Announcing the Meiji Nutritional Profiling System (Meiji NPS) Evaluating nutrients in food items and apply results to develop products that help consumers choose foods that offer higher nutritional value

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Meiji Co., Ltd. (President and Representative Director: Katsunari Matsuda) announces the formulation of the Meiji Nutritional Profiling System (Meiji NPS).

The term NPS[*1] denotes a system of evaluating the nutritional value of foods. It adopts a scientific approach to assess or classify foods based on their nutrient quality. Diverse NPSs are currently utilized across the world. We principally aim to contribute to global health from the Japanese perspective. Hence, the Meiji NPS specifically attends to Japanese dietary habits and comprises two types of Meiji NPS: a system for adults[*2] and a system to prevent frailty[*3] in the elderly.[*2]

The Meiji NPS will enable us to strive to offer products with higher nutritional value to help consumers choose foods according to their nutritional value.

1. The Meiji NPS Context

1.9 billion adults are overweight or obese, while 462 million are underweight.[*4] The "double burden of malnutrition," describes the phenomenon of the coexistence of overnutrition and undernutrition and has become a major global issue in recent years.[*5] It is extremely difficult to resolve both issues of overnutrition and undernutrition; in fact, most regions of the world are unable to resolve either. Additionally, health and nutritional issues vary depending on regions, lifestyles, and life stages.

Japan is also confronted with the "double burden of malnutrition." It faces the risks of obesity and other lifestyle diseases linked to overnutrition as well as major health-related difficulties such as age-related frailty and thinness among young women which are based on undernutrition. Excess sodium intake is also an issue that needs to be resolved in Japan. It is thought that the majority of such nutritional problems can be ameliorated by appropriate eating habits. However, every food product encompasses various nutrients. Consumers may not have the wherewithal to easily and accurately choose foods that provide them with an overall balanced diet by evaluating the nutritional benefits of every available food item or combination of foods.

Food companies should offer products with higher nutritional value to assist consumers make food choices. They should also provide due information that can allow consumers to make healthier decisions about their nutrition.

At Meiji, we have devised a system that we hope will contribute to the realization of this ideal: an NPS that enables an easily comprehensible summary of the nutritional value of every food item.

2. Our vision for the Meiji NPS

For more than 100 years, we have been striving to widen the world of "Tastiness and Enjoyment" and meet all expectations regarding "Health and Reassurance." We have recently established the Meiji Nutrition Statement[*6] as an aspect of our approach to advance our efforts to mitigate health difficulties faced by individual consumers in diverse nations and regions. We aspire to offer our customers foods that suit their respective lifestyles and life stages. We realize that food is not valued solely for nutrition and that enjoyment and satisfaction are also crucial.

More than 100 different types of nutritional profiling systems exist around the world, and every country adopts systems apt to their circumstances. We hope the Meiji NPS will contribute to the resolution of health difficulties in Japan by addressing Japanese dietary habits. We designed two types of Meiji NPS in recognition of the differing health needs of discrete consumer groups: a system for adults[*2] and a system to prevent frailty[*3] in the elderly.[*2]

The Meiji NPS enables us to assess the nutritional value of food products while also attending to unique Japanese dietary habits. We will offer products with greater nutritional value based on these evaluations, increasing the nutritional value of our existing products and developing new products with higher nutritional value. Some foods could also offer lower nutritional value while providing other distinctive benefits such as enjoyment and satisfaction. Meiji will endeavor to offer products in appropriate sizes and enable customers to make informed decisions about the appropriate consumption quantities and frequencies of such food items.

Meiji will publish scholarly research and issue other relevant information to inform the public of the findings obtained through the creation of this NPS and possible related future initiatives. We also hope to collaborate with external experts to aggressively promote efforts to alleviate the health issues currently confronting Japan.

Meiji is committed to directly tackling diverse health issues and facilitating the realization of a future comprising health for all humanity.

3. Future initiatives

We will launch a Meiji NPS website in 2023

*1: About nutritional profiling systems (NPSs)

An NPS is a system of evaluating the nutritional value of food items based on their nutrient quantities. More than 100 different types of NPSs exist around the world and their evaluation systems vary. These systems are also referred as nutritional profile models and other names.

Nutrients such as sugars, saturated fatty acids, and salt are often listed as dietary substances whose intake should be limited; conversely, the ingestion of protein and dietary fiber is typically encouraged. Every NPS offers advantages and disadvantages, but all NPSs incorporate some scientific basis allowing them to assess the nutritional value of foods.

Some countries are undertaking initiatives to encourage disease prevention and improve health and are endeavoring to make it easier for consumers to choose foods based on their nutritional value. Such

efforts include labeling product packages with scores calculated based on an NPS.

*2: The system for adults elucidates nutrients that should be limited (such as sugars, saturated fatty acids, and salt) as well as encouraged nutrients (such as proteins and dietary fibers) in accordance with Japanese nutritional habits. We decided to use an evaluation method that scores the nutritional value of food items based on the amounts of these nutrients. In instituting the system to prevent frailty in the elderly, we employed an evaluation method that modified the system for adults to prevent frailty in the elderly; for instance, by not limiting saturated fatty acids.

*3: About frailty
Frailty is defined as the weakening of the mind and body, including age-related muscle strength and cognitive function decline. The elderly are highly susceptible to frailty. Left unchecked, age-related weaknesses can advance the need for nursing care. However, appropriate actions can help them maintain and improve their lifestyle-related functions.

*4: From the WHO Fact Sheet "Malnutrition (June 9, 2021)"
https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/malnutrition

*5: The Double Burden of Malnutrition: Policy Brief (2017) WHO, Geneva
The double burden of malnutrition is when both undernutrition and overnutrition are seen within the same group of people, or when an individual experiences undernutrition at one point in time, then overnutrition during a different period, resulting in the existence of both undernutrition and overnutrition.

*6: Refer to the following link for details on the Meiji Nutrition Statement.
https://www.meiji.com/global/food/nutrition-statement.html