Platform on Diet, Physical Activity and Health

Bruce Silverglade
Center for Science in the Public Interest
US Co-Chair TACD Food Working Group

Lost in Translation

Improvements are occurring on both sides of the Atlantic on:
- Food composition
- Advertising and marketing
- Labeling

Lost in Translation

But . . .
changes are not occurring consistently on both sides of the Atlantic

Lost in Translation

This is problematic because:
- Both the US and the EU are suffering from an epidemic of obesity and diet related disease
- The same companies are doing business in the US and the EU

Lost in Translation

As a general matter:
- Improvements by a multi-national food company in food composition, labeling and marketing practices should be adopted on a Transatlantic basis

Lost in Translation

Examples:
- UK salt reduction – Nestlé’s Nesquik chocolate drink contains 96 mg of sodium per 240 ml in the UK, while the same size drink in the US contains 150 mg of sodium
Lost in Translation
Examples:
- Masterfoods (Mars Candy) provides full nutrition labeling in the US but claims in the EU that there is not enough space on the label for more than a few nutrients

Lost in Translation
Examples:
- PepsiCo, Coca-Cola, and Cadbury have agreed to stop selling soft drinks in vending machines in all US schools
- No similar agreement in the EU

Lost in Translation
- McDonalds has stopped, or reduced the use of oils high in trans fats to fry its French fries in some EU members states but has not done so in the US

Lost in Translation
Consistent Transatlantic policies are possible:
- Kraft has a (global) policy not to advertise in TV, radio, or print media to children under six
- Coca-Cola has pledged (globally) not to directly promote its brands to elementary school children

Lost in Translation
Reasons for inconsistent actions:
- Corporate organization and decentralization?
- Actions taken only where governments pressure companies?
- Let’s explore further . . .
Lost in Translation

- Differences in public health priorities and cultural norms can be taken into account as appropriate

- But as a general matter, improvements in composition, marketing and advertising should be made consistently

Thank You

- Bruce Silverglade
- bsilverglade@cspinet.org
- www.cspinet.org