

# Evaluation of Calcium Content in Tofu Products and Comparison with Canadian Nutrient File

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## Introduction

In May 2022, Health Canada released “Applying Canada’s Dietary Guidelines” which aims to provide additional information to support health professionals and policymakers in the application of the 2019 dietary guidelines. Among suggested foods to support specific nutrient needs across different life stages, tofu (prepared with calcium) is listed as a food with a high calcium content to help achieve increased requirements in several age groups, notably children, adolescents, adult females and older adults.

## Objectives

1.

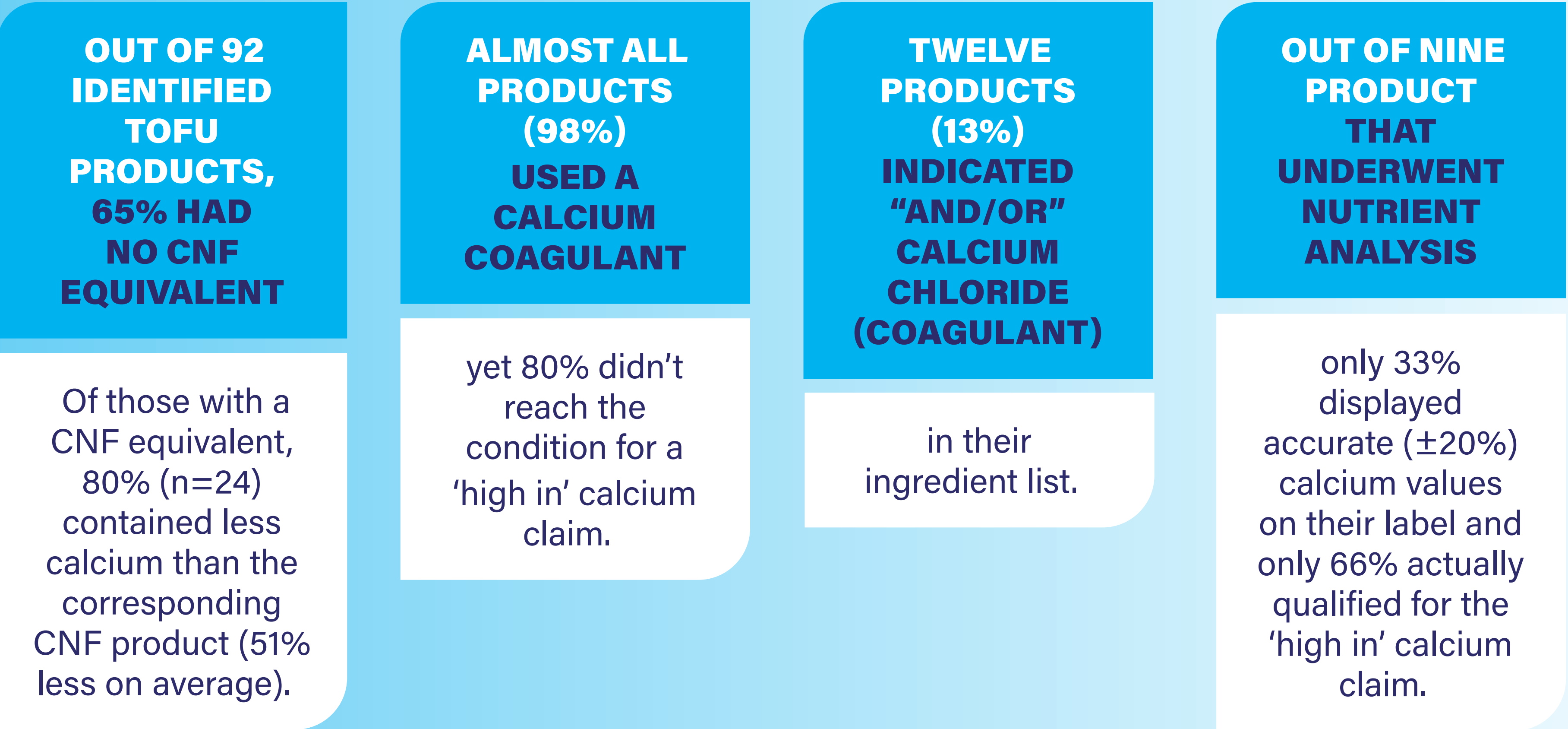
Evaluate and compare the calcium content of in-store tofu products with Canadian Nutrient File (CNF) reference values.
2.

Validate whether various tofu products in the current marketplace can be considered to have a high calcium content.

## Methods

- Data on tofu were collected using front-and-back label photographs in local and Asian grocery stores/supermarkets in: Quebec, Alberta, the Maritimes, Manitoba. Products were categorized according to firmness/coagulant and compared to corresponding CNF products.
- Information on nutritional labels determined if the item qualified for a “high in” calcium claim nutrition labels (NFT) ( $\geq 15\%$  Daily Value/ $\geq 195$  mg per 85g reference amount [RA]) per Health Canada regulations.
- Products indicating a calcium content  $>300$  mg per RA underwent nutrition analysis by a certified laboratory.

## Results

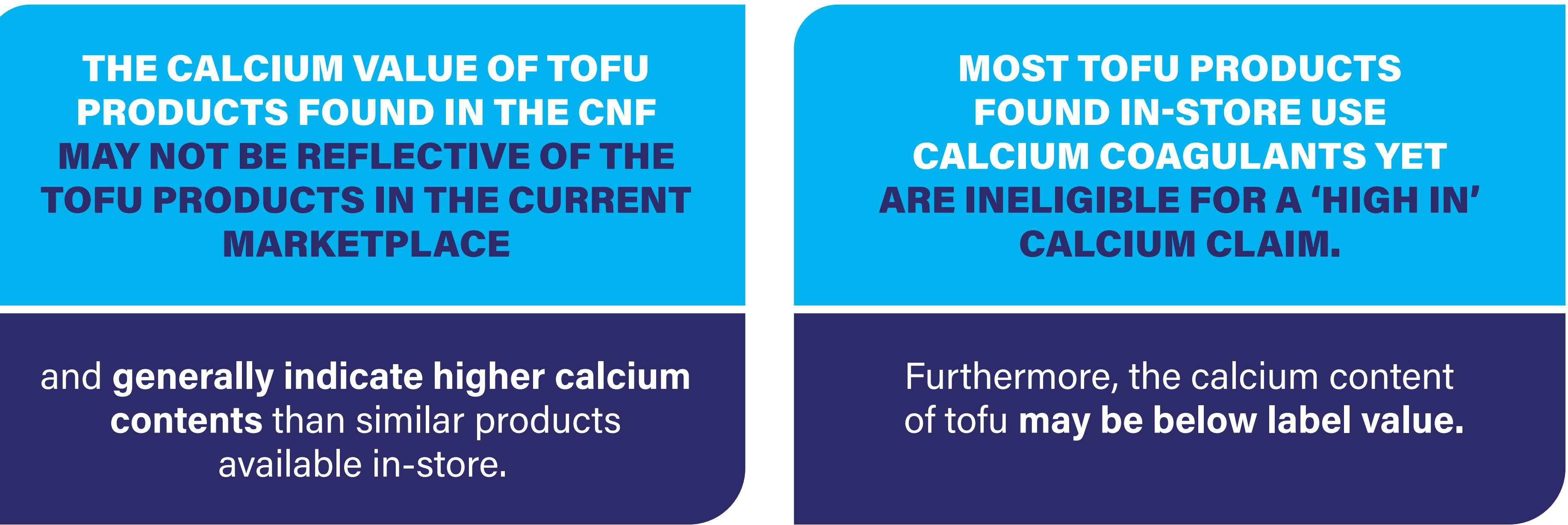


Coagulant use and calcium content of tofu products located in grocery stores in four Canadian provinces

Texture/Firmness (categories based on those in CNF)	% Using a calcium coagulant*	% Qualifying as good source of calcium†** ( $\geq 195$ mg calcium per reference amount)
FRIED TOFU		
All textures (n=4)	100%	0%
REGULAR TOFU		
Extra firm or firm (n=13)	100%	15.4%
Medium firm or firm (n=15)	100%	20.0%
Soft or firm (n=12)	100%	0%
Other‡ (n=35)	94.3%	37.1%
SILKEN TOFU		
All textures (n=7)	100%	0%
DESSERT TOFU		
All textures (n=6)	100%	0%

\* Includes products indicating “and/or” a calcium coagulant  
† Excludes products with missing data for calcium content (n=3)  
\*\* Based on Health Canada criteria to be considered a good source, i.e., using the reference amount for tofu (85 grams) and based on 1300 mg Daily Value (DV)  
‡ This category includes a variety of tofu products for which a categorization by firmness was not possible based on labelling or if the product was in a distinct form (i.e., flavoured, “magic”, or sprouted).

## Conclusions



## Significance

Although Canada’s dietary guidelines recommend tofu (prepared with calcium) as a food high in calcium, caution is advised as the calcium content of in-store products varies substantially, and most do not qualify as being “high in” calcium.



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