

  
SOUTH AFRICAN ASSOCIATION FOR  
FOOD SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY  
**CONGRESS  
2021**

Welcome to SAAFoST's  
24th Biennial International  
Virtual Congress

20 - 22 September 2021



## **A Place to Stand: Health Claims on Food Labels as a Lever for Multistakeholder Value Creation**

Melvi Todd<sup>1</sup>, Jako Volschenk<sup>2</sup>, Gunnar Sigge<sup>1</sup>, Elizabeth Joubert<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Stellenbosch University, Stellenbosch, South Africa. <sup>2</sup>University Stellenbosch Business School, Bellville, South Africa. <sup>3</sup>Agricultural Research Council, Stellenbosch, South Africa

### **Abstract**

**Introduction:** In this paper, we extend the value creation and appropriation enquiry into the world of food, and specifically food labels. Historically, food policy, including that around food labelling has been driven by diverse stakeholders with different interests. These interests are notoriously tough to balance, leading to sub-optimal value creation. A systemic and multiple stakeholder view of how food labels lead to increased value creation and appropriation has the potential to move a whole industry. The aim of this study was to elucidate what forms of value can be created by including health claims (including indigenous health claims) on food labels in South Africa. Furthermore, the aim was also to establish whether value is ultimately created and appropriated by the anticipated stakeholders and in the predicted domains or whether value slippage occurs.

**Methodology:** Using a qualitative approach, a diverse group of 37 professionals and 12 consumers were interviewed to investigate value creation from food labels along two dimensions: (1) for which stakeholders value can be created (consumers, business and society) and (2) in which domains value creation and appropriation can occur (economic, social and environmental). New insights were generated through thematic analysis of the interviews.

**Results and Discussion:** It was found that the overemphasis of the food system on economic value over the other domains is prevalent in South Africa; and that value capture will remain predominantly with a single group of stakeholders, namely business unless changes are made. Food labels can be the lever through which more value can be created at the economic level, but also at the social and environmental level. Finally, the barriers to value creation outside the economic domain and the occurrence of value slippage are discussed to identify implications for research and practice.

**Conclusion:** The findings directly impact food labelling policy formulation, considering draft regulations to implement health claims in South Africa.

### **Biography: Melvi Todd**

Melvi Todd is an FMCG professional with 15 years of research and innovation experience, reaching across several countries in the EMEA region. She has a broad range of industry experience having worked for companies such as Vital Health Foods, Distell, Kimberly Clark and Averda. She holds both an MSc Food Science (Cum Laude) and MBA (Cum Laude). Her PhD research is focused on multi-stakeholder value

creation and employs both qualitative and quantitative methodology. The consideration of a multi-stakeholder approach is particularly important to her as she believes that it is important to open discussions to a wider group of stakeholders so that balanced and positive momentum is achieved in the space of food and health.