

Peer Review Plan

Preliminary Title: Menu Labeling Imparts New Information about the Calorie Content of Restaurant Foods

Type of Report (ERR, EIB, EB, SOR,) ERR

Agency: Economic Research Service [X] Influential Scientific Information
USDA [] Highly Influential Scientific Assessment

Agency Contact: Ephraim Leibtag, eleibtag@ers.usda.gov

Subject of Review: Restaurant foods are typically higher in calories than meals consumed at home. A goal of the Patient Protection and Affordable Health Care Act of 2010 is to encourage healthier food choices at restaurants by informing consumers about the calorie content of menu items. However, doesn't a well-informed consumer already know that a 12-piece bucket of chicken has more calories than a salad? Following studies in marketing and behavioral economics, we assume that a representative consumer uses simple heuristics to judge the calorie content of restaurant meals when explicit calorie information is not available. For example, as a rule of thumb, he or she believes that deep fried foods are higher in calories, whereas meals containing fruits and vegetables are lower in calories. Information was then collected for 361 meals available at major fast food chains and 5,752 meals available at major full-service restaurant chains. We use these data to test the association between the calorie content of actual restaurant meals and a handful of rules of thumb.

Purpose of Review: The purpose of the review is to ensure the high-quality of the economic analysis, transparent explanation of methods, objective interpretation of results, and effective communication to the intended audience.

Type of Review: [] Panel Review [X] Individual Reviewers

[] Alternative Process (Briefly Explain):

Timing of Review (Est.): Start: 04/09/14 End: 7/14/14 Completed: 7/14/14

Number of Reviewers: [] 3 or fewer [X] 4 to 10 [] More than 10

Primary Disciplines/Types of Expertise Needed for Review: Economists

Reviewers selected by: [X] Agency [] Designated Outside Organization

Organization's Name:

Opportunities for Public Comment? [] Yes [X] No

If yes, briefly state how and when these opportunities will be provided:

How:

When:

Peer Reviewers Provided with Public Comments? [] Yes [X] No

Public Nominations Requested for Review Panel? [] Yes [X] No

