

Kraft Foods to use iodized salt in processed foods in Egypt

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<http://www.gainhealth.org/country-stories/kraft-foods-makes-socially-responsible-decision-use-iodized-salt-processed-foods>

Kraft Foods in Egypt has decided to use iodized salt in processed foods. The decision should improve iodine intake for millions of Egyptians. Insufficient iodine in diets causes irreversible mental and physical impairment. Iodized salt is the main way people consume their daily iodine, and many people get most of their salt from processed foods. A food company that chooses iodized salt over non-iodized salt is socially-responsible and contributes to the nutrition of consumers.

The GAIN-UNICEF Universal Salt Iodization Partnership Project works with food producers in several countries to support them in replacing non-iodized salt with iodized salt in their recipes.

GAIN spoke with Mr. Gawad Abaza, Managing Director at Kraft Foods, Mashreq Region, about Kraft Foods Egypt's decision to use iodized salt in their entire product range. Kraft recently became a member of the GAIN Business Alliance, a global partnership to explore new business models, best practices and sustainable approaches in the fight against malnutrition.

Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN): Why does your company choose to use iodized salt?

Gawad Abaza (GA): Consumer health is central to Kraft Food Egypt's decision making. Our company policy ensures that our products are made of the best ingredients for the consumer's interest. Iodized salt contributes to the required intake of this essential mineral and helps to prevent deficiencies.

GAIN: What is the cost of iodized salt versus non-iodized salt?

GA: There is no issue of cost differential as we only go through our certified suppliers who provide us with top quality ingredients.

GAIN: How does iodized salt compare with non-iodized salt in the taste and quality of your products?

GA: To my knowledge, there is no difference. At Kraft Foods we did not conduct research to prove that. However, ingredients go through the R&D center where they are tested and certified. Product changes go through consumer preference tests to ensure we always meet consumer needs.

GAIN: What lessons have you learned about communicating the importance of iodized salt?

GA: At Kraft Foods we feel that the consumer has to be educated and informed on all the contents of food items. We ensure that all information and ingredients are clearly indicated on the packaging in order to ensure that product ingredients are well represented and labels are compliant with regulatory requirements.

GAIN: What kind of information do you feel is needed to encourage companies to utilize iodized salt in their products?

GA: Companies should always have the consumers' best interest at heart. This should be the point from which they operate and make their decisions. Consumer awareness of iodine deficiency is vital to enable people to understand why they need a certain intake of iodine per day. They also need to be aware of the sources of iodine intake, for example iodized salt.



Mr. Gawad Abaza, Kraft Foods, Egypt