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# A Partnership for Public Health: *USDA Branded Food Products Database*



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## **FAQ on A Partnership for Public Health: USDA Branded Food Products Database**

### ***What is “A Partnership for Public Health: USDA Branded Food Products Database” and why was it established?***

A Partnership for Public Health: The USDA Branded Food Products Database is a public-private partnership between the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the International Life Sciences Institute North America (ILSI North America), GS1 US, 1WorldSync, and Label Insight, whose goal is to enhance public health and to share open data by augmenting the USDA National Nutrient Database with nutrient composition and ingredient information on branded foods. The USDA Branded Food Products Database is seamlessly integrated into the existing USDA National Nutrient Database, and ensures that these data elements are publicly available. This includes, federal agencies, the research community, international databases, proprietary databases and end users, the food industry, and consumers.

### ***When was the USDA Branded Food Products Database launched?***

The USDA Branded Food Products Database was unveiled in September 2016. Data submissions to the USDA Branded Food Products Database are voluntary; however, if a manufacturer or retailer participates, they must agree to and submit a set of mandatory product attributes agreed upon by the Partners. These data are publicly available and updated continuously.

The USDA Branded Food Products Database is hosted by USDA’s National Agricultural Library, who also enhanced the search program to improve the user interface. The USDA Branded Food Products Database is accessed through the same search program as the USDA National Nutrient Database, but is clearly identified as a distinctive but connected Database. This search program allows immediate access to these data and the format is standardized to that of the USDA National Nutrient Database.

### **[Link to the USDA Branded Food Products Database](#)**

### ***What information is included in the USDA Branded Food Products Database?***

The USDA Branded Food Products Database includes information on:

- the product name and generic descriptor,
- serving size (RACC) in gram or ml weight,
- nutrients shown on the Nutrition Facts Panel or the Expanded Nutrition Facts Panel per serving size and 100 gram-basis or 100 ml-basis,
- the ingredient list and sub-list, and
- a date stamp associated with the most current product formulation (effective date of introduction/reformulation).

All data will be archived; historical data on food products will allow for tracking dietary trends. The USDA Branded Food Products Database expands the USDA National Nutrient Database to better reflect the nation’s food supply.

### ***Why was the USDA Branded Food Products Database established as a Public-Private Partnership?***

The composition of the food supply and consumer dietary choices are key inputs for agricultural and food policy decisions. This requires comprehensive food composition data, but the volume and fluidity of the food supply in the U.S. marketplace are key challenges to the robustness of such data. Expertise to compile branded and private label data, and private sector engagement in voluntarily providing data are necessary to maximize content and provide needed information for nutrition, agricultural, and diet-related health policies. This endeavor is best pursued through a public-private partnership.

### ***Who uses the USDA Branded Food Products Database and how is it beneficial?***

Various sectors of the research community, the public health community, the food industry, policy officials, and consumers find this Database valuable. For example, the Database:

- enhances the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) by more accurately characterizing food selection and nutrient intakes for Americans;
- enables nutrition software developers to produce enhanced software so that dietitians can provide more specific dietary guidance to individual clients;
- enables researchers to better link dietary intakes to chronic disease measures;
- enables policy development that promotes public health; and
- enables food manufacturers to use the USDA Branded Food Products Database to develop new product formulations.
- Overtime, the data available publicly in the USDA Branded Food Products Database may be indexed or syndicated into consumer facing search engines, and will be available more broadly through sites linking to and pulling from the source site data.

### ***As a manufacturer or retailer, how does my company submit data to the USDA Branded Food Products Database?***

There are two options for submitting data to the USDA Branded Food Products Database:

1. Brands who are leveraging the GS1 Global Data Synchronization Network, can synchronize product data directly to the USDA Branded Food Products Database using certified providers like 1WorldSync. 1WorldSync offers users the ability to upload and validate data in any format needed. 1WorldSync solutions use the system of GS1 Standards at the core of their solutions to drive efficiencies of scale and more seamlessly communicate product information.
  - a. For more than 40 years, the Global Trade Item Number® (GTIN) (also known as the U.P.C. number) has served an important purpose of providing a unique product identification for a food product which has been leveraged by the USDA Branded Food Products Database.
2. Label Insight allows brands to submit their product data to the USDA Branded Food Products Database via a simple drag and drop portal on [labelinsight.com](http://labelinsight.com). Through an extensive partnership ecosystem, manufacturers and retailers simply load their package flat (mechanicals) images directly into the Label Insight platform for immediate data generation, transformation and attribution. As long as the package flats (mechanicals) represent the print ready package complete with all sides of the package, nutrition facts panel, ingredient panel, and U.P.C., Label Insight's proprietary data refinery capability captures and generates all required data for inclusion in the Database automatically.

***What distinguishes the USDA Branded Food Products Database from other food composition databases?***

The USDA National Nutrient Database is widely recognized as the gold standard for food composition data. Many databases, including proprietary databases, build from the USDA National Nutrient Database. The USDA Branded Food Products Database expands the USDA National Nutrient Database with timely data submissions and is scalable to manage a large volume of food product information, enabling real-time linkage of food intake and nutrient composition to dietary patterns recommendations. The USDA Branded Food Products Database may be used as a model for other countries and could expand globally if international food products are added, which the Public-Private Partnership welcomes.

***What is the difference between the USDA Branded Food Products Database and SmartLabel™?***

SmartLabel™ is a tool that gives *consumers* a way to get more detailed ingredient information about a wide range of food, beverage, and personal care products. This transparency program, created by the Grocery Manufacturers Association, its member companies, and retailers, enables consumers to access additional details about products by scanning a barcode or doing an online search to reach a landing page with information on ingredients and other attributes, such as third-party certifications and social compliance programs. It recognizes that consumers want to go well beyond an ingredient list. They want to know, “what is that ingredient?”, “why is it in my food?”, “what does it do?” and even “where does it come from?” The USDA Branded Food Products Database is integrated into the existing USDA National Nutrient Database to provide *researchers, academicians, government agencies and database users* with nutrient composition and ingredient information on branded and private label foods and beverages.

***Who are the Partners?***

**US Department of Agriculture (USDA)**

Founded in 1862, USDA is the U.S. federal executive department that provides leadership on food, agriculture, natural resources, rural development, nutrition, and related issues based on sound public policy, the best available science, and efficient management. USDA funds/manages internal and external programs that conduct research, set public policy and disseminate information regarding food, nutrition, healthy eating and the relationship between agricultural production and optimal nutrition.

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**International Life Sciences Institute North America (ILSI North America)**

ILSI North America is a public, non-profit scientific foundation that advances the understanding and application of science related to the nutritional quality and safety of the food supply. The organization carries out its mission by sponsoring research programs, professional and educational programs and workshops, seminars, and publications, as well as providing a neutral forum for government, academic, and industry scientists to discuss and resolve scientific issues of common concern for the well-being of the general public. ILSI North America's programs are supported primarily by its industry membership.

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## **GS1 US**

GS1 US<sup>®</sup>, a member of the global information standards organization GS1<sup>®</sup>, brings industry communities together to solve supply-chain problems through the adoption and implementation of GS1 Standards. Nearly 300,000 businesses in 25 industries rely on GS1 US for trading-partner collaboration and for maximizing the cost effectiveness, speed, visibility, security and sustainability of their business processes. They achieve these benefits through solutions based on GS1 global unique numbering and identification systems, barcodes, Electronic Product Code (EPC<sup>®</sup>)-enabled RFID, data synchronization, and electronic information exchange. GS1 US also manages the United Nations Standard Products and Services Code<sup>®</sup> (UNSPSC<sup>®</sup>).

[www.GS1US.org](http://www.GS1US.org).

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## **1WorldSync**

1WorldSync<sup>™</sup> is the leading multi-enterprise product information network, helping more than 25,000 global brands and their trading partners in over 60 countries – share authentic, trusted content with customers and consumers, empowering them to make intelligent choices and decisions concerning purchases, lifestyle and well-being. 1WorldSync maintains the world’s largest data pool in the Global Data Synchronization Network (GDSN) with more than 14 million items (76% of total items).

1WorldSync’s Product Information Cloud platform was designed for businesses to exchange authentic and enriched product data and digital content, creating a mission critical foundation for connected commerce.

Through its technology platform and expert services, 1WorldSync provides solutions that meet the diverse needs of its customers in B2B Supply Chain, Product Transparency and Compliance, or Digital Commerce.

1WorldSync offers comprehensive solutions for providing transparency product information to customers and consumers; enabling users to stay healthy, identify possible food allergens and track food nutrition and safety. 1WorldSync equips school and government nutrition organizations with access to trusted, accurate nutritional product content from food manufacturers through easy to use, real-time product solutions.

1WorldSync is jointly owned by the member organizations of GS1 Germany and GS1 US. For more information, please visit [www.1worldsync.com](http://www.1worldsync.com).

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## **Label Insight**

Label Insight is a data refinery for product data that powers transparency between CPG brands, retailers and consumers. The company works to capture, analyze and enrich data contained on the packaging and labeling

of food, pet, and personal care products. Label Insight's platform enables transparent, open access to accurate product information. Label Insight's platform contains more than 350,000 products, representing 80% of the top purchased CPG products in the USA today. Label Insight customers use this data to provide greater transparency to consumers; create more connected omni-channel experiences; and maximize category growth potential. To learn more visit [www.labelinsight.com](http://www.labelinsight.com)

- Label Insight currently provides over 170,000 products to the partnership, representing over 90% of the available product data in the USDA Branded Food Products Database.
- The company's product data engine enables CPG brands and retailers to transform basic product data into smart attributes, providing a deep understanding of their product set.
- Label Insight offers an unmatched level of data, generating 17,000+ consumer facing attributes for each product - such as nutrient composition, allergen containment, , sustainability practice, specialty diet, food safety and general health and wellness.
- These attributes serve as building blocks for a live view of data for more than 400,000 products across 17,000 brands, totaling over 80% of the U.S. retail food and beverage market.
- The Label Insight database is updated on a daily basis to ensure it maintains its relevance to our customer base, with upwards of 6,000 product updates measured each week.
  
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