



Press Release

5th February 2013

GSCOP compliance reports fall short

Today the British Brands Group launches its review of retailers' reports on their compliance with the Groceries Supply Code of Practice (GSCOP). The review finds that not all retailers are publishing their reports, there is no common approach to reporting and there is an apparent reluctance to quantify problems.

Under the GSCOP, the ten grocery retailers it covers are required to submit an annual report on compliance to the Office of Fair Trading and to publish a summary of this in their annual company report or prominently on their website. For the second year running the British Brands Group has undertaken a review of these published summaries. It publishes [its findings](#) today.

The Group has been unable to find a published report from Aldi. All other retailers' reports are freely available online with the exception of Iceland's which is available for a small fee from Companies House.

A comparison of the reports shows that there is no consistency in what is being reported. The GSCOP requires that a retailer's report to the OFT covers their compliance with the Code (including alleged and actual breaches), the steps taken to ensure compliance and details of disputes, including their outcome. The required content of summaries however is not specified and as a result some information, notably in relation to breaches, has not been included.

For those retailers who do report on breaches, there is a reluctance to give the number of cases, using such language as "a handful" or "a small number" in their summaries. There is also no quantification of the number of disputes.

John Noble, Director of the British Brands Group, commented, "Presumably the Competition Commission required information on compliance to be published in order to bring some transparency and public scrutiny to the performance of the GSCOP. The differences in reporting that we have found does not allow this to any meaningful extent."

He went on to say, "We have long advocated the importance of independent scrutiny of the GSCOP if it is to be effective so we strongly welcome the recent appointment of an Adjudicator. How retailers report compliance is just one area where independent guidance may make a tangible difference to the information that is publicly available."

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. The Groceries Supply Code of Practice came into force in February 2010. Grocery retailers with turnovers over £1bn are covered by the Code, being Aldi, Asda, The Co-operative, Iceland, Lidl, M&S, Morrisons, J Sainsbury, Tesco and Waitrose.
2. The reporting requirements are given in section 10 of the [The Groceries \(Supply Chain Practices\) Market Investigation Order 2009](#) and are further clarified in paragraph 30 of the OFT's [Explanatory Note](#).
3. The British Brands Group undertook its [first review](#) of retailers' compliance reports in December 2011.
4. The British Brands Group was founded in 1994 as a non-profit-making membership organisation. It speaks on behalf of brand manufacturers and seeks to deepen understanding of how brands benefit consumers, society and the economy through the provision of choice, value for money and innovation.

It represents its members collectively when commercial and regulatory issues threaten the ability of brands to deliver value and to be a positive force in society. It also provides the prime forum for its members on brand-related issues.

The British Brands Group is part of a global network of similar brand associations, and is the UK representative of AIM, the European Brands Association, based in Brussels.

For more information and further background briefings on this subject please visit the British Brands Group website: www.britishbrandsgroup.org.uk.

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