

ERS Peer Review Plan

Preliminary Title: The prevalence of competing and complementary claims on U.S. food product packaging: A case study of claims on milk and yogurt

Type of Report (ERR, EIB, EB) EB

Agency: Economic Research Service [X] Influential Scientific Information
USDA [] Highly Influential Scientific Assessment

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Subject of Review: Food products sold at retail stores may carry a variety of claims on packaging, including claims about human health (low fat, good source of calcium), environmental stewardship (USDA Organic), and the types of inputs used in making the food (non-GMO). This study presents a quantitative baseline on the use of label claims, highlighting claims that point to farm production methods. Descriptive statistics for 2022 show which claims appeared most frequently on food packaging, the number of claims that appeared on products, which ones were complementary (appearing together), and which ones competed for consumers' attention (appearing on separate products). The focus is on fluid milk and yogurt. The data revealed a wide range of claims on these two dairy products. Label Insight and Circana (formerly IRI) data were used to identify foods that bear various claims. At least one claim appeared on 95.6 percent of milk products and on 97.8 percent of yogurt products. Most dairy products had multiple claims. Complementary claims fell into two distinct groups. Verified claims that required farmers, suppliers, or retailers to incur some expenses appeared together, and claims that required no new activities or costs appeared together. The two groups rarely overlapped.

Purpose of Review: The purpose of the review is to ensure the high-quality of the economic analysis, transparent explanation of methods, objective interpretation of results, and effective communication to the intended audience.

Type of Review: [] Panel Review [X] Individual Reviewers
[] Alternative Process (Briefly Explain):

Timing of Review (Est.): Start: 10/28/2024 Completed: 12/20/2024

Number of Reviewers: [] 3 or fewer [X] 4 to 10 [] More than 10

Primary Disciplines/Types of Expertise Needed for Review: Economists

Reviewers selected by: [X] Agency [] Designated Outside Organization

