

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

**CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD LABELLING
THIRTY-THIRD SESSION
KOTA KINABALU, MALAYSIA, MAY 9 – 13, 2005**

**PROPOSED DRAFT AMENDMENT TO *THE GENERAL STANDARD FOR THE
LABELLING OF PREPACKAGED FOODS:*
QUANTITATIVE DECLARATION OF INGREDIENTS
(CL 2004/22-FL – APPENDIX VII)**

GOVERNMENT COMMENTS AT STEP 3

COMMENTS FROM:

**CANADA
NORWAY
INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL BEVERAGE ASSOCIATIONS (ICBA)**

**PROPOSED DRAFT AMENDMENT TO THE GENERAL STANDARD FOR THE LABELLING OF PREPACKAGED FOODS:
QUANTITATIVE DECLARATION OF INGREDIENTS
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GOVERNMENT COMMENTS AT STEP 3

CANADA:

Canada does not support universal QUID labelling for all ingredients of all multi-ingredient prepackaged foods, recognizing that a considerable amount of important and useful information is already provided to consumers on labels through such elements as ingredient listing, common names, and nutrition labelling. The original principles in the current *Codex General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods*, Section 5.1 need to be maintained.

However, Canada supports the need to provide information to assist consumer choice between products and the development of clearer requirements in Section 5.1 of the *Codex General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods* would contribute to prevention of misleading labelling, the subject of the Discussion Paper prepared by the United States for the 30th Session of CCFL. Canada does not see this as a voluntary vs mandatory issue, but rather a triggering of information, if specified conditions are met. It has been Canada's position that, in principle, a statement be provided regarding the amount of an ingredient, component or class of ingredient that is emphasized on the label through words, pictures, or graphics or that is essential to distinguish the food from others with which it may be confused. However, Canada notes that it is possible to provide more clarity through other means such as using a more descriptive common name.

Canada supports the amendment of the existing Codex labelling provisions for quantitative labelling of ingredients to provide structure and clarity of a special emphasis in support of this principle. The question, then, is: is there a common view on what are the specified conditions that will trigger a percentage declaration of a particular ingredient (or component, or class of ingredients)? Or, in other words, what constitutes a special emphasis?

Canada has identified a special emphasis as any word, picture or graphic of an ingredient, component, or class of ingredient, that is emphasized on a label or that is essential to distinguish one food from others with which it may be confused. Canada suggests that the scope for defining a special emphasis be limited to aspects that could be misleading regarding the composition of the food. Specifically, an ingredient is highlighted or given a special emphasis when:

- § it is represented on a label by words, pictures or graphics, and emphasis could be misleading, thus requiring a percentage declaration, when:
- § it is one of a group of similar ingredients* which are not highlighted, and
- § it is not the predominant ingredient of the food nor of the similar ingredients, and
- § there is no indication that the ingredient is added for flavouring purposes.

*A similar ingredient is a non-highlighted ingredient, component or group of ingredients present in a food which are of a similar class, added for the same purpose, have the same appearance, or fulfil one of the primary functions of the substance.

For example, the percentage of raspberry would be required when a picture of a raspberry is shown on the label, there are bananas, apples, and pears in the product, raspberry is the third highest in predominance in the group, and there is no indication that it is Araspberry flavoured@.

NORWAY:

Norway finds it important that QUID should relate to the ingredients that consumers find important to know the quantity of. There could be different reasons why consumers would be interested in knowing the quantity of certain ingredients. The character of the food is related to certain ingredients which have an influence on the quality, e.g. some ingredients might taste good and others might contribute to the nutritional value.

Last year we referred to “the Joint WHO/FAO Expert Consultation Report on Diet, Nutrition and the Prevention of Chronic Diseases¹. The Expert Consultation had identified added ingredients with a high amount of mono- and disaccharides as a major health problem. It is widely recognized that high consumption of such ingredients threatens the nutritional quality of diets by providing significant energy without specific nutrients. This is why we find it important that the amount of such ingredients should be quantified in the ingredient list. When consumers are advised to eat less of products such as sugar, syrup etc, they should be able to identify the amount of these ingredients on the labelling.

We suggest new 5.1.1 (e):

“is defined as added sugar, for which a reduced consumption is deemed by WHO to be necessary to enhance the health of consumers.”

It is important to find a definition of “added sugar” that identifies ingredients with high amounts of mono- and disaccharides, such as honey and syrup, which should be quantified. If only mono- and disaccharides are included, other ingredients might be added for sweetening purposes, without being quantified in the labelling. To ensure that such ingredients are properly labelled, and to include honey and syrups mention by the Expert Consultation a definition of “added sugar” could be as follows:

“All mono- and disaccharides added to food by the manufacturer, plus ingredients with more than 67 g mono- and disaccharides per 100 g naturally present.”

We are aware of the fact that nutrition declaration labelling provides information to consumers on the total amount of sugars as nutrients. However, such labelling does not provide any information on the quantity of added sugar that leads to a diet lacking in nutrients but high in energy. Moreover, many consumers find it hard to read and understand the nutrition labelling. Consumers will find information on added sugar useful if they would like to follow the advice from the expert consultation to decrease the intake of such ingredients. This will also give them the possibility to bring about a healthy product development by choosing products with healthier ingredients.

¹ Joint WHO/FAO Expert Consultation Report on Diet, Nutrition and the Prevention of Chronic Diseases, 2002

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL BEVERAGE ASSOCIATIONS (ICBA :

In general, ICBA does not support a universal quantitative declaration of ingredients (QUID). This type of food labelling should remain under the jurisdiction of national regulatory authorities and not become the subject of multilateral negotiation. We also agree with the views expressed by several delegations and observers at the 32nd session of CCFL in that the text should not include references to nutrition or health claims. These issues are not relevant to the context of ingredient declaration and are adequately addressed in the *Guidelines on Nutrition Labelling* and the *Guidelines for the Use of Nutrition and Health Claims*.

5. ADDITIONAL MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

5.1 Quantitative Ingredient Declarations

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| 5.1.1 Every food sold as a mixture or combination shall disclose the ingoing percentage, by weight, of any ingredient (including ingredients of compound ingredients) that | |
| <p>(a) is emphasised on the label through words or pictures. A reference in the name of food to a particular ingredient shall not itself constitute the placing of special emphasis if no other reference to a valuable or characterizing ingredient has been made; or</p> | <p><u>Add:</u> A reference in the name of food to a particular ingredient shall not itself constitute the placing of special emphasis if no other reference to a valuable or characterizing ingredient has been made.</p> <p><u>Justification:</u> The proposed addition is from the existing section 5.1.3 that should be maintained. The name of food alone should not be used as a justification of QUID if no other reference to a valuable or characterizing ingredient has been made. Many product names may have a reference to a certain flavour in the name to identify the flavour of the product to the consumer, e.g., “orange soft drink”.</p> |
| <p>(b) [is essential to characterize the food; or</p> | <p><u>Delete (b)</u></p> <p><u>Justification:</u> This would create confusion since sometimes a flavour will characterize the food and could be derived either from natural ingredients or natural, nature-identical or artificial flavoring substances.</p> |
| <p>(c) is essential to distinguish the food from others with which it may be confused; or]</p> | <p><u>Delete (c)</u></p> <p><u>Justification:</u> We see no reason for this requirement.</p> |
| <p>(d) appears in the common or trade name of the food; or</p> | <p><u>Delete (d)</u></p> <p><u>Justification:</u> See above</p> |
| <p>(e) [the disclosure of which is deemed, by national authorities, to be necessary to enhance the health of consumers or prevent consumer deception].</p> | <p><u>Delete (e)</u></p> <p><u>Justification:</u> QUID should not be used for health effects. These issues are addressed at national</p> |

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| | <p>levels through other means such as national dietary guidelines or nutrition labelling regulations.</p> |
| <p>(f) [is the subject of an express or implied claim about the presence of any fruits, vegetables, whole grains or added sugars]</p> | <p><u>Delete (f)</u></p> <p><u>Justification:</u> QUID is not intended to be used as a nutrition education tool and there should be no requirement to list certain foods or ingredients whose presence are listed in the list of ingredients in descending order. Further, the recipe information is generally considered confidential and protected by trade secret laws.</p> |
| <p>Such disclosure is not required where</p> | |
| <p>(g) (a) [the ingredient comprises less than 2 5% of the total weight of the product and or has been used for the purposes of flavouring; or]</p> | <p><u>Add (a) and revise and delete square brackets: change 2 to 5 % and delete “and”, add “or”</u></p> <p><u>Justification:</u> We note that section 4.2.1.3 in the Codex General Standard for the Labeling of Prepackaged Foods provides an exemption from declaring a compound ingredient that constitutes less than 5% of the food. There should not be any discrepancy between required ingredient declarations in section 4.2 and 5.1.</p> |
| <p>(h) the ingredient comprises less than [2%] of the total weight of the product and consumers have no reasonable expectation of a nutritional or health effect related to the amount of that ingredient; or</p> | <p><u>Delete (h)</u></p> <p><u>Justification:</u> QUID is intended as a quantitative quality description and should not be based on nutritional or health related effects. These are addressed by other Codex or national guidelines on nutrition labeling and health claims. Further, the term “reasonable” is subject to interpretation and that may differ widely on a global scale.</p> |
| <p>(i) (b) commodity specific standards of Codex Alimentarius conflict with the requirements described here. the quantities of an ingredient or category of ingredients are already required to be given on the labelling under the provisions of a specific Codex Alimentarius standard.</p> | <p><u>Delete (i) and replace with:</u> the quantities of an ingredient or category of ingredients are already required to be given on the labeling under the provisions of a specific Codex Alimentarius standard.</p> <p><u>Justification:</u> We suggest this as an alternative text since Codex commodity standards should not be in conflict with general labeling standards.</p> |

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| <p>5.1.2 The information required in Section 5.1.1 shall be declared on the product label [as an average a numerical percentage, by weight, at the time of manufacture rounded to the nearest percentage point].</p> | <p><u>Revise:</u> a numerical percentage to “an average percentage, by weight, at the time of manufacture”</p> <p><u>Justification:</u> This wording is intended to simplify the proposed language.</p> |
| <p>The ingoing percentage, by weight, of each such ingredient [may be given on the label in close proximity to the words or images emphasising the particular ingredient, or beside the common name or class name of the food, or adjacent to each appropriate ingredient listed in the ingredient list as;]-</p> | <p><u>Delete</u></p> <p><u>Justification:</u> The placement of QUID on the label should be left to the national authorities</p> |
| <p>(a) [a minimum percentage, where the emphasis is on the large amount of the ingredient present, or</p> | <p><u>Delete (a)</u></p> <p><u>Justification:</u> Unnecessary and should be left to the national authorities. Minimum and maximum amounts are regulated by nutrition labelling regulations.</p> |
| <p>(b) a maximum percentage, where emphasis is on the small amount of the ingredient present, or]</p> | <p><u>Delete (b)</u></p> <p><u>Justification:</u> Unnecessary and should be left to the national authorities. See preceeding row.</p> |
| <p>(c) an average percentage in all other cases</p> | <p><u>Delete (c)</u></p> <p><u>Justification:</u> Is combined with (a)</p> |
| <p>Or</p> | |
| <p>5.1.3 Ffor foodstuffs which have lost moisture following heat treatment or other treatment, the quantity shall correspond to the quantity of the ingredient or ingredients used, related to the finished product quantities used at the time of manufacturing.</p> | <p><u>Add:</u> Paragraph number and revise the last part of the sentence with “... shall correspond to the quantities used at the time of manufacturing.”</p> |
| <p>The quantity shall be expressed as a percentage. However, when the quantity of an ingredient or the total quantity of all the ingredients expressed on the labelling exceeds 100%, the percentage shall be replaced by the weight of the ingredient(s) used to prepare 100g of finished product.</p> | <p><u>Delete text</u></p> <p><u>Justification:</u> We believe that the proposed text is confusing and would require a justification to be included in the text.</p> |