



Breaking News on Food & Beverage Development - North America

## No trans fat ban for Louisville – yet

By Caroline Scott-Thomas, 22-Feb-2010

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**A proposed trans fat ban in Louisville, Kentucky has been rejected in favor of a public education effort, better labeling and a voluntary phase-out – despite a taskforce recommendation for an outright ban.**

Hydrogenated fats have been widely used by food producers for a century, but fears about trans fats – and the risk of coronary heart disease that these can cause – have prompted companies to look for alternative oils that provide the same function without the attendant dangers.

The Metro Council requested that a taskforce be set up in 2007 to assess whether Louisville should follow the lead of other cities in implementing a trans fat ban. The taskforce's recommendation – that a ban should be brought in within 18 months – was referred to Dr Adewale Troutman, director of the Louisville Metro Public Health and Wellness Department, last week. But he has decided not to recommend a ban to the Metro Council.

Despite Troutman's conclusion favoring improved labeling and a public education program, he said that businesses' voluntary actions should be reassessed in 12 to 18 months, when the possibility of legislation could be reconsidered. Louisville's mayor Jerry Abramson and several members of the metro committee have come out in opposition to an outright ban.

Bans already apply across areas that encompass about 20 percent of the US population, including New York City, Philadelphia, and the State of California. But there has been controversy about how easy or difficult it is for food manufacturers to reformulate with non-hydrogenated fats.

Hydrogenation of oils, essentially turning them into semi-solids, gives them a higher melting point and extends their shelf life, making them better suited for use by the food industry. Trans fats in the form of partially hydrogenated oils are also cheaper to produce than healthier oils like sunflower or olive oil. Therefore, margarines and commercially produced shortenings in the US have traditionally contained high levels of hydrogenated fats.

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