Do flavourings have an impact on the nutritional value of a food or drink product?

Flavourings do not make any relevant contribution to the nutritional value of a food or drink product. Their contribution is to improve product taste, while providing the same flavouring experience even in products with lower energy value.

The European Flavour Association (EFFA) welcomes the European Commission's (EC) Farm to Fork Strategy and the associated initiative on front-of-pack (FOP) nutrition labelling. As an important ingredient supplier to the European food & drink industry, the European flavour industry forms an integral part of the Farm to Fork value chain. When it comes to the safety in any sector, transparency is key for authorities, industries, and consumers alike.

Any future European Union (EU) FOP labelling scheme should raise consumers' awareness and be built in a collaborative way between all stakeholders. In the context of the use of flavourings, EFFA looks forward to constructively engage with all stakeholders involved and provide additional (scientific) information. Our common aim should be to achieve a harmonised FOP labelling system throughout the EU based on scientific evidence.

Against this backdrop, EFFA would like to clarify the negligible impact of flavourings on the nutritional value of a finished food or drink product. EFFA would also like to provide some further facts about flavourings.

What are flavourings and why do we use them?

Flavourings are ingredients that bring flavour, taste and variety to the food we eat. Flavourings are not intended to be consumed as such but are added to food in order to impart or modify odour and/or taste. Flavourings do not have an exclusive sweet, sour, or salty taste.[1]

Creativity

Flavourings give to food that signature flavour and taste that brings back memories and generates emotions. They provide us with numerous flavours and taste sensations. They also improve the overall perception and increase recognition of the taste profile, recovering flavours lost during processing.

Sustainability

Flavourings help us use the earth limited resources sustainably. Flavouring companies are innovative, resource-efficient and committed to using greener processes, that in turn reduce the use of raw materials. An example of this is the Sustainability Charter, launched by the global flavour and fragrance associations.

Conscious diet

Flavourings help to support a conscious diet (or lifestyle) by maintaining great taste also for products with reduced salt, sugar, or fat to make the healthy choice easier for consumers. Moreover, flavourings contribute to increased consumer acceptance and preference of nutritional products.

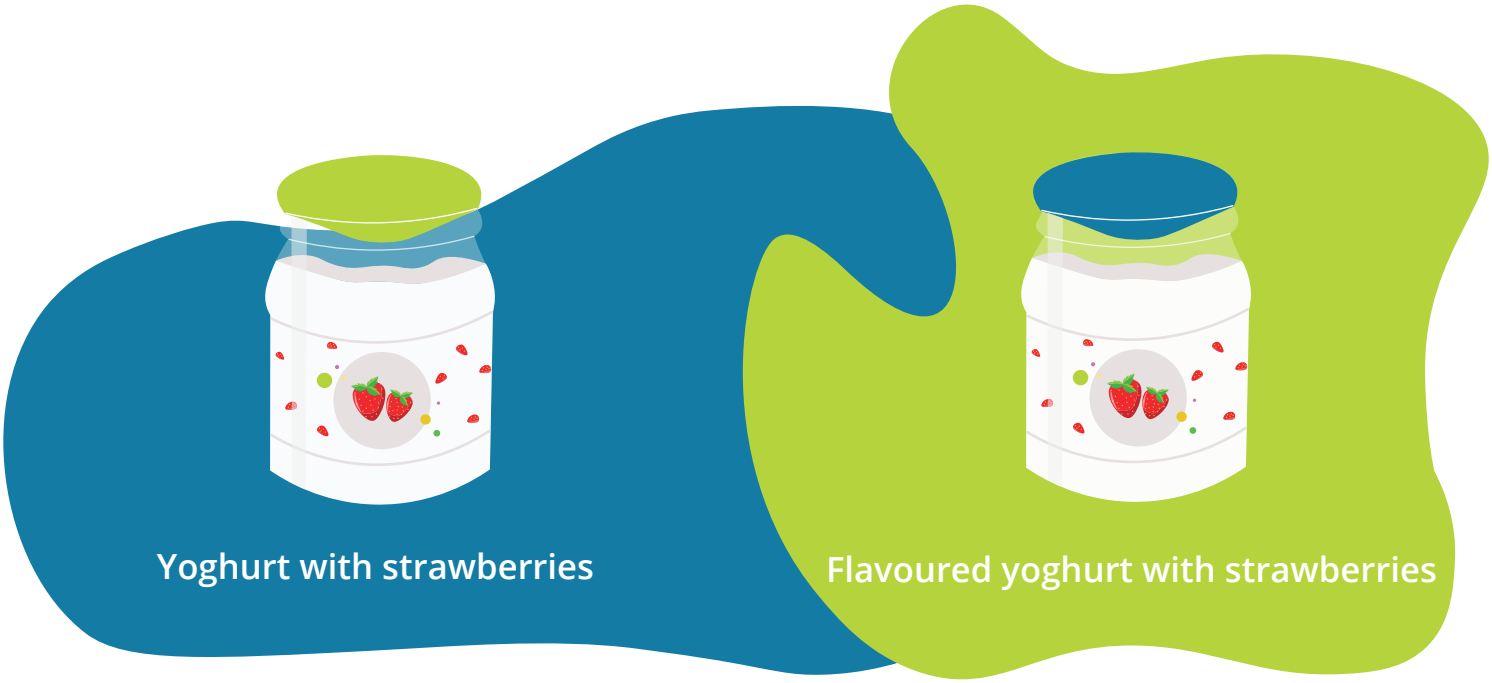
Why do flavourings have a negligible impact on the nutritional value of a final food product?

- Flavourings are added in very small quantities to a food or drink product. Generally, they amount for approximately 0.01% - 2% of the food or drink product, depending on the type of product.
- As a general rule, flavouring ingredients do not belong to a specific nutrient category and are not expected to make any relevant contribution to the nutritional value of the food.
- The nutritional value of a final food product depends on the other common ingredients and their combination.

Therefore: the contribution of flavourings to the total nutritional value of a food or drink product is limited and even negligible.

[1] Regulation (EU) No 1334/2008 on flavourings.

Let's take as an example: The energy value of a yoghurt with strawberries



Energy value: 366 kj (87kcal) /100g

Energy value: 366 kj (87kcal) /100g

The energy values of both yoghurts are equivalent. The flavourings impact is so minimal that according to the EU rounding guidelines linked to Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011, it can be regarded as negligible. Therefore, the energy value appearing in the labelling will be the same.

This also applies to other food and drink products. So it does not matter if the product chosen by the consumer contains flavourings or not, the nutritional impact of that product will be the same. This is because flavourings, added to a food or drink product, have a negligible caloric impact.

Scientific references

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (2003) Food energy - methods of analysis and conversion factors. FAO Food And Nutrition Paper 77, Report of a Technical Workshop, Rome, 3-6 December 2002 *"Chapter 3: Calculation Of The Energy Content Of Foods – Energy Conversion Factors".*

Merrill, A.L. and Watt, B.K. (1973) Energy Value of Foods: Basis and Derivation. Agriculture Handbook No. 74, ARS United States Department of Agriculture, Washington DC.
https://www.ars.usda.gov/ARSUserFiles/80400525/Data/Classics/ah74.pdf

Legal references

Codex Alimentarius	Guidelines on Nutritional Labelling (CAC/GL-2-1985 (Rev. 2 –2011)
EU	Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 on the provision of food information to consumers Regulation (EU) No 1334/2008 on flavourings

Avenue des Arts 6, 1210 Brussels | info@effa.eu | +32 2 214 20 40 | www.effa.eu