

# Obama's Food Police in Staggering Crackdown on Market to Kids

by [Audrey Hudson](#)

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Tony the Tiger, some NASCAR drivers and cookie-selling Girl Scouts will be out of a job unless grocery manufacturers agree to reinvent a vast array of their products to satisfy the Obama administration's food police.

Either retool the recipes to contain certain levels of sugar, sodium and fats, or no more advertising and marketing to tots and teenagers, say several federal regulatory agencies.

The same goes for restaurants.

It's not just the usual suspected foods that are being targeted, such a thin mint cookies sold by scouts or M&Ms and Snickers, which sponsor cars in the Sprint Cup, but pretty much everything on a restaurant menu.

Although the intent of the guidelines is to combat childhood obesity, foods that are low in calories, fat, and some considered healthy foods, are also targets, including hot breakfast cereals such as oatmeal, pretzels, popcorn, nuts, yogurt, wheat bread, bagels, diet drinks, fruit juice, tea, bottled water, milk and sherbet.

Food industries are in an uproar over the proposal written by the Federal Trade Commission, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Food and Drug Administration and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

"The most disturbing aspect of this interagency working group is, after it imposes

multibillions of dollars in restrictions on the food industry, there is no evidence of any impact on the scourge of childhood obesity," said Dan Jaffe, executive vice president of the Association of National Advertisers.

The "Interagency Working Group on Food Marketed to Children, Preliminary Proposed Nutrition Principles to Guide Industry Self-Regulation Efforts" says it is voluntary, but industry officials say the intent is clear: Do it, or else.

"When regulators strongly suggest a course of action, it's treated as a rule, not a suggestion," said Scott Faber, vice president of federal affairs for the Grocery Manufacturers Association. "Industry tends to heed these suggestions from our regulators, and this administration has made it clear they are willing to regulate if we don't implement their proposal."

It's not just the food industry that will be impacted. Hundreds of television shows that depend on the advertising revenue, such as the Nickelodeon Channel, ESPN, and programs including "American Idol" will be affected, critics of the proposal say—at a cost of \$5.8 trillion in marketing expenditures that support up to 20 million American jobs.

If the food is not reformulated, no more ads or promotions on TV, radio, in print, on websites, as well as other digital advertising such as e-mail and text messaging, packaging, and point-of-purchase displays and other in-store marketing tools; product placement in movies, videos, video games, contests, sweepstakes, character licensing and toy branding; sponsorship of events including sport teams and individual athletes; and, philanthropic activity tied to branding opportunities.

That includes softball teams that are sponsored by food companies and school reading programs sponsored by restaurants.

"The Interagency working group recommends that the food industry, through voluntary self-regulatory efforts, make significant improvements in the nutritional quality of foods marketed to children and adolescents ages 2 to 17 years," the proposal says.

"By the year 2016, all food products within the categories most heavily marketed directly to children should meet two basic nutrition principles. Such foods should be formulated to ... make a meaningful contribution to a healthful diet and minimize the content of nutrients that could have a negative impact on health and weight."

The foods most heavily marketed directly to children and adolescents fall into 10 categories: "breakfast cereals, snack foods, candy, dairy products, baked goods, carbonated beverages, fruit juice and non-carbonated beverages, prepared foods and

meals, frozen and chilled desserts, and restaurant foods.”

Beth Johnson, a dietician for Food Directions in Maryland, said many of the foods targeted in this proposal are the same foods approved by the federal government for the WIC nutrition program for women, infants and children.

“This doesn’t make any sense whatsoever,” Johnson said. “It’s not going to do anything to help with obesity. These are decisions I want to make for my kids. These should not be government decisions.”

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