

Offering healthy choices to consumers



The **success story** of reformulation efforts by the margarine sector



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EUROPEAN MARGARINE ASSOCIATION

# Reformulation achievements of the margarine sector

Thanks to the industry's on-going efforts, the fat composition of margarines and spreads has been continuously improved over time so that they are no longer the main source of *trans* fatty acids (TFA) in the diet. Dietary surveys in Europe dated between 1999 and 2012 indicate that the *trans* fatty acids intake has been below 1% in Western Europe for over 13 years<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>.

Thus *trans* fatty acids are no longer a public health concern for the vast majority of European population.

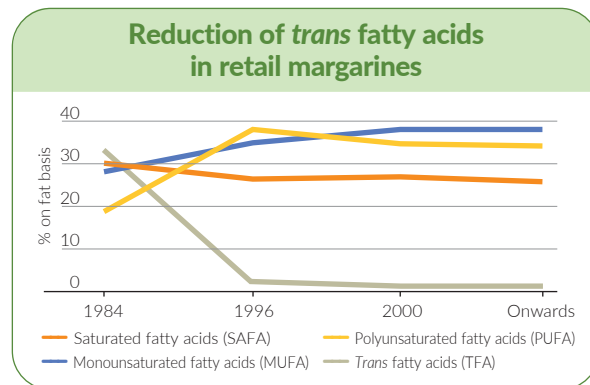
“RECENT DIETARY SURVEYS INDICATE THAT THE INTAKES OF TRANS FATTY ACID HAVE DECREASED IN A NUMBER OF EU COUNTRIES, MAINLY DUE TO REFORMULATION OF FOOD PRODUCTS, E.G. FAT SPREADS, TO REDUCE THE TRANS FATTY ACID CONTENT.”

EFSA 2004 Opinion<sup>5</sup>

## Improvements of retail margarines and spreads

**Nowadays, retail margarines contain less than 1% *trans* fatty acids (on product basis).**

The removal of *trans* fatty acids from retail margarines and spreads has been accompanied by other beneficial changes: the level of mono- and polyunsaturated fatty acids has consistently increased, while the level of saturated fatty acids was reduced.



“TRANS FATTY ACIDS HAVE BEEN REDUCED OR ELIMINATED FROM RETAIL FATS AND SPREADS IN MANY PARTS OF THE WORLD.”

WHO/FAO, 2003<sup>6</sup>

(1) Hulshof KF, van Erp-Baart MA, Anttolainen M, Becker W, Church SM, et al. (1999) Intake of fatty acids in western Europe with emphasis on *trans* fatty acids: the TRANSFAIR Study. *Eur J Clin Nutr* 53: 143–157

(2) Pot GK, Prynne CJ, Roberts C, Olson A, Nicholson SK, et al. (2012) National Diet and Nutrition Survey: fat and fatty acid intake from the first year of the rolling programme and comparison with previous surveys. *Br J Nutr* 107: 405–415. doi:10.1017/S0007114511002911

(3) AFSSA (2009) Avis de l'Agence française de sécurité sanitaire des aliments sur l'estimation des apports en acides gras *trans* de la population française.

(4) Capita R, Alonso-Calleja C (2003) Intake of nutrients associated with an increased risk of cardiovascular disease in a Spanish population. *Int J Food Sci Nutr* 54: 57–75. doi:10.1080/096374803/000062001

(5) EFSA opinion of the Scientific Panel on dietetic products, nutrition and allergies on a request from the Commission related to the presence of *trans* fatty acids in foods and the effects on human health of the consumption of *trans* fatty acids (Request EFSA-Q-2003-022), adopted on 8 July 2004

(6) Diet, nutrition and the prevention of chronic disease, Report of a joint WHO/FAO expert consultation

## Improvements of margarines used as ingredients in food products (B2B)

Some margarines are not sold directly to the consumers but are used as ingredients in food products (e.g. pastries, cakes, other bakery products, etc.). They are also called Business-to-business (B2B) margarines. Between 2004 and 2014, thanks to on-going reformulations, IMACE Members have reduced the average *trans* fatty acid level of their B2B margarine products by more than five times<sup>7</sup>. **Nowadays, B2B margarines only contain 1.3% *trans* fatty acids on average.**

This drastic reduction was achieved, while keeping saturated fatty acid content on fat basis as low as possible. This was despite the additional challenges of reformulating while maintaining technical performances of the products.

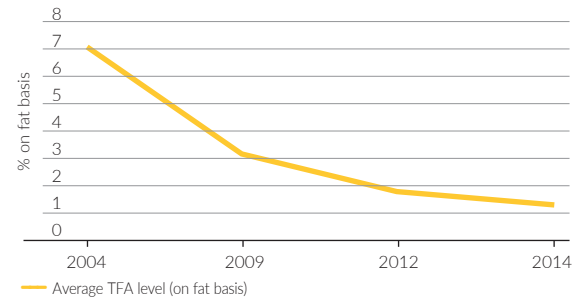
## Voluntary agreements towards *trans* fatty acid reduction

All these efforts towards nutritional improvements are made on a voluntary basis by the margarine manufacturers, led by IMACE. In 1995, a Code of Practice was created to formalise the members' effort with a reduction target, and it has been updated in 2003, 2007 and again in 2013. **IMACE Members are now aiming at a *trans* fatty acid content below 2% on fat basis, in all margarines and spreads.**

“PUBLIC CONCERNS ABOUT OBESITY AND CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE HAVE INCREASED OUR INTEREST IN MINIMIZING THE CONSUMPTION OF SATURATED FATS AND *TRANS* FATS. THESE CONCERNS HAVE BEEN A DRIVING FORCE IN THE LIPID INDUSTRY TO DEVELOP FATS AND FAT-BASED INGREDIENTS WITH IMPROVED NUTRITIONAL PROPERTIES.”

WHO/FAO, 2008<sup>8</sup>

## Reduction of *trans* fatty acids in B2B margarines



(7) from 7.1% to 1.3% (on fat basis) from 2004 to 2014. Based on an internal IMACE survey covering 75% of the B2B market for margarines in Europe.

(8) Fats and Fatty acids in Human Nutrition, Joint FAO/WHO Expert Consultation Report, November 2008

# Choosing **fats** wisely for your health

## Which fats should we prefer in our diet?

Everyone needs a moderate amount of good vegetable oils and fats. Fats give energy for the body, provide essential nutrients, satiate our hunger and make food taste delicious! But not all fats are equal. This is why the key is to control our overall fat consumption while optimising its content. **Because margarines and vegetable fat spreads have fewer saturated fatty acids and more mono- and polyunsaturated fatty acids than butter, they are a healthy choice to help us balance our fatty acid consumption.**

## Margarines and spreads belong to a healthy and balanced diet

### → An important source of essential fatty acids

These essential fatty acids are polyunsaturated fatty acids and belong to either the omega-6 or the omega-3 family. They are naturally present in vegetable oils and are called essential fatty acids, because our body cannot make them and therefore they need to be provided by the diet. **Regular consumption of margarines and spreads thus helps to ensure an adequate intake of essential fatty acids into the diet.**

### Omega-6 (LA - Linoleic Acid) and Omega-3 (ALA - $\alpha$ -Linolenic Acid) essential fatty acids have various functions and benefits in our body:

- They are structural components of all tissues and are indispensable for growth and renewal of body cells.
- They are needed for normal growth and development of children.
- They help maintain normal blood cholesterol levels.

### → Helping you taking care of your heart health

Lowering the intake of saturated fatty acids, while increasing the intake of unsaturated fatty acids is a recognised way to take care of your heart. Choose in particular the margarines high in unsaturated fatty acids and the essential polyunsaturated fatty acids Omega-3 and Omega-6. They help maintain a healthy cholesterol level and thus take care of you heart.

### → A good carrier for vitamins A, D and E

Vitamins A, D and E are better absorbed by our body in presence of fats. These vitamins are necessary to ensure a good immune system, eyesight and a healthy skin (Vitamin A), strong bones and teeth (Vitamin D) and antioxydation (Vitamin E). Margarines can provide all these vitamins.

## Margarines and spreads are a very varied family

The retail margarines can be found in tubs, liquids or as bricks and are suitable for spreading, cooking or baking at home. They are also used as an ingredient in many of your favourite foods. Their composition may vary depending on the format or dish, so look at the nutrition label for detailed information.

“REPLACING SATURATED FATS (SAFA) WITH MONOUNSATURATED FATS (MUFA) AND POLYUNSATURATED FATS (PUFA) CONTRIBUTES TO THE MAINTENANCE OF NORMAL BLOOD CHOLESTEROL LEVELS.”

EFSA, 2011<sup>9</sup>

(9) EFSA Panel on Dietetic products, Nutrition and Energy (NDA), EFSA Journal 2011; 9(4):2069, January 2011

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EUROPEAN MARGARINE ASSOCIATION

Avenue de Tervueren, 168 box 12 • B-1150 Brussels  
Tel. : +32 2 772 33 53 • Fax : +32 2 771 47 53  
Imace.ifma@imace.org • www.imace.org

