

## 2025 WHOLE GRAIN DECLARATION OF ACTS

### A Call to Build a Whole Grain Generation

Decades of scientific research consistently demonstrate that regular consumption of whole grains significantly reduces the risk of chronic diseases, including cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and certain cancers.<sup>1</sup>

Yet, despite well-established evidence, global whole grain intake remains far below recommended levels. For more insights on whole grain health benefits, please check the Whole Grain Initiative Factsheet.<sup>2</sup>

Encouraging whole grain consumption similarly to fiber-rich foods from an early age is particularly beneficial for health. Children's eating habits are formed early in life and tend to persist into adulthood. Introducing whole grains as part of their daily diet not only supports a balanced and more sustainable diet but also lays the foundation for lifelong well-being.<sup>3</sup> Establishing healthier eating patterns in childhood has the potential to improve population health outcomes, reduces risks of obesity in childhood, and lowers future healthcare costs.<sup>4</sup>

This persistent gap in consumption highlights the urgent need for targeted public policies that make whole grain products more accessible, affordable, and appealing, especially for children and adolescents. Schools offer a powerful platform for change, as they can normalise whole grain consumption habits as part of everyday eating.<sup>5</sup>

Across the world, inspiring examples demonstrate that progress is achievable. The U.S. School Meals Scheme,<sup>6</sup> school meal programmes in Kenya<sup>7</sup> and Rwanda<sup>8</sup> and successful initiatives in European countries such as Denmark<sup>9</sup> and Sweden<sup>10</sup> show that increasing whole grain intake among children is both feasible and impactful.

The success of these initiatives highlights one key lesson: collaboration is essential. Only through strong partnerships between policymakers, educators, health associations, manufacturers and retailers can we accelerate the shift toward healthier diets and ensure that every child benefits from the power of whole grains.

For this reason, on the occasion of the 7th International Whole Grain Day held on the 19<sup>th</sup> of November 2025, experts and stakeholders from diverse sectors will come together to urge stronger action to build a 'Whole Grain Generation'.

#### Our policy asks

##### 1. Have national dietary guidelines that clearly define and promote whole grain consumption

While an increasing number of national dietary guidelines encourage consumption of whole grains, inconsistencies remain in the definition and quantification of whole-grain foods across countries.<sup>11</sup> Studies show that a dose response relationship exist between whole grain intake and reduced risk of chronic disease, and the optimal recommended intake should be a

---

1 Chen, G. C., Tong, X., Xu, J. Y., Han, S. F., Wan, Z. X., Qin, J. B., & Qin, L. Q. (2016). Whole-grain intake and total, cardiovascular, and cancer mortality: A systematic review and meta-analysis of prospective studies. *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 104(1), 164–172.

2 WGI Factsheet - Whole Grains Jan 2025.pdf

3 Madsen, M. T. B., Landberg, R., Nielsen, D. S., Zhang, Y., Anneberg, O. M. R., Lauritzen, L., & Damsgaard, C. T. (2024). Effects of wholegrain compared to refined grain intake on cardiometabolic risk markers, gut microbiota, and gastrointestinal symptoms in children: A randomized crossover trial. *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 119(1), 18–28

4 Miller, K. B., Grafenauer, S. J., & Martikainen, J. (2022). Nutrition economics: Four analyses supporting the case for whole grain consumption. *Journal of Cereal Science*, 105, 103455.

5 Meynier, A., Chanson-Rollé, A., & Riou, E. (2020). Main factors influencing whole grain consumption in children and adults—A narrative review. *Nutrients*, 12(8), 2217.

6 Guthrie, J., Lin, B.-H., & Smith, T. A. (2023). Children were only age group improving whole-grain intakes—School foods are a key factor. *Amber Waves*. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service [link](#)

7 Fortified Whole Grain Alliance (2025). Unlocking Fortification Through Posho Millers. [link](#)

8 Fortified Whole Grain Alliance (2025). Rwanda has set a bright example by committing to universal school feeding. [link](#)

9 The Guardian (2025, April 3) The wholegrain revolution! How Denmark changed the diet – and health – of their entire nation. [link](#)

10 FullkornsFrämjandet (2025). Improving public health. [link](#)

11 Price, E. J., Barrett, E. M., Batterham, M. J., & Beck, E. J. (2024). Exploring the reporting, intake and recommendations of primary food sources of whole grains globally: A scoping review. *British Journal of Nutrition*, 132(10), 1365–1376

minimum of 50g per day.<sup>12 13</sup> It is worth noting that processing is necessary to make wholegrain edible and palatable while throughout different processes wholegrain retains their benefits on health.<sup>14</sup>

To promote harmonisation and clarity, national authorities are encouraged to adopt a definition and labelling criteria for Wholegrain ingredient, Wholegrain content claim and Wholegrain foods, within their dietary guidelines and related policy frameworks. For that purpose, Whole Grain Initiative (WGI) offers a benchmark,<sup>15</sup> that sets the basis for an ISO definition that is encouraged to be endorsed by governments in the lack of local regulations.

## **2. Implement labelling and support reformulation to ensure whole grain options are more visible and appealing**

Ensure front of pack nutritional labelling scheme and nutrient profiling systems include whole grain to help consumers more easily identify these products and make informed choices. While the industry<sup>16</sup> is already taking steps to increase whole-grain content in products such as bread, breakfast cereals, pasta, etc, policy frameworks need to provide stronger support to accelerate progress, for example through incentives, subsidies, VAT reduction or technical assistance for manufacturers. For more insights and technical support on how to increase the whole grain content in food products, please reference Food Drink Europe's technical toolkits.<sup>17</sup>

## **3. Support public-private partnerships to raise awareness and improve access**

Promote the creation of public-private partnerships to raise awareness, improve availability, and boost consumption of whole grains. Build on successful models such as those in Denmark<sup>18</sup> and ongoing one in Sweden,<sup>19</sup> where collaboration between government, industry, and health organisations increases national whole-grain intake.

## **4. Make whole grain as a key criterion in sustainable public procurement policies and school meals**

Evidence shows that policies that incentivise the procurement of whole grain foods for school breakfasts and lunches bring student consumption closer to national recommendations.<sup>20</sup> Such policies also improve equitable access to healthy foods, demonstrating the importance and effectiveness of policy-driven changes in institutional food environments.

**As the Whole Grain Initiative, and in harmony with all the work & advocacy done by all WGI members since 2017, and with all the signatories of this declaration, we are here to support policymakers and all stakeholders interested in realising these goals.**

### **Co-signatory organisations:**



<sup>12</sup> Chen, G. C., Tong, X., Xu, J. Y., Han, S. F., Wan, Z. X., Qin, J. B., & Qin, L. Q. (2016). Whole-grain intake and total, cardiovascular, and cancer mortality: A systematic review and meta-analysis of prospective studies. *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 104(1), 164–172.

<sup>13</sup> Reynolds A et al. (2019). Carbohydrate quality and human health: a series of systematic reviews and meta-analyses. *The Lancet Commissions*. 393(10170). Pp. 434-45.

<sup>14</sup> Cordoba R, Viallon B, Fontvielle E, et al: Consumption of ultra-processed foods and risk of multimorbidity of cancer and cardiometabolic diseases: a multinational cohort study. *The Lancet Regional Health - Europe* 2023;35: 100771 Published Online 14 November 2023 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lanepe.2023.100771>

<sup>15</sup> Whole Grain Initiative (2021) Definition of Whole Grain as Food Ingredient. [link](#)

<sup>16</sup> FoodDrinkEurope & Ceereal (2025) Technical Toolkit and Guidelines to Increase Whole Grains in Breakfast Cereals. [link](#)

<sup>17</sup> FDE toolkits : [Homepage - FoodDrinkEurope](#) : [FoodDrinkEurope](#)

<sup>18</sup> See note 9

<sup>19</sup> See note 10

<sup>20</sup> Cohen, J. F. W., Rimm, E. B., Austin, S. B., Hyatt, R. R., Kraak, V. I., & Economos, C. D. (2014). A food service intervention improves whole grain access at lunch in rural elementary schools. *Journal of School Health*, 84(3), 212–219