

**Front-of-Pack Focus Groups
Spring 2022
DRAFT Moderator's Guide**

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A. WELCOME AND GROUND RULES (5 min)

Thank you for taking the time to join us today. I am (name) from (company) and we are conducting a research study on behalf of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. The purpose of tonight's discussion is to get your thoughts about things you might see on a food label. Your feedback is very important to us. Our discussion will last about an hour and 30 minutes.

Before we start, I want to review a few important things.

- Your participation today is voluntary, and you have the right to stop being in the focus group at any time.
- None of my questions are very personal, but you can choose not to answer any of them if you are uncomfortable. Just let me know that you prefer not to answer.
- I am audio and video recording this conversation so that I can give you my full attention and not have to take a lot of notes. **[START ZOOM RECORDING]**
- Some of my colleagues from [Contractor] and FDA are viewing today's interview. This is so they can hear your feedback in real time. They may have additional questions for you, so towards the end of our interview I'll check in with them.
- Anyone can speak out; you don't need to wait for me to call on you, just make sure you speak up and speak one at a time. However, please keep in mind that we have a lot to talk about and materials to review, so it's important that I hear from everyone and that we discuss all the topics.
- Please set your cell phones to vibrate or turn them completely off. If you need to use the restroom, please feel free to step away and join us once you are done.
- Most importantly, there are no right or wrong answers. None of these are trick questions. I want to know your opinions and about your experiences.

Appendix C

- I am not selling anything, I do not work for the people sponsoring this research, and I haven't created any of the things we'll look at, so please provide your honest opinions.
- Also, I am not an expert about the topics we are going to discuss today or a medical doctor, so you may have questions that I can't answer.
- All of your comments will be kept secure to the extent provided by law, so feel free to say exactly what is on your mind. I will draft a report of the focus group session, and I may include direct quotes in my report, but I never attribute any quote to any particular person. Your name will never appear in any report I develop about this research.

Do you have any questions before we continue?

FOP Focus Group Project Research Questions **The questions asked of participants are designed to elicit responses to cover the following:**

1. What are the FOP schemes communicating to participants?
 - a. What do the FOP schemes mean to participants?
 - b. What do they mean in relation to other food package claims or symbols?
2. Can participants use the FOP scheme to pick out healthy foods? How do they do it? How do they do it?
 - a. Does the FOP symbol simplify choice-making?
3. Do the FOP schemes have "health halos" or other "product attribute halos"?
4. How do attitudes/perceptions differ across low/high education and nutrition literacy?
5. What is the role of the FDA-sponsorship of a FOP symbol with perceptions of trust?

B. PARTICIPANT INTRODUCTIONS – WARM-UP (5 minutes)

[Their name, favorite food, and the last time they ate it.]

[For each group, follow the symbol presentation plan found in Table 1 at the end of this document]

C. EXPERIENCE WITH FOOD LABELS AND REACTION TO SCHEME 1 (30 minutes)

As I mentioned earlier, today we are going to talk about food labels. Please take a moment to look at the food label on your screen. We are going to talk about it together after a while *but first, without saying anything out loud, please write down the one thing about this food label that most jumps out at you when you look at it.* We'll talk about your answers as a group in a minute.

[Ask participants to read answers out loud; probe or discuss responses.]

[Read and ask the following paragraph only if previous discussion did not address.]

Now, let's imagine that you are very concerned about your health and the health of your whole household and when you go shopping for food, *including for packaged foods*, you like to get food that you know will keep your family healthy. Imagine that you are at the grocery store looking at cereals. What are the elements of this food label you would use when shopping?

[Funnel discussion to focus on the Scheme.]

Now I would like us to focus on the symbol that is located at the bottom right-hand corner of the label. I'm interested in knowing your thoughts about this symbol. **[Let them talk before asking questions below.]**

[Encourage discussion for each question]

What is the symbol communicating to you?

What information is the symbol communicating to you?

What does the symbol say about how nutritious the food is?

[Probe only if no discussion] Does it make you think the food is healthy/unhealthy/something else Why?

What do you like about this symbol?

Is there anything about this symbol that you are finding difficult to use?

Is there anything about this symbol that would make it easier to use?

Why do you think this symbol is on the package? label?

Have you seen symbols like this one on food packages before? Where? What did they look like?

Take a look at the rest of this cereal package.

What other information about health or nutrition do you see?

What does the other information on the label make you think about the product?

Does the symbol conflict with any of the other information on the label? How?

[If symbol contains "FDA" and there has been no discussion about it.]

Did you notice that the symbol says, "FDA"?

Why do you think that FDA is on the symbol?

[Show SCHEME on Frozen Meal and Soup]

What does the symbol make you think when you see it on this product?

D. REACTION TO OTHER SCHEMES (35 minutes)

[From this point forward, schemes will be shown in appropriate groupings. For each symbol, in the order prescribed for the particular focus group [TBD], repeat the following questions. Probe as indicated by the discussion AND use probes provided for each symbol.]

What do you think about this symbol?

What information does this symbol give you about the product?

If you were looking for food for yourself or our family, would this symbol be helpful in any way?

How?

What do you like about this symbol?

Is there anything about this symbol you find difficult to use?

Is there anything about this symbol that would make it easier to use?

E. POLLING ACTIVITY (10 minutes)

[Show all schemes at once]

Now I am going to ask you to look at all these symbols together and, using the polling feature in Zoom, please select the symbol that best represents the answer to the following questions.

[Poll 1.] From all these symbols, which symbol do you think provides you with the most useful information?

[Poll 2.] Which symbol would be most helpful if you were in a rush?

[Poll 3.] Which symbol would you want to see on the food label?

[If there is time, encourage participants to discuss their choices.]

F. CLOSING (5 minutes)

[Moderator to check with clients for additional questions.]

Moderator’s Guide Appendix

FOP Focus Group Project Research Questions

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Mock food types

1. Oat Flakes Cereal
2. Frozen Vegetable Grain Bowl
3. Soup

SCHEMES for testing

1. Guideline Daily Amounts (GDA) - lists calories and nutrients and the adult proportion recommended for daily consumption represented by a serving of the food.
2. Nutrition Tips – mimics the iconic design of the Nutrition Facts Label. Will include interpretive versions (High/Medium/Low, traffic light colors).
3. High-in – indicator showing just the nutrient(s) and percent daily value in the products that, per serving, are considered high and have recommended daily limits.

Table 1. Group Segmentation and Symbol Presentation Plan (TBD)

Group #	Participant Group	Level of Education	1 st Symbol	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th
1	High Nutrition Literacy	Higher								
2	High Nutrition Literacy	Lower								
3	Low Nutrition Literacy	Higher								
4	Low Nutrition Literacy	Higher								

Appendix C

5	Low Nutrition Literacy	Lower								
6	Low Nutrition Literacy	Lower								
7	Low Nutrition Literacy	Lower								
8	Low Nutrition Literacy	Lower								
9	Low Nutrition Literacy	Lower								
10	Low Nutrition Literacy	Lower								
11	Low Nutrition Literacy	Lower								
12	Low Nutrition Literacy	Lower								