

**DRAFT REVISION TO THE GENERAL STANDARD FOR THE LABELLING OF PREPACKAGED
FOODS (CODEX STAN 1-1985)**

(At Step 6)

2. DEFINITION OF TERMS:

For use in Date Marking of prepackaged food:

“Date of Manufacture” means the date on which the food becomes the product as described. This is not an indication of the durability of the product.

“Date of Packaging” means the date on which the food is placed in the immediate container in which it will be ultimately sold. This is not an indication of the durability of the product.

“Best Before Date” or “Best Quality Before Date” means the date which signifies the end of the period, under any stated storage conditions, during which the unopened product will remain fully marketable and will retain any specific qualities for which implied or express claims have been made. However, beyond the date the food may still be acceptable for consumption.

“Use-by Date” or “Expiration Date” means the date which signifies the end of the period under any stated storage conditions, after which the product should not be sold or consumed due to safety and quality reasons.

4.7 Date marking and storage instructions

4.7.1 If not otherwise determined in an individual Codex standard, the following date marking shall apply, unless clause 4.7.1 (vii) applies:

- (i) When a food must be consumed before a certain date to ensure its safety and quality the “Use-by Date” or “Expiration Date” shall be declared¹.
- (ii) Where a “Use-by Date” or “Expiration Date” is not required, the “Best-Before Date” or “Best Quality Before Date” shall be declared.
- (iii) The date marking should be as follows:
 - On products with a durability of not more than three months; the day and month shall be declared and in addition, the year when competent authorities consider consumers could be misled.
 - On products with a durability of more than three months at least the month and year shall be declared.
- (iv) The date shall be introduced by the words:
 - “Use-by <insert date>” or “Expiration Date <insert date>” or “Best before <insert date>” or “Best Quality Before <insert date>” as applicable where the day is indicated; or
 - “Use-by end <insert date>” or “expiration date <insert date>” or “Best before <insert date>”; or “Best Quality Before <insert date>” as applicable in other cases.
- (v) The words referred to in paragraph (iv) shall be accompanied by:
 - either the date itself; or
 - a reference to where the date is given.
- (vi) The day and year shall be declared by uncoded numbers with the year to be denoted by 2 or 4 digits, and the month shall be declared by letters or characters or numbers. Where only numbers are used to declare the date or where the year is expressed as only two digits, the competent authority should determine whether to require the sequence of the day, month, year, be given by appropriate abbreviations accompanying the date mark (e.g. DD/MM/YYYY or YYYY/DD/MM).
- (vii) Notwithstanding 4.7.1 (i) and 4.7.1 (ii), a date mark shall not be required for a food if one or more of the following criteria apply:

¹ Consideration should be given to other Codex texts

1. Where safety is not compromised and quality does not deteriorate
 - 1.1 because of the preservative nature of the food is such that it cannot support microbial growth (e.g. alcohol, salt, acidity, low water activity); and/or
 - 1.2 under stated storage conditions;
2. Where the deterioration is evident to the consumer;
3. Where the key/organoleptic quality aspects of the food are not lost;
4. Where the food is intended to be consumed within 24 hours of its manufacture.

For example, foods such as:

- fresh fruits and vegetables, including tubers, which have not been peeled, cut or similarly treated;
- wines, liqueur wines, sparkling wines, aromatized wines, fruit wines and sparkling fruit wines;
- alcoholic beverages containing at least 10% alcohol by volume;
- bakers' or pastry-cooks' wares which, given the nature of their content, are normally consumed within 24 hours of their manufacture;
- vinegar;
- non-iodized food grade salt;
- non-fortified solid sugars;
- confectionery products consisting of flavoured and/or coloured sugars;
- chewing gum.

In such cases, the "Date of Manufacture" or the "Date of Packaging" may be provided.

(viii) A "Date of Manufacture" or a "Date of Packaging" may be used in combination with 4.7.1 (i) or (ii). It shall be introduced with the words "Date of Manufacture" or "Date of Packaging", as appropriate, and use the format provided in clause 4.7.1 (vi).

4.7.2 Any special conditions for the storage of the food shall be declared on the label if where they are required to support the integrity of the food and, where a date mark is used, the validity of the date depends thereon.