

DANONE – SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN EVIDENCE (FDO0140)

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide follow up evidence, corrections and clarifications following Danone's appearance in front of the Committee on 29th April 2024, as requested by the Committee.

Response - ATNI Report

We are responding to the specific request from the Committee to address Baroness Browning's comment on the on the Access to Nutrition Initiative (ATNI) report 2024. The ATNI report looks at many companies, including Danone, across different countries. The response below therefore is specific to Danone UK only.

- 1.1** As part of Danone's ongoing health commitments to infants and children we have delisted products that were not aligned to Public Health England (PHE) guidance. Some of the products included in ATNI's assessment and mentioned in the Mail article for example, have been delisted in the UK:
 1. Nutricia Aptamil Bircher Muesli
 2. Cow And Gate Mango Multigrain Porridge
 3. Cow And Gate Apple and Pear
- 1.2** To provide context on the nutritional composition of these products, Danone UK complementary foods have no added sugar. The sugar content of the cereals comes from a combination of lactose and fructose from included or added milk and fruit, where the fruit content is consistently <10%, as per PHE draft guidance.
- 1.3** Furthermore, whilst the ATNI report states "ATNI's research and Indexes do not assess compliance with local regulations or laws, but rather assess private sector performance against international standards and guidance", we believe that to deliver a positive impact on the health of babies and well-being of parents, any assessment methodology should be anchored in the national socio-economic, cultural and – ultimately – regulatory contexts of the countries in which we are present, which is not reflected in the latest methodology developed by ATNI.
- 1.4** The labelling and nutritional composition of complementary foods for infants and toddlers are strictly regulated, taking into consideration national health requirements and recommendations. Danone is anticipating the proposed Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHD) *Voluntary Industry Guidelines for Commercial Baby Food and Drink Aimed at Children Aged Up To 36 months*.
- 1.5** The ATNI uses the WHO (World Health Organisation) Nutrient Profiling and Promotion Model (NPPM), a model which assesses both nutritional value and labelling and marketing claims.

1.6 Today, Danone supports families in the UK who are ready to begin weaning their baby from four months by offering baby cereals. Many babies indeed begin their journey onto solid foods from four months, which is recognised by the British Dietetic Association (BDA) and is supported by evidence from the scientific community which shows early exposure to common food allergens is associated with lower incidences of food allergies (EAT Study).

Amendments

1.7 We would like to make an amendment to James Mayer's response that we have exited the baby food market in its entirety. Danone has reduced its portfolio over the last three years as stated, and exited the jars and pouches segments of this market. These are known as 'baby foods' as compositional guidance separates Baby foods and cereal based foods. The statement made to the Committee remains accurate.

Addition

We would like to make an addition to James Mayer's response to Q195 from Baroness Boycott.

Baroness Boycott: Why "quite rightly so", given that [Infant Formula] is exactly the same as all the others, essentially?

James Mayer: We made a decision based on where our pricing sits in the marketplace and how we compete in the marketplace.

Q195

1.8 Infant formulas are highly regulated globally, Europe-wide and in the UK. Referring to composition regulation for infant formulas specifically, these stipulate **minimum** requirements for all macro- and micronutrients to ensure that nutrition, hydration, growth, and development needs are met for formula-fed infants.

1.9 Since Cow & Gate's first infant formula in 1908 and Aptamil's in 1946, these formulas have continued to evolve. We have invested heavily into research with the sole objective of optimising infant formula, whilst we are aware and acknowledge infant formula will never reach the ingenuity and sufficiency of breastmilk. We however endeavour to continually improve it, to give formula-fed infants the best start in life.

1.10 At Danone, over 50 years of breastmilk research allow us to offer evidence-based formulas to suit varying needs. In the UK, Danone has two ranges of infant formula in the market, both which surpass the minimum legislative requirements and provide various additional benefits. Indeed, while all baby formulas must use certain core ingredients as part of their recipe, there remains important differences

in quality, innovation and benefits offered amongst products sold in the UK.

1.11 Danone UK has made considerable and prolonged investments in quality, safety and R&D enabling it to bring innovative, scientifically-proven products to market via its Cow & Gate and Aptamil brands to address needs and demands of babies, as well as their parents and caregivers. For example, such pioneering R&D activities led to Danone being able to offer long chain polyunsaturated fatty acids in its formula product over 20 years before relevant regulations were updated to require them as a minimum regulatory standard. Danone was also the first to launch an infant formula containing prebiotics and pioneered prebiotic formulas based on its mixture of prebiotic GOS:FOS, in an evidence-based 9:1 ratio. This innovation has since been followed by other competitors, although at lower levels given that Danone UK has already borne the R&D costs.

10 May 2024