

## AIMS:

The last edition of the French food composition table was published in printed format in 1995. The French food composition table needs to be updated to meet the needs of the recent INCA-2 national food consumption survey (2005-2006).

Moreover, in order to comply with users' demands and participate actively in the EuroFIR (European Food Information Resource Network) project, it was decided to publish the new food composition table on the Internet.

## METHODS:

The French national nutrient data bank team belongs to the **Food Safety Agency (AFSSA)**, a government agency whose role is to provide monitoring alert, evaluation and research services on the health and nutritional risks present in human food and animal feed. Its opinions serve as scientific bases for political decision-making. Although AFSSA has no direct regulatory pressure on industry, governmental recommendations (e.g. salt, added sugar, trans fatty acids) and emerging regulations encourage industry to participate in the database.

Major food manufacturers were contacted in 2005-2006 directly or via joint-trade organizations. Contracts were written between AFSSA and companies to assure confidentiality of industry data; only aggregated generic foods will be published.

**Table 1. Criteria used to evaluate quality of data from industry**

### Data from analysis:

- Food description
- Unambiguous identification of component and unit
- Number of analyses per year (>2, 1, unknown)
- Analytical method used (official method, method named, method unknown)
- Laboratory accreditation or validation of method
- Laboratory quality control

### Data from calculation:

- Food description
- Unambiguous identification of component and unit
- Source of data on composition of ingredients (manufacturer of ingredients, French food composition table, or unknown)
- Calculation method (process taken into account or not)
- Validation of calculation by analysis (at least once a year)

**Figure 1. New AFSSA website for French food composition database (<http://www.afssa.fr>)**



## RESULTS:

Fifty companies (including one retail chain) participated in the project. Most data was provided in Excel spreadsheet format, but some also arrived on paper. Data ranged from label information to complete nutrient analysis:

- 650 food products (all food groups)
- 280 components (including fatty acids)
- more than 46,000 values

Despite instructions for data collection, many additional contacts were needed with the companies to sort problems of nutrient identification (e.g. nitrogen conversion factor, Vitamin A, Vitamin D, carbohydrates, etc.).

Additional new data came from subcontracted analyses in 2004-2006 (40 to 90 foods per year) on an AFSSA budget.

A specific **quality rating** scheme (Table1) was created with trade organizations to document and evaluate industry data from analysis or from calculation. Quality rating of data from laboratories or scientific literature followed a scheme similar to that developed by the USDA.

## CONCLUSIONS:

By June 2007 the new French food composition database will be accessible on the web site of the French Food Safety Agency (<http://www.afssa.fr>). The 2007 edition of the database will cover **40 components** and **1200 foods** selected from the latest French food consumption survey.

## CORRESPONDANCE