

# codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
ORGANIZATION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD  
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ORGANIZATION



JOINT OFFICE: Viale delle Terme di Caracalla 00100 ROME Tel: 39 06 57051 www.codexalimentarius.net Email: codex@fao.org Facsimile: 39 06 5705 4593

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TO: Codex Contact Points  
Interested International Organizations

FROM: Secretary, Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme  
FAO, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00100 Italy

SUBJECT: **REQUEST FOR COMMENTS ON THE NEED FOR LABELLING PROVISIONS SPECIFIC TO FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES**

DEADLINE: **15 April 2002**

COMMENTS: **To:** Mr. Miguel Aguilar Romo  
Director General de Normas  
Av. Puente de Tecamachalco 6, segundo piso,  
Lomas de Tecamachalco Sección Fuentes,  
C.P. 53950  
Naucalpan de Juárez, Estado de México  
Tel: (52) (5) 7 29 93 00, Ext. 4144, 4108  
Directo: (52) (5) 7299480.  
Fax: (52) (5) 7299484  
E-mail: [codexmex@economia.gob.mx](mailto:codexmex@economia.gob.mx)

**Copy to:** Secretary  
Codex Alimentarius Commission  
Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme  
FAO  
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla  
00100 Rome, Italy  
Fax: +39 06 5705 4593  
E-mail: [codex@fao.org](mailto:codex@fao.org)

## BACKGROUND

1. The 9<sup>th</sup> Session of the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (Mexico City, Mexico, 9-13 October 2000) noted that the Codex General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods (CODEX STAN 1-1985, Rev. 1-1991) might not be applicable in all cases to the labelling of fresh fruits and vegetables. The Committee therefore agreed to request comments on the need to elaborate generic provisions for labelling specific to fresh produce, for consideration at its next session.<sup>1</sup>

2. The Codex General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods represents the international consensus on information to be included on the labels of all prepackaged foods or in non-retail containers. The Section on Labelling in Codex commodity standards should include reference to the General Standard and may also contain provisions which are exemptions from, additions to, or which are necessary for the interpretation of the General Standard in respect of the product concerned provided that these can be justified fully.<sup>2</sup> The Section on Labelling for Codex Commodity Standards should be prepared in accordance with guidance given in the *Relations between Commodity Committees and General Committees* as set out in the Procedural Manual of the Codex Alimentarius Commission 12<sup>th</sup> Edition (see pages 82-83). For ease of reference, this section is reproduced hereafter as Appendix I.

<sup>1</sup> ALINORM 01/35, para. 115

<sup>2</sup> Procedural Manual of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, 12<sup>th</sup> Edition, page 81.

3. In addition, the Terms of Reference of the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables calls for the Codex and UN/ECE standards to follow the same broad format.<sup>3</sup> In this regard, the 3<sup>d</sup> Session of the Codex Committee on Tropical Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (Mexico City, Mexico, 23-27 September 1991) acknowledged the decision of the Codex Alimentarius Commission that Codex format should be respected for those matters not dealing exclusively with commercial quality, while the UN/ECE format should be respected for quality characteristics.<sup>4</sup> For ease of reference, the Labelling Section of Codex Standards for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables and the Standard Layout for the UN/ECE Standards for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables are reproduced in Appendix II.

4. Governments and interested international organizations are invited to comment on the *Need for Labelling Provisions specific to Fresh Fruits and Vegetables* as directed above.

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<sup>3</sup> Procedural Manual of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, 12<sup>th</sup> Edition, page 114.

<sup>4</sup> ALINORM 93/35, para. 19

## APPENDIX I

## RELATIONS BETWEEN COMMODITY COMMITTEES AND GENERAL COMMITTEES

## FOOD LABELLING

(Extract from the Procedural Manual 12<sup>th</sup> Edition)

The provisions on food labelling should be included by reference to the Codex General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods (CODEX STAN 1-1985). Exemptions from, or additions to, the General Standard which are necessary for its interpretation in respect of the product concerned should be justified fully, and should be restricted as much as possible.

Information specified in each draft standard should normally be limited to the following:

- a statement that the product shall be labelled in accordance with the Codex General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods (CODEX STAN 1-1985)
- the specified name of the food
- date marking and storage instructions (only if the exemption foreseen in Section 4.7.1 of the General Standard is applied)

Where the scope of the Codex Standard is not limited to prepackaged foods, a provision for labelling of non retail containers may be included.

In such cases the provision may specify that:

*“Information on ...<sup>1</sup> shall be given either on the container or in accompanying documents, except that the name of the product, lot identification, and the name and address of the manufacturer or packer shall appear on the container.<sup>2</sup>*

*However, lot identification, and the name and address of the manufacturer or packer may be replaced by an identification mark provided that such a mark is clearly identifiable with the accompanying documents.”*

In respect of date marking (Section 4.7 of the General Standard), a Codex Committee may, in exceptional circumstances, determine another date or dates as defined in the General Standard, either to replace or to accompany the date of minimum durability, or alternatively decide that no date marking is necessary. In such cases, a full justification for the proposed action should be submitted to the Codex Committee on Food Labelling.

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<sup>1</sup> Codex Committees should decide which provisions are to be included.

<sup>2</sup> Codex Committees may decide that further information is required on the container. In this regard, special attention should be given to the need for storage instructions to be included on the container.

## APPENDIX II

Codex Standards for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables <sup>1</sup>	Standard Layout for UN/ECE for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables
<b>6. MARKING AND LABELLING</b>	<b>VI. PROVISIONS CONCERNING MARKING</b>
<b>6.1 CONSUMERS PACKAGES</b> In addition to the requirements of the Codex General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods (CODEX STAN 1-1985, Rev. 1-1991), the following specific provisions apply:	Each package <sup>2</sup> must bear the following particulars, in letters grouped on the same side, legibly and indelibly marked, and visible from the outside: (for ..... transported in bulk (direct loading into a transport vehicle) these particulars must appear on a document accompanying the goods, and attached in a visible position inside the transport vehicle).
<b>6.1.1 Nature of Produce</b> If the produce is not visible from the outside, each package shall be labelled as to the name of the produce and may be labelled as to the name of the variety and/or commercial type.	<b>A. Identification</b> Packer ) Name and address or and/or ) officially issued or Dispatcher ) accepted code mark. <sup>3</sup>
<b>6.2 NON-RETAIL CONTAINERS</b> Each package must bear the following particulars, in letters grouped on the same side, legibly and indelibly marked, and visible from the outside, or in the documents accompanying the shipment. <sup>4</sup>	<b>B. Nature of produce</b> - Name of the produce if the contents are not visible from the outside - ..... (Name of the variety and/or commercial type according to the nature of produce).
<b>6.2.1 Identification</b> Name and address of Exporter, Packer and/or Dispatcher. Identification code (optional). <sup>5</sup>	<b>C. Origin of produce</b> - Country of origin and, optionally, district where grown, or national, regional or local place name.
<b>6.2.2 Nature of Produce</b> Name of produce if the contents are not visible from the outside. Name of variety and/or commercial type (optional).	<b>D. Commercial specifications</b> - Class - Size (if sized) - ..... (Other possible particulars depending on the nature of produce).
<b>6.2.3 Origin of Produce</b> Country of origin and, optionally, district where grown or national, regional or local place name.	<b>E. Official control mark (optional)</b>
<b>6.2.4 Commercial Identification</b> - Type; - Class; - Size; - Net weight (optional).	
<b>6.2.5 Official Inspection Mark (optional)</b>	

<sup>1</sup> The Labelling Section following hereafter corresponds to the standardized language used throughout Codex Standards for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables as endorsed by the 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Codex Committee on Food Labelling (ALINORM 93/22 para.14). Some deviations may be allowed according to the characteristics of the produce.

<sup>2</sup> See Geneva Protocol, footnote 2, under "Marking".

<sup>3</sup> The national legislation of a number of countries requires the explicit declaration of the name and address. However, in the case where a code mark is used, the reference "packer and/or dispatcher (or equivalent abbreviations)" has to be indicated in close connection with the code mark.

<sup>4</sup> Governments, when indicating their acceptance of this Standard, should notify the Commission as to which provisions of this Section apply.

<sup>5</sup> The national legislation of a number of countries requires the explicit declaration of the name and address. However, in the case where a code mark is used, the reference "packer and/or dispatcher (or equivalent abbreviations)" has to be indicated in close connection with the code mark.