

Sodium, Agriprocessors and Trader Joe's

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Sodium Labels and Trader Joe's Private Label Whole Turkeys

Food laboratory testing completed on Trader Joe's All Natural Glatt Kosher Turkeys and Rubashkin's Aaron's Best Glatt Kosher Turkeys found that the sodium levels as printed on the Nutrition Facts label were false. Both products are packed by Agriprocessors, Inc., a large kosher producer based in Postville, IA.

Nutrition Facts labels on Trader Joe's All Natural Glatt Kosher Turkeys state a sodium level of 80 mg per 4 oz serving size. Independent testing conducted by Strasburger & Siegel, Inc. Food Testing Laboratories, undertaken at the request of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) International Union, reveals that Trader Joe's consumers may have been exposed to sodium levels up to 351 mg per serving size, four times higher than stated on the Nutrition Facts label. This equates to 339 % above the stated sodium levels (please see below for full comparison results). This is far above the 20% variation allowed by the United States Department of Agriculture.¹

Further testing conducted on Rubashkin's Aaron's Best Glatt Kosher Turkey, a national brand, also revealed sodium levels far in excess of the stated amount on the package. The Nutrition Facts state a sodium level of 150 mg per serving size. Testing revealed, however, sodium levels of up to 357 mg per serving size, 138% above stated sodium levels (please see below for full comparison results). This, too, is far above the 20% variation as allowed by the United States Department of Agriculture.²

Nutrition Facts Labeling

In 1990, Congress passed the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act. This act mandates that all prepackaged foods provide a "Nutrition Facts" label which also shows "nutrients associated with diet-related disease."³ As a result, the nutrition label lists nutrients that should be limited, most notably fat, cholesterol and sodium. Regarding these nutrients, the FDA states "Eating too much fat, saturated fat, *trans* fat, cholesterol, or sodium may increase your risk of certain chronic diseases, like heart disease, some cancers, or high blood pressure."⁴

¹ National Archives and Records Administration, "Code of Federal Regulations Title 9 CFR 381 Nutrition Labeling," <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/index.html>.

² Ibid

³ World Health Organization, "Nutrition labels and health claims: the global regulatory environment," <http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2004/9241591714.pdf>.

⁴ FDA, "How to Understand and Use the Nutrition Facts Label," <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/foodlab.html>.

Consumers rely on these Nutrition Facts labels to make informed decisions. In 2004, a World Health Organization (WHO) report quotes a study that asserts “75% of a sample of 453 women said that labels always or sometimes affected their purchasing decisions.”⁵

Sodium and Health

Sodium, or salt, is present in a variety of foods. According to the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI), the amount of sodium consumed “in the typical American diet is a major cause of high blood pressure (hypertension).”⁶ In fact, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) claim that “High blood pressure (hypertension) was listed as a primary or contributing cause of death for 277,000 Americans in 2002.”⁷ The CDC estimated high blood pressure costs of \$63.5 billion in 2006.⁸

High-blood pressure is the most commonly known problem linked with sodium intake, but it is not the only one. Also of concern are “gastric ulcers and cancers.”⁹ The CDC estimates:

1 of 3 American adults has high blood pressure or hypertension. Having high blood pressure increases one’s chance for developing heart disease, a stroke, and other serious conditions.¹⁰

In order to maintain a healthy blood pressure, the CDC recommends that an individual “watch the sodium” in prepared foods.¹¹ Some groups are more at risk than others and the USDA’s *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* recommends that the “middle-aged and older adults” should consume less sodium.¹²

The issue of salt and its role in developing high blood pressure is a matter of concern for public health advocates, such as the American Medical Association, and they are urging the FDA to consider stricter regulations for sodium content in food.¹³

⁵ World Health Organization, “Nutrition labels and health claims: the global regulatory environment,” <http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2004/9241591714.pdf>.

⁶ Center for Science in the Public Interest, “Salt: The Forgotten Killer,” http://www.cspinet.org/salt/salt_factsheet.pdf.

⁷ CDC, “High Blood Pressure,” <http://www.cdc.gov/bloodpressure/facts.htm>

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Chicago Tribune, “Diet experts compare salt to a global plague,” http://www.chicagotribune.com/features/lifestyle/health/chic-1007_health1_roct07.1_5361585.story?ctrack=1&cset=true.

¹⁰ CDC, “High blood pressure,” <http://www.cdc.gov/bloodpressure/index.htm>

¹¹ CDC, “Preventing and Controlling High Blood Pressure,” <http://www.cdc.gov/bloodpressure/prevention.htm>

¹² USDA, “Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005,” <http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/document/html/chapter8.htm>.

¹³ Reuters, “FDA mulls stricter regulation of salt in food,” <http://www.reuters.com/article/health-SP-A/idUSN2956789820071130>.

Trader Joe’s All Natural Glatt Kosher Turkeys – Packed by Rubashkin’s

- Establishment # P4653A - Agriprocessors, Inc., Postville, Iowa
- Serving size (on package): 4 ounces (oz) = 112 grams (g)
- 4 oz = 112 g
- Stated amount of sodium (on package): 80 mg

Sample No.	Sodium amount as stated on Nutrition Facts label (4 oz serving size = 112 g)	Sodium (Na) per 100g as shown by lab tests	Lab results calculated per 4oz serving size (112g = 4 oz)	Difference in sodium levels between Nutrition Facts label and lab results (per 112g = 4oz)	Percentage above stated sodium levels
1	80	313.77	351.4224	271.4224	339.28%
2	80	235.90	264.2080	184.2080	230.26%
3	80	306.41	343.1792	263.1792	328.97%
Average	80	285.36	319.6032	239.6032	299.50%

*Results are derived from laboratory tests conducted by Strasburger & Siegel, Inc. Food Testing Laboratories – Please see attachment for original document

Rubashkin’s Aaron’s Best Glatt Kosher Turkey

- Establishment # P4653A - Agriprocessors, Inc., Postville, Iowa
- Serving size (on package): 4 ounces (oz) = 112 g
- 4 oz = 112 g
- Stated amount of sodium (on package): 150 mg

Sample No.	Sodium amount as stated on Nutrition Facts label (4 oz serving size = 112 g)	Sodium (Na) per 100g as shown by lab tests	Lab results calculated per 4oz serving size (112g = 4 oz)	Difference in sodium levels between Nutrition Facts label and lab results (per 112g = 4oz)	Percentage above stated sodium levels
1	150	239.68	268.4416	118.4416	78.96%
2	150	319.23	357.5376	207.5376	138.36%
3	150	212.94	238.4928	88.4928	59.00%
Average	150	257.28	288.1573	138.1573	92.10%

*Results are derived from laboratory tests conducted by Strasburger & Siegel, Inc. Food Testing Laboratories – Please see attachment for original document