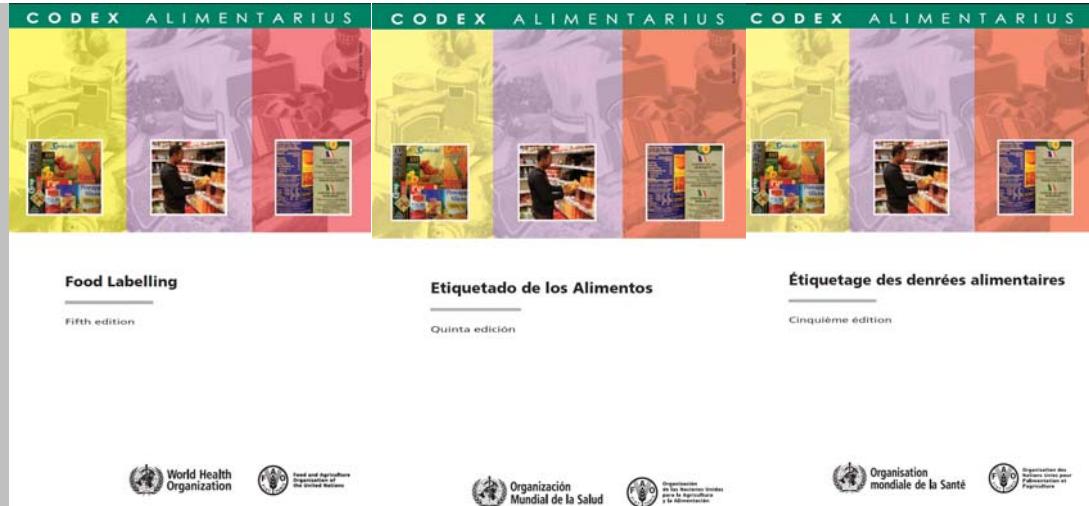


WTO THEMATIC SESSION ON REGULATORY COOPERATION BETWEEN MEMBERS

9 NOVEMBER 2016

Codex Food Labelling Standards – an Overview



Codex Secretariat



World Health Organization



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

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Background

- Codex texts are recommendations for governments to protect the health of consumers and ensure fair practices in the food trade
- CCFL was established by the 2nd Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in 1964, and held its' first meeting in Ottawa, Ontario Canada in June 1965

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CCFL Mandate

- (a) to draft provisions on labelling applicable to all foods;
- (b) to consider, amend if necessary, and endorse draft specific provisions on labelling prepared by the Codex Committees drafting standards, codes of practice and guidelines;
- (c) to study specific labelling problems assigned to it by the Commission;
- (d) to study problems associated with the advertisement of food with particular reference to claims and misleading descriptions.

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Why food labelling?

- consumer information
- advertising
- product identity



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Purpose of food labelling rules

- Protect consumers and ensure fair marketing
 - prohibit labelling that misrepresents the quality of a product and deceives consumers
 - preventing false claims protects businesses from unfair competition

The Codex framework

- General standard for the labelling of prepackaged foods (GSLPF) adopted 1969 as the first Codex standard later extended by other standards
- Codex commodity standards are extensions of GSLPF by assisting in its interpretation
- A series of interpretative guidelines on claims, nutrition labelling etc.
- Codex Committees involved:
 - CCFL
 - CCNFSDU

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Codex texts on food labelling

- Standards
 - labelling of prepackaged foods (Codex Stan 1-1985)
 - labelling of food additives when sold as such (Codex Stan 107-1981)
 - labelling of and claims for prepackaged foods for special dietary uses (Codex Stan 146-1985)
 - labelling of and claims for foods for special medical purposes (Codex Stan 180-1991)
 - use of dairy terms (Codex Stan 206-1999)
- Guidelines
 - claims (CAC/GL 1-1979)
 - nutrition labelling (CAC/GL 2-1985)
 - use of health and nutrition claims (CAC/GL 23-1997)
 - use of the term 'halal' (CAC/GL 24-1997)
 - production, processing, marketing and labelling of organically produced foods (CAC/GL 32-1999)

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Principles of food labelling

- Prepackaged food shall **not** be described or presented on any label or in any labelling
 - in a manner that is **false**, **misleading** or **deceptive** or is likely to create an erroneous impression regarding its character in any respect;
 - by words, pictorial or other devices which refer to or are **suggestive either directly or indirectly, of any other product with which such food might be confused**, or in such a manner as to lead the purchaser or consumer to suppose that the food is connected with such other product.

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Truthful but misleading?

Maple flavoured syrup

Maple syrup flavoured

Flavoured Maple syrup



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Mandatory labelling

- name,
- ingredients,
- possible allergens always to be declared
- added water
- allergen transferred through GM
- specific name or class name for ingredients
- food additives – class titles
- net contents
- country of origin
- lot identification
- date marking
- instructions for use

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Labelling in commodity standards

- Exemptions from or additions to the GS allowed if needed by the product in question
- CCFL endorses all labelling provisions
- Tendency to harmonise with the general standard

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Quantitative labelling of ingredients

The ingoing percentage of an ingredient ... shall be disclosed for foods sold as a mixture or combination where the ingredient:

- (a) **is emphasised as present** on the label through words or pictures or graphics; or
- (b) is not within the name of the food, is essential to characterise the food and **is expected to be present in the food** by consumers in the country where the food is sold if the omission of the quantitative ingredient declaration would mislead or deceive the consumer.

QUID

Water
Sorbitol
Vegetable gum
Natural flavours
Salt
Citric acid
Caramel colour
Preservatives
Sweetener



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Is this last example in line with Codex texts?

5.1 Quantitative ingredients declaration (QUID)

5.1.1 The ingoing percentage of an ingredient (including compound ingredients or categories of ingredients), by weight or volume as appropriate, at the time of manufacture, shall be disclosed for foods sold as a mixture or combination where the ingredient:

- (a)** is emphasized as present on the label through words or pictures or graphics; or

0% Maple syrup

QUID: example2



35% lentils



22% lentils

Two examples where quid is triggered for “lentil soup”

QUID: example3



INGREDIENTS

CEREALS (32%) (WHEAT FLOUR, WHOLE OATS), GLUCOSE SYRUP, SUGAR, HYDROGENATED VEGETABLE OIL, FRUIT (APPLE, RASPBERRY, STRAWBERRY, BLUEBERRY) (5%), HUMECTANT (GLYCEROL), MODIFIED STARCH, FRUCTOSE, YOGURT (1.5%), HONEY, CALCIUM CARBONATE, SWEETENED CONDENSED SKIMMED MILK, FLAVOURING, SKIMMED MILK POWDER, STABILISER (CELLULOSE, CARRAGEENAN, LOCUST BEAN GUM), SALT, WHEY POWDER, EMULSIFIER (E471, E472e), COLOUR (ANTHOCYANINS, CARAMEL E150d, TITANIUM DIOXIDE), RAISING AGENT (POTASSIUM HYDROGEN CARBONATE), CITRIC ACID, EGG WHITE SOLIDS, MALIC ACID, LACTIC ACID, VITAMINS (NIACIN, VITAMIN B6, RIBOFLAVIN (B2), THIAMIN (B1), FOLIC ACID, VITAMIN B12), IRON.

5% fruits and 1.5% yoghurt. Quid helps to reveal these facts.

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Date marking



- The Codex General Standard introduced the use of the expression 'Best before' to describe the date of minimum durability and this expression is now widely used in national regulation.
- The purpose of date marking is to give the consumer a date which will provide information about the expected quality of the product provided that it has been properly stored.
- On going discussions within CCFL to clarify if different types of date marks cover quality and safety requirements;

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Irradiated food

- The General Standard contains a brief, but detailed, section on the labelling of irradiated food.
- This is the only processing and production method singled out for special labelling in the GS.
- Heightened interest of consumers in this matter.

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Claims

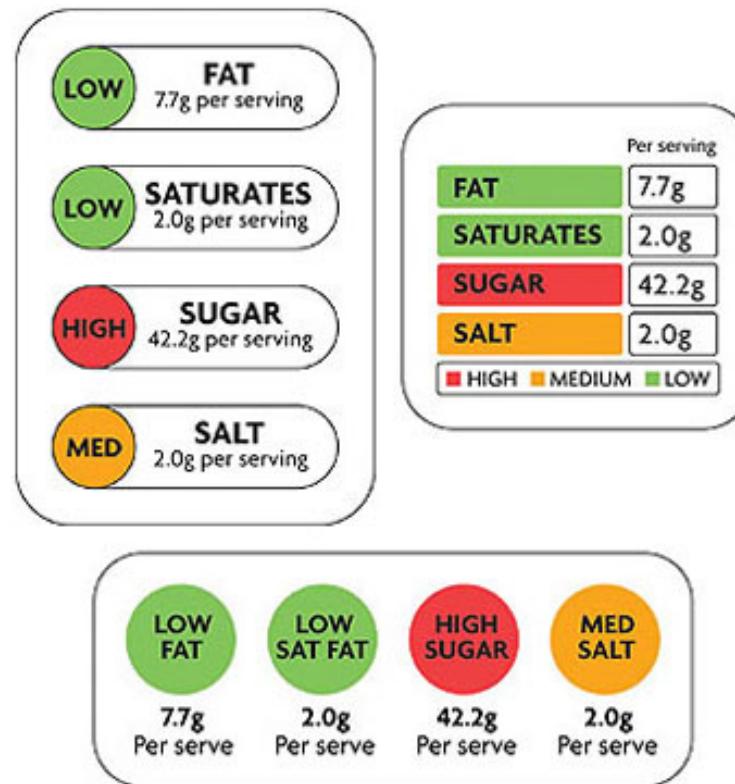
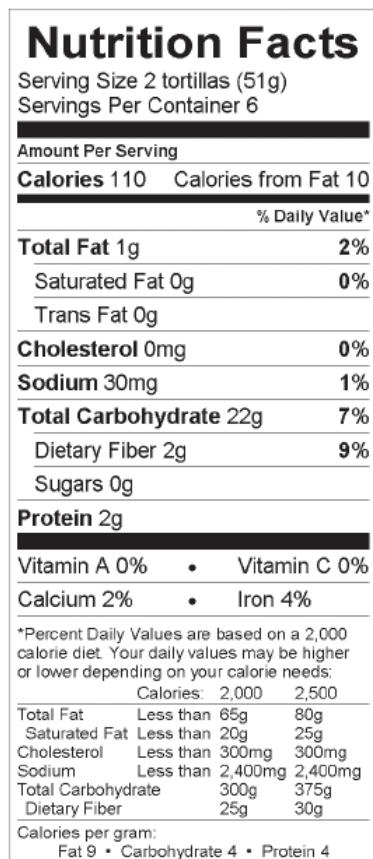
- Concern with
 - exaggerated health and nutrition claims,
 - claims that a normal diet could not provide adequate nutrition, and
 - claims concerning the use of specific terms such as ‘natural’ or ‘organic’
- General Guidelines on Claims deal with
 - prohibited claims,
 - potentially misleading claims and
 - conditional claims (i.e., claims subject to specific conditions).
- Specific texts have been developed for claims on:
 - ‘organically-produced’
 - ‘Halal’.
 - nutrition
 - special dietary foods and medical foods

Nutrition and health information

- Guidelines for nutrition labelling describe the form and content of nutrition information on a food label:
 - energy value;
 - protein,
 - carbohydrate and fat content; and
 - the amount of any other nutrient for which a nutrition or health claim is made
 - specific provisions for the declaration of claims relating to types of fatty acids and cholesterol; types of carbohydrates and fibre; and for vitamins and minerals.
- Add substantially to the principles of food labelling:
 - concept of consumer information ‘so that a wise choice ... can be made’
 - link nutrition labelling to public health policy
 - shift from ‘ensuring fair practices in the food trade’ to a more balanced approach that also encompasses ‘protecting the health of consumers’.
- No claim without nutrition labelling

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Examples



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Guidelines for Use of Health and Nutrition Claims

- Allow nutrition and nutrient claims as well as comparative nutrient claims, under specified conditions and in conformity with standardized wording for such claims.
- Health claims must be substantiated scientifically and must consist of information on the physiological role of the nutrient(s) or on an accepted diet–health relationship
- Claims may be made that relate to established dietary guidelines or to ‘health diets’.
- Table of conditions as to what constitutes ‘Low’, ‘Very low’, ‘Free’ and ‘Source’
- An annex on the scientific substantiation of health claims was recently adopted (2009).

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Labelling, food safety and allergens

- Codex food labelling assumes that all foods to which labelling might apply are safe to eat but foods can deteriorate and become unsuitable for human consumption
- Labelling can limit the effects of deterioration by providing suitable storage and handling instructions. (also suggested in Guidelines for the Conduct of Microbiological Risk Management (CAC/GL 63-2007))
- Certain known allergens are always included in the list of ingredients even if they are present as sub-ingredients of composite foods below the cut-off level of 5 per cent.
- The presence of any of these allergens occurring as a result of transfer through genetic modification must also be declared.

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On-going and future work

- Revision of the GSLPF
- Organic Aquaculture
- Front of pack labelling
- Labelling of non-retail containers
- Consumer preference claims
- Internet sales of food (discontinued)

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Thank you
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