Scientific and Funding Activities for Generating Food Composition Data for South Africa

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Introduction

• As far as we know the earliest effort to compile food composition data for South Africa was by Dr Fox in the 1960s.

• In 1981 the first edition of the MRC Food Composition Tables was published.
SOUTH AFRICAN FOOD COMPOSITION TABLES
Published since 1981

Software Products containing the
South African Food Composition Database

Users:
Researchers, universities, dietitians, food industry

Users:
Private practicing dietitians, medical doctors
Management of the SOUTH AFRICAN FOOD COMPOSITION DATA SYSTEM (SAFOODS) at the Medical Research Council

Current Activities

• Updating activities:
  – Cereals and cereal products in progress
  – Updating of FoodFinder3 software program in progress

• Data generation

• New business plan

• New national group formed
  – SAFOODS Advisory group (SAFDAG)

• New website (http://safoods.mrc.ac.za)
Data Generation

- Not the main aim of researchers at the Medical Research Council

- Collaborate with others, e.g. the Agricultural Research Council, e.g. meat analysis

- Food industry funded food analyses
  - Analysis of staple foods (Medical Research Council)
    - maize meal and maize meal porridge (fortified meal)
    - White bread flour, white and brown bread
  - Analysis of South African margarines/spreads, vegetable oils and fast foods
    - Quantification of total fat and fatty acids

New Business Plan for SAFOODS

- Historically SAFOODS based at the South African Medical Research Council (MRC)

- Need to expand activities beyond MRC borders

- Additional funding from MRC management to develop new business plan

- Aim to motivate and obtain national funding for generating more data and building an extensive country-specific food composition database
Formation of a National body to advance food composition

• Formation of the SAFOODS Advisory Group (SAFDAG)
  – Workshop to form national body - November 2008

Aim of SAFDAG

• Main aim
  – To form a national body that will strive to advance food composition data activities of SAFOODS

• Specific objectives
  – To compile guidelines for the generation of food composition data for SAFOODS
  – Generate new data for inclusion in SAFOODS
  – Identify and compile existing data for SAFOODS
  – Meet user requirements
SAFDAG working groups and chairpersons

• SAFDAG management [Dr P Wolmarans, Medical Research Council (MRC)]

• Seven working groups established
  – Finances (Dr N Bhagwandin, MRC)
  – Sampling procedures (Prof H Schönfeldt, University of Pretoria)
  – Data generation (Dr I van Heerden, Agricultural Research Council)
  – Laboratories (Dr P Van Jaarsveld, MRC)
  – Food Composition Compilation (Dr P Wolmarans/Ms N Danster, MRC)
  – Software product development (Dr C Seebregts, MRC)
  – Education/users (Prof E Wentzel-Viljoen, University of North-West)

SAFDAG Workshops

• Chairpersons of working groups met in May 2009

• Compilation of working document for food composition compilation
  – Aim of the group
  – Specific objectives
  – Activities
  – Co-workers: SAFOODS

• Discussion of the documents and recommendations for completion of the document

• November 2009: Follow-up meeting with stakeholders to give feedback on the activities of the chairpersons

• Funding – lobby organisations, food industry
Market Survey
Wentzel-Viljoen and Wolmarans

- Market survey to identify challenges and requirements for SAFOODS

- Target audience:
  - Dietitians and nutritionists – client service and research
  - Universities – teaching and research
  - Food industry – product development
  - Magazines – general public communications

- Protocol developed
  - Approval by Ethics Committee of the South African Medical Research Council

- Pilot study (questionnaire finalisation)

- Email questionnaire study in progress

http://SAFOODS.mrc.ac.za (online December 2009)
Summary and Conclusion

- Food composition activities have grown immensely in South Africa since its early start in the 1980’s.

- New and concerted efforts by several stakeholders have been put into place to co-ordinate data generation and compilation activities in South Africa.

- Funding is a critical aspect and the main strategy to secure more funding for the country-specific SAFOODS is the writing of a five year business plan. This will enable us to lobby for money within and outside of government structures.

THANK YOU