



Pekka Puska
Director General, National Public Health Institute – KTL
President, Finnish Heart Association
Helsinki, Finland

HEART SYMBOL OF HEART HEALTHY FOOD ITEMS, TO PROMOTE HEART HEALTHY DIETARY CHANGES IN FINLAND

Brussels 29 October, 2004



www.sydanmerkki.fi



RESPONSIBLE ORGANISATIONS

Finnish Heart Association
Finnish Diabetes Association



THE HEART SYMBOL – A BETTER CHOICE

Strong basis

Consensus meeting and Action Plan...

Expert Group

Consulting important stakeholders

Experiences from other countries



PRACTICE

- **The right to use the Heart Symbol is granted to food products by application to food manufacturers by an expert group of Finnish Heart Association.**
- **The product must comply with the set criteria.**
- **The right to use the symbol is subject to a charge and granted for a given period at a time.**
- **Control checks are carried out at random**



SIX PRODUCT GROUPS

- **Milk and milk products**
- **Edible fats**
- **Meat products**
- **Fish and shellfish products**
- **Bread and cereal products**
- **Convenience foods**

**Currently (Sept. 2004) some
180 products (28 producers)**



NUTRITIONAL CRITERIA

- **The quantity and quality of fat**
- **Sodium**
- **Cholesterol (in some product groups)**
- **Fibre**



PROMOTION

- **Finnish Heart Association promotes use of food items with the logo through numerous channels.**
- **The companies use the logo in their advertising of the products.**



RECOGNITION

- **71 % (women 83 %) of over 15 year old Finns tell that they recognize the symbol and know what it means.**
- **34 % (women 42 %) tell that the Heart Symbol has definitely influenced their purchases often or occasionally.**



This paper was produced for a meeting organized by Health & Consumer Protection DG and represents the views of its author on the subject. These views have not been adopted or in any way approved by the Commission and should not be relied upon as a statement of the Commission's or Health & Consumer Protection DG's views. The European Commission does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this paper, nor does it accept responsibility for any use made thereof.