Tick) started reformulating 12 breakfast cereals to reduce sodium content. As a result of Kellogg's action, 235 tonnes of salt were removed annually from Australian cereals<sup>13</sup> – 13 tip trucks full of salt. Of the 12 products reformulated, five met all the nutrition standards required to earn the Tick, accounting for 53% of the total salt reduction achieved by Kellogg. Kellogg continues to reduce sodium through an active sodium reduction program, which has led to further reductions in sodium content in key brands.

2004

9 out of 10 shoppers say they intend to shop using Tick in next 12 months.<sup>15</sup>

**Tick for eggs**

Eggs gain the Tick in 2005, providing greater clarity for consumers about their role in healthy eating after many years of confusion. Despite the fact that eggs contain top quality protein and omega 3 fatty acids plus 10 vitamins and minerals, they were hampered by long held myths focused primarily on cholesterol and fat levels. Tick helped to clarify that eggs contain only 1.5g saturated fat, helping eggs to reclaim their place in healthy eating.

The Heart Foundation has also helped educate consumers on the importance of healthier fats such as those found in avocados, nuts, eggs, salad dressings, margarine spreads and vegetable oils.

2007

Government forms a Trans Fat Collaboration to combat trans fat in the foodservice industry.

Heart Foundation publishes "The Three Step Guide"<sup>18</sup> to help foodservice outlets identify healthier oils and ensure that trans fat reduction does not increase saturated fat levels.

After one year in the eating out market, more than eight million Tick meals were sold, adding 35 tonnes of fibre, removing 460 tonnes of trans fat and 50 tonnes of salt.<sup>19</sup>

1999

**Heart Foundation position paper reveals benefits of plant sterols and stanols to cardiovascular health.**



2001

FSANZ makes Nutritional Information Panels mandatory for all foods.

2003 – 2006

**Getting tougher on salt, trans fat and energy**

With obesity levels rising, the Heart Foundation introduces energy criteria in selected categories to encourage reduce kilojoules and serve size, particularly for snacks. Uncle Tobys launches the first Tick approved cereal bar, with approximately 348 fewer kilojoules per serve than the market average.<sup>14</sup>

Salt levels were reduced across 36 of 54 Tick categories and 25 categories became virtually trans fat free.

The standards also encouraged more 'good' nutrients. So, convenience meals, pies, pastries and pizza included at least one serve of vegetables per serve, while milk and milk alternatives, cheese, yoghurt and dairy desserts all had to meet calcium standards.

2006

FSANZ amends its code to allow plant sterols to be added to foods other than margarine spreads.

2006

**Tick launches into meals eaten out, with McDonald's introducing Tick approved ranges within six months.**

**Consumers trust and use Tick**

Approximately 78 companies are today providing some 1,000 healthier food choices across the supermarket proudly displaying the Tick. Almost 75% of consumers surveyed have used the Tick and almost 80% understand that Tick is a healthier option when compared with similar foods.<sup>16</sup> Since 2005 consumer awareness and trust in Tick has remained high (93-97% and 69-76% respectively).<sup>17</sup>

2008

**Helping Indigenous groups buy healthier foods**

Tick criteria were used to assess foods for inclusion in The Heart Foundation's *Buyers Guide*, a practical guide for managers of remote Indigenous stores and takeaways.<sup>20</sup> With remote stores and takeaways supplying more than 90% of all food consumed by these communities,<sup>21</sup> improving the foods on offer is clearly a priority to improve the health of these communities.



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<sup>13</sup> Williams P, McMahon A and Boustead R. A case study of sodium reduction in breakfast cereals and the impact of the Pick the Tick food information program in Australia. Health Promotion International. 2003; 18 (1): 51-56.

<sup>14</sup> Heart Foundation calculations based on Dunn, Son & Stone analytical laboratory report for cereal based bars (2004) and Heart Foundation compiled cereal-based bars market data (2003).

<sup>15</sup> Taylor Nelson Sofres, Tick tracking; 2004.

<sup>16</sup> Instinct and Reason, Tick tracking – market and consumer insights; June 2008.

<sup>17</sup> Instinct and Reason, Tick tracking – market and consumer insights; June 2005-2008.

<sup>18</sup> Heart Foundation Tick. The 3 Step Guide – A guide for the Australian foodservice industry on reducing trans and saturated fats. 2007.

Available from <http://www.heartfoundation.org.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/Tick%203%20Steps%20Guide%20New.pdf>. Accessed 9 July 2009.

<sup>19</sup> Williams P and Colyer C. Nutrition profiling and labelling of healthier or functional meals. Journal of Foodservice 2009; 20: 230-240.

<sup>20</sup> Heart Foundation. Buyers Guide - For managers of remote Indigenous stores and takeaways. 2008.

Available from <http://www.heartfoundation.org.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/Tick%20Brochure%20Buyers%20Guide.pdf>. Accessed 9 July 2009.

<sup>21</sup> Lee et al. Apparent dietary intake in remote Aboriginal communities. Australian Journal of Public Health 1994; 18 (2): 190-197.

# How Tick makes foods healthier

The Heart Foundation makes foods healthier by setting tough, but achievable, standards and encouraging companies to meet them. A strength of the Tick has been its dynamic nature and relevance. New criteria for new, popular foods and raising the bar with tougher standards when it believes the food industry can achieve even healthier foods for Australians. The Heart Foundation has also actively contributed to the development of public health and nutrition policies to ensure the benefits extend beyond those foods earning the Tick.

## 1. Setting strict nutrition standards

To earn the Tick, food companies must meet strict nutrition standards based on the nutrition priorities of that particular type of food. The Tick nutrition standards represent nutrition evidence in a practical policy framework.

Tick standards are developed using:

- an analysis of public health priorities for each category;
- assessing technical and market feasibilities;
- reviewing the nutritional content of foods currently available.

These standards may include combinations of energy, saturated fat, trans fat, partially hydrogenated fat, sodium, fibre, calcium and vegetable content.

### Focus on: Peppercorn Food Company

Peppercorn is an excellent example of a medium sized food company committed to earning the Tick for all its products.

“Nothing with the Peppercorn brand goes into the market place unless it earns the Tick. But when the Heart Foundation announced its revised, tougher nutrient requirements for sausages, I didn't think it was possible to make a flavoursome sausage with less than 3% saturated fat.

A lot of testing was done for taste and a number of different flavour profiles were developed to get it to where it is today. It came back to using fresh, strong ingredients - coriander, fresh chilli, ginger and kaffir lime leaves. These interesting flavours mask the lack of salt and fat.

The Heart Foundation Tick has really set a new standard that everybody in the category is trying to reach. As a result, the whole category has improved its meat quality and taste profile.”

*Dean Murphy, Managing Director,  
Peppercorn Food Company  
10 year commitment to Tick*

## 2. Encouraging reformulation and innovation to meet Tick standards

Meeting the Tick challenge often sparks innovative solutions. When the market leader in meat pies, Patties, partnered with Unilever Australia to develop a world-first flaky puff pastry with no partially hydrogenated fat, the result was a Tick approved Four'n Twenty Lite Beef Pie. It contained 45% less saturated fat, 28% fewer kilojoules and 36% less sodium than the brand's standard pie.<sup>22</sup>

*“With no existing commercial trans fat free margarine on the market to meet our needs we knew we had to think ‘outside the square’, so we turned to the product development team at Unilever for help with finding a solution. The teamwork between Patties, Unilever and the Heart Foundation resulted in a great tasting product which met the tougher Tick criteria.” – Mark Connolly, General Manager Marketing, Patties Foods  
5 year commitment to Tick*

## 3. Raising the bar

To ensure continuous improvement, Tick nutrition standards are reviewed and modified over time. This ensures the standards keep pace with changing science, eating habits, nutrition issues and improvements in technology. While some foods just can't make the grade, the Heart Foundation encourages those companies with foods that can, to continue to earn the Tick.

**More than half the companies today earning the Tick have been with the program for 10 years or more, with 11 companies demonstrating a 20 year commitment to healthier foods signposted by Tick.**

## 4. Helping shape the agenda

Beyond its nutrition standards, the Heart Foundation has also influenced important public health frameworks including:

- Requiring Tick foods to display Nutrition Information Panels 13 years before FSANZ made it mandatory. Food outlets serving Tick meals must also provide in-store nutrition information and meet tough food safety measures – not yet required nationally.
- From 1990, the Heart Foundation required foods bearing the Tick logo to declare saturated fat levels on food labels. In addition, saturated fat criteria across a number of Tick categories were introduced to reduce saturated fat levels in the food supply. FSANZ implemented mandatory labelling of saturated fat in 2001.
- By the time the Government formed the Trans Fat Collaboration in 2006 to reduce levels of trans fats in foods, Tick approved foods across 25 food categories were already virtually trans fat free including: biscuits; convenience meals; breakfast cereals; pasta and noodles; cereal bars and muffins; pies and savoury pastries; processed meats and poultry; salad dressings and mayonnaise.
- The Heart Foundation believes people should understand what's in the foods they buy. We have played an active role in discussion about front of pack labelling. By reviewing international research and commissioning research locally,<sup>23</sup> we aim to ensure that any changes to labelling will result in real changes to foods and help, rather than confuse, consumers.

<sup>22</sup> Heart Foundation calculations based on AgriQuality laboratory report for Four n Twenty traditional meat pie and lite pie (2005).

<sup>23</sup> Heart Foundation. Australians and front of pack labelling – what we want, what we need, 2008. Available from [www.heartfoundation.org.au](http://www.heartfoundation.org.au). Accessed 15 April 2009.

# Making a difference

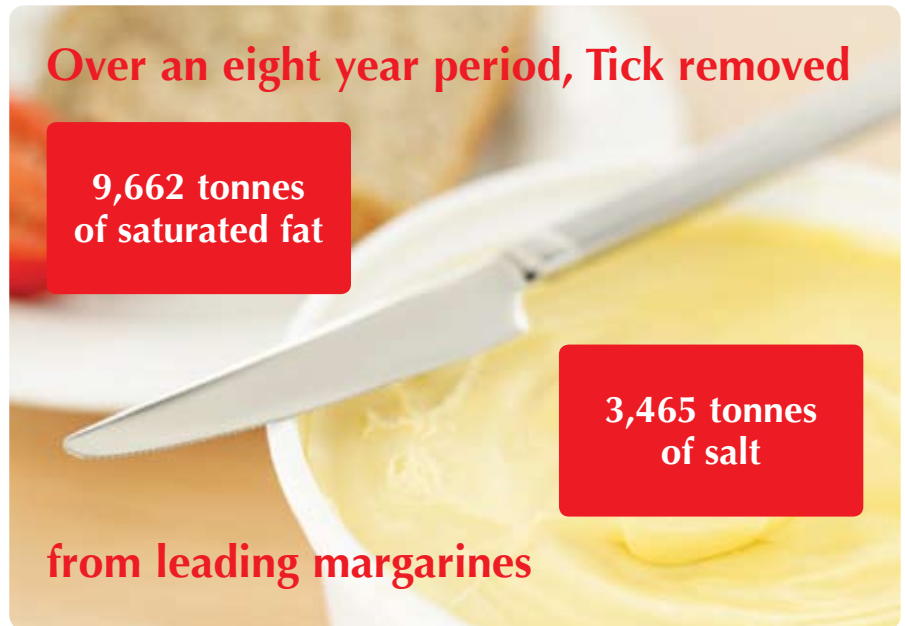
## In margarines

Always a leader in the dietary fats area, the Heart Foundation has encouraged people to choose margarine spreads instead of butter. In addition, we have worked with industry to reduce salt, saturated fat and trans fat in spreads since the 1990s so consumers benefit from even healthier margarine spreads.

With Australia's two largest margarine spread manufacturers - Unilever and Goodman Fielder, who represent 70% of the market - continuing to meet Tick nutrition standards since 1989, the savings mount up.

In fact, as a direct result of their commitment to Tick, 9,662 tonnes of saturated fat and 3,465 tonnes of salt were removed from margarine spreads between 2001 and 2008.<sup>24</sup>

In addition, by 2005 all margarine spreads with the Tick were virtually trans fat free. This made Australians among the first in the world to be able to choose from as many as 50 varieties of virtually trans fat free margarine spreads.



"Our corporate commitment to healthier choices for our customers is the key reason for Goodman Fielder being a founding Tick licensee. As an industry leader using Heart Foundation benchmarks, we have delivered a wide range of healthier margarine spreads for Australians."

*Janet Macdonald, Technical Director, Goodman Fielder Home Ingredients  
20 year commitment to Tick*

"At the same time that Unilever globally was rolling out the technology to remove trans fats from margarine spreads, Unilever in Australia worked with the Heart Foundation to take similar action here. There were huge costs with changing margarine production for small markets like Australia and New Zealand. It was a real challenge to get the product to meet the Tick criteria and still have consistency and taste - but we did it."

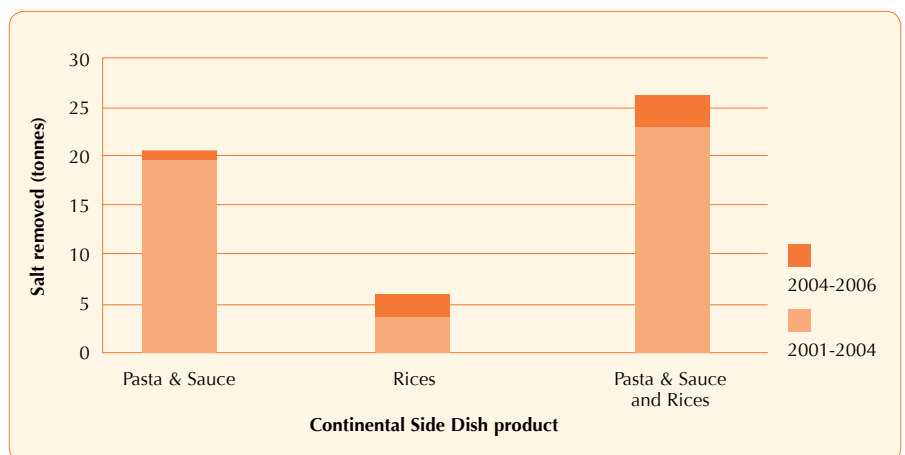
*Megan Cobcroft, Corporate Nutritionist, Unilever Australia  
20 year commitment to Tick*

## Healthier sides too

In 2008 some of the top 10 fastest movers in supermarkets were cook-it-from-scratch meal and convenience options.<sup>25</sup>

The Heart Foundation Tick plays an important role in responding to consumer trends and ensuring people still serve up the right balance of nutrients. In the fast growing pasta and rice side dishes category, the Heart Foundation's key priorities are to lower sodium, saturated fat and trans fat. In reformulating 37 products in the Continental side dishes range to meet Tick criteria, Unilever Australia removed 26 tonnes of salt\* alone in just five years.<sup>26</sup>

Total amount of salt removed from Unilever's Continental Side Dishes Range



<sup>24</sup> Heart Foundation calculations based on volume of margarine consumption. Retail World Annual Reports, 2001-2008 and product share information from Goodman Fielder and Unilever.

<sup>25</sup> Nielsen Australia. Grocery Report; 2008. Available from <http://au.nielsen.com/site/documents/nielsen grocery report 2008.pdf>. Accessed 23 January 2009.

<sup>26</sup> Continental side dishes product reformulation data obtained from Unilever.

\* Table salt is composed of two minerals, sodium and chlorine. One gram of salt is equivalent to 0.4 grams of sodium

# Recognising Commitment

The Heart Foundation Tick owes its 20 years of achievement to the unwavering support of the companies, their leaders and staff, who have accepted our challenge to improve the food supply. Quite simply, we could not achieve our goals without them.

Of course, the job is far from over! Our focus is firmly on the challenges ahead and we look forward to even greater commitment over the coming decades.

20 years committed to Tick	15 years committed to Tick	10 years committed to Tick
Goodman Fielder	GrowSA Ltd	Mayver's Health Time
National Foods Pty Ltd	Foodimex Pty Ltd	Grove Fruit Juice Pty Ltd
Ward McKenzie	Telstar Bakery Pty Ltd	Soya King
Meat & Livestock Australia	Changs Fine Foods	Peppercorn Food Company
Unilever Australia	McCain Foods (Aust) Pty Ltd	Tender Loving Cuisine
Inghams Enterprises Pty Ltd	Fonterra Brands (Australia) Pty Ltd	Sanitarium Health Food Company
Australian Pork Ltd	Simplot Australia Pty Ltd	Kraft Foods Ltd
M.E.B. Foods Pty Ltd	Parmalat Australia Ltd	Lloyd Brooks Pty Ltd
SunRice	Peerless Foods	Macro Meats – Gourmet Game
Murray Goulburn Co-op	Kellogg (Aust.) Pty. Ltd.	Fresh Cheese Company
George Weston Foods Ltd	Bulla Dairy Foods	Nestlé Australia Ltd
	SPC Ardmona Operations Ltd	

**For a full list of all participating companies and products or for more details about the Heart Foundation Tick and its impact on improving the foods Australians eat, go to [www.heartfoundation.org.au/tick](http://www.heartfoundation.org.au/tick)**

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