



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00153 Rome, Italy - Tel: (+39) 06 57051 - E-mail: codex@fao.org - www.codexalimentarius.org

Agenda Item 6

CX/FL 26/49/6
March 2026

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEx COMMITTEE ON FOOD ADDITIVES

Forty-ninth Session

11-15 May 2026

AMENDMENTS TO THE *GENERAL STANDARD FOR THE LABELLING OF PRE-PACKAGED FOODS* (CXS 1- 1985): PROVISIONS RELEVANT TO JOINT PRESENTATION AND MULTIPACK FORMATS (STEP 4)

(Prepared by the Electronic Working Group chaired by Colombia and
co-chaired by Canada, India and Jamaica)

Codex Members and Observers wishing to submit comments on the draft guidelines in the Appendix I
should do so as instructed in CL 2026/08-FL available on the Codex webpage/Circular Letters:

[Circular letters](#) | [CODEXALIMENTARIUS FAO-WHO](#)

INTRODUCTION

1. The 47th Session of the Codex Committee on Food Labelling (CCFL47, 2023) considered the project document and agreed to start new work on the labelling of foods sold in joint presentation and multipack formats. CCFL47 also established an Electronic Working Group (EWG), chaired by Colombia and co-chaired by Jamaica, to prepare a preliminary draft text for consideration at CCFL48.
2. CCFL48 considered the proposed draft Provisions relevant to joint presentation and multipack formats, returned them to Step 2/3 for further consideration, and re-established an EWG chaired by Colombia and co-chaired by Canada, India and Jamaica, to continue drafting the guidelines, taking into account the discussions and written comments submitted at the session for circulation for comments at Step 3 and consideration by CCFL49.
3. The work addresses how the *General Standard for the Labelling of Pre-packaged Foods* (GSLPF) applies to pre-packaged foods that are sold as a single unit of food and consist of more than one identical or different individually packaged food that may be either consumed together or separately. Examples include pre-packaged products that consist of:
 - individually packaged foods intended to be consumed separately, such as a multipack of single servings of yogurt of the same or different flavours
 - individually packaged foods intended to be combined or consumed together, such as a taco kit with tortilla, seasoning, and beans.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

4. The EWG was mandated to:
 - Develop proposed text to clarify how mandatory labelling requirements apply to foods sold in multipack and joint presentation formats.
 - Consider whether amendments to definitions in the GSLPF are necessary.
 - Explore revisions to provisions on net contents, date marking, and ingredient lists for these formats.

PARTICIPATION AND METHODOLOGY

5. A total of 19 Codex Members and 8 Observers contributed comments during two rounds of consultation within the EWG.¹

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

Consultation- Round 1

6. The first consultation proposed a new section (8.1.3.1) to clarify how mandatory labelling requirements apply to foods sold in multipack or joint presentation formats. Two options for the wording of section 8.1.3.1 were proposed, both with the same intent. During the first round of consultations views were also sought on whether: new definitions were needed; additional provisions should be introduced for net contents, date marking, and ingredient lists; and the labelling of inner packages falls within the scope of this work.

7. Key outcomes:

- Most members agreed that the GSLPF already applies to the labelling of foods sold in joint presentation and multipacks but supported or did not object to the addition of a clarifying text.
- General provision in 8.1.3.1: most EWG members supported the intent of the section, with a majority favoring the wording of Option 1 for alignment with existing structure of the standard and for clarity.
- Definitions: The majority of members supported the proposal that new definitions or updates to definitions were not required based on the proposed wording of 8.1.3.1, which incorporates the meaning of multipacks and foods sold in joint presentation directly into the provision. As such, no new definitions have been developed. This approach will avoid amendments to long standing definitions, which could have unintended consequences.
- Inner packages: Almost all EWG members agreed that labelling inner packages is outside the scope of this work. Most members agreed that this work stream should be limited to the outer package of foods sold in multipack or joint presentation formats, and not the labelling of inner packages that are not sold individually to consumers.

Responses on this topic also revealed differing views on whether the definition of “container”, in the GSLPF definition, applies only to outer packaging. Some EWG members noted that the definition includes wrappers, and that Section 8.1.3 refers to both wrappers and inner units as containers. It was also clarified that if inner units are sold individually or intended for individual sale, they qualify as pre-packaged foods under GSLPF and must meet all labelling requirements.

- There were mixed views expressed on the proposed new provisions for net contents, date marking and ingredient lists, and these are summarized below.

Consultation- Round 2

8. The second consultation summarized feedback and presented revised text for Section 8.1.3.1 (outer container labelling), Section 4.3.4 (net contents), Section 4.7.1 (date marking), and Section 4.2.1 (ingredient lists and allergen statements). Specific comments on each of these proposals are summarized in their respective sections below.

9. Based on responses to the first consultation, no new definitions were proposed, and the second consultation addressed the labelling of the outer package sold as the pre-packaged food in multipack or joint presentation only, and not inner packages.

10. Full summary of discussion is in Appendix II, for information.

CONCLUSIONS

11. The EWG has progressed work to develop draft updates to the *General Standard for the Labelling of Pre-packaged Foods* (GSLPF) for foods sold in multipack and joint presentation formats. While the majority of members agree that the existing provisions of the GSLPF apply to these products, there is general acceptance that additional text could improve clarity and support consistent interpretation.

¹ Countries: Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Egypt, European Union, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Thailand, The Netherlands, Türkiye, UK, United States, Uruguay Observer Organizations / NGOs: , ALAIAB, Association of European Coeliac Societies, EFAD (European Federation of Associations of Dietitians), FoodDrinkEurope, Food Industry Asia, ICGA, (International Chewing Gum Association), ICA (International Confectionery Association), ICGMA (International Council of Grocery Manufacturers Association), International Council of Beverages Associations.

12. The consultations revealed broad support for introducing a new subsection under Section 8 to specify how mandatory labelling information applicable to the pre-packaged product that is sold in joint presentation or multipack format should be provided, either on the outer container or by being discernible and legible on the individual packages that make up the container.

13. Draft amendments were also developed for net contents, date marking, and ingredient lists, to address the unique considerations for these types of food. For these, the EWG Chair and Co-Chairs worked to address member comments that varied from seeking greater flexibility to increased prescriptiveness.

14. The vast majority of EWG members agreed that inner packages not intended for individual sale fall outside the scope of this work. The majority of members also supported the approach to describe the foods in section 8.1.3.1 rather than introduce new definitions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

15. CCFL49 is invited to consider

- (i) the proposed draft amendments to *General standard for the labelling of pre-packaged foods* (CXS 1-1985) (GSLPF) sections 4.2.1, 4.3.4, 4.7.1, and 8.1.3.1 to include the provisions relevant to joint presentation and multipack formats in Appendix I; and
- (ii) if the text in square brackets under section 8.1.3.1 is needed or not.

16. CCFL 49 is also requested to note that inner packages that are not intended for individual sale will not be considered within the scope of this work, and if these are sold individually, they must comply with all GSLPF requirements.

APPENDIX I**AMENDMENTS TO THE GENERAL STANDARD FOR THE LABELLING OF PRE-PACKAGED FOODS
(CXS 1- 1985): PROPOSED PROVISIONS RELEVANT TO JOINT PRESENTATION AND MULTIPACK
FORMATS****(STEP 4)**

(Proposed new text to CXS 1-1985 is indicated in **bold and underline**)

4.2 *List of Ingredient***NEW Text to appear after existing text in 4.2.1:**

4.2.1 (bis) For pre-packaged foods subject to section 8.1.3.1, either separate lists of ingredients for each type of individually packaged food that makes up the container, or a combined list of ingredients shall be declared, as appropriate to the nature of the food and whether the individually packaged foods are intended to be consumed separately or together.

4.3 *Net contents and drained weight*

4.3.4 For pre-packaged foods that are subject to section 8.1.3.1 and intended to be consumed separately, the net contents shall be declared by indicating:

- **the total net contents of the pre-packaged food sold as a single unit; and/or**
- **the number of individually pre-packaged foods per type and their respective net contents, either on the outer container or on the individually packaged foods that make up the container, if they can easily be counted and their net contents per type are clearly discernible and legible**

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 Section 4.7.1 (vii) applies:

4.7.1 (vi) bis: For pre-packaged foods subject to section 8.1.3.1, the best-before date, best quality-before date, use-by date, or expiration date shall be declared as the earliest date of the individually packaged foods that make up the container (if they differ). If the inner units have more than one type of date, the earliest date and the earliest use-by or expiration date shall be listed— unless the use-by or expiration date is already the earliest.

8. PRESENTATION OF MANDATORY INFORMATION**8.1** *General*

8.1.3 Where the container is covered by a wrapper, the wrapper shall carry the necessary information or the label on the container shall be readily legible through the outer wrapper or not obscured by it.

8.1.3.1 A container of pre-packaged food that is sold as a single unit and consists of more than one identical or different individually packaged foods, whether intended to be consumed together or separately, shall include on the outer packaging the mandatory labelling information for that container, as set out in Sections 4 and 5, unless the mandatory labelling information is readily legible and discernible on at least one of each type of the individually packaged foods that make up the container.

[a. Any mandatory labelling information for the pre-packaged food that is sold as a single unit that is different to that on the individually packaged foods that make up the container must appear on the outer packaging. (e.g: Where the name and address required by Section 4.4 for the pre-packaged food sold as a single unit is different from that on the individually pre-packaged inner units, the name and address of the packer, distributor, importer, exporter or vendor of the single unit shall appear on the outer packaging.)]

APPENDIX II**FULL SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION****Overall Provision on Labelling of Foods Sold in Joint Presentation and Multipack Formats (New Section 8.1.3.1)**

The second consultation presented a revised Section 8.1.3.1, based on EWG members' preference for Option 1 in the first consultation, and other adjustments to wording for clarity.

The intent of the proposed new section is to ensure that any mandatory information that pertains to a prepackaged product sold as a single unit (such as a multipack or food sold in joint presentation):

- Is readily available, by being either:
 - visible on the inner units, **or**
 - applied to the outer container.
- Despite the above, is provided on the outer container if the mandatory labelling information for the product *differs* from what appears on the inner units.

This is the version that was consulted on during the second consultation:

8.1.3.1 *A container of pre-packaged food that is sold as a single unit and consists of more than one identical or different individually packaged foods, whether intended to be consumed together or separately, will include on the outer packaging the mandatory labelling information set out in Sections 4 and 5, unless:*

a. The outer package wrapping is transparent, and the mandatory labelling information is readily legible and discernible on at least one of each type of the individually packaged foods that make up the container AND

b. When there are differences in mandatory labelling information between the individually packaged foods and the transparent outer packaging of the pre-packaged food that is sold as a single unit, only the differing information must appear on the outer packaging. (e.g. the name and address of the manufacturer, etc. of the pre-packaged food that is sold as a single unit is different from one or more of those of the individually packaged foods)

Member Responses

Members were asked to respond “yes” or “no” when asked if they supported the above proposed draft section 8.1.3.1. While responses were mixed, most members indicated support for the overall intent of section 8.1.3.1.

The majority of negative responses related to the wording of the provision, in particular part (b) and whether it unintentionally limits flexibility and does not flow with the chapeau statement. A few EWG members expressed additional concerns related to wanting allergen labelling to be available on the inner packages. One member suggested that it was not necessary to specify that the outer package wrapping be transparent in part (a), just that the mandatory labelling on the inner units be legible and discernible, which could be achieved in different ways including units attached by a sleeve that reveals some inner package labelling, transparent outer package, etc.

Proposed Path Forward:

A revised section 8.1.3.1 has been drafted. This revised draft acknowledges the general support for the intent of the new section, while addressing comments that the wording needed to be clarified, with the following adjustments:

- The word “will” is replaced by “shall”, for consistency with other CCFL texts;
- The specification that the outer package wrapping needs to be transparent is removed, as there may be other ways to achieve the outcome of “legible and discernible” which is already stated.
- The words “for that container” are added, and the provision formerly in paragraph (b) about differences between the inner and outer package labelling is placed in square brackets. This is because if it is clear in section 8.1.3.1 that the mandatory information to be provided is that which is applicable to the container that is the pre-packaged product sold in joint presentation or multipack format, then it may not be necessary to specify that the information that is different between the outer package and inner units must appear on the outer container.

The result is that if the inner units provide the information that is applicable to the container as a whole, the requirement will be met, and if not, then the labelling information must appear on the outer package. For example, if the container holds two different types of products, any information not declared on the outer packaging that is unique to each type of product must be visible on at least one of each type of product.

Together the above changes should address concerns with the original wording of part (b).

With respect to comments that section 8.1.3.1 should specify allergen labelling requirements for the inner units, no changes have been made. There was broad agreement as part of the first consultation that the labelling of inner units would not be part of this work stream. In addition, section 8.1.3.1 is about the labelling of the entire pre-packaged product (in joint presentation or multipack format), and it would complicate this section to also address the labelling of inner units.

Revised Draft:

8.1.3.1 A container of pre-packaged food that is sold as a single unit and consists of more than one identical or different individually packaged foods, whether intended to be consumed together or separately, shall include on the outer packaging the mandatory labelling information **for that container**, as set out in Sections 4 and 5, unless the mandatory labelling information is readily legible and discernible on at least one of each type of the individually packaged foods that make up the container.

[a. Any mandatory labelling information for the pre-packaged food that is sold as a single unit that is different to that on the individually packaged foods that make up the container must appear on the outer packaging. (e.g: Where the name and address required by Section 4.4 for the pre-packaged food sold as a single unit is different from that on the individually pre-packaged inner units, the name and address of the packer, distributor, importer, exporter or vendor of the single unit shall appear on the transparent outer packaging.]

Section 4.3.4 – Net Contents

Through both rounds of consultation within the EWG, support for the inclusion of an additional provision on labelling the net contents of foods sold in joint presentation and multipack formats was mixed. Some EWG members commented that the inclusion of new text would provide useful information for consumers, while others saw it as unnecessary and inflexible.

The second consultation sought feedback on the following draft provision:

4.3.4 *For pre-packaged foods that are subject to section 8.1.3.1 and intended to be consumed separately, the number of individually packaged foods per type, and their respective net contents, shall be stated on the container of pre-packaged food next to the declaration of net contents. For example, “600mL (3 units of 200mL)” or “600 mL (2 units of 100 mL and 2 units of 200 mL)”. This does not apply if, despite 8.1.3.1. (b), the number of individually packaged foods can easily be counted through the transparent outer package wrapping, and their net quantities per type easily identified.*

Member Feedback

There were both supporters and opponents of the above draft, with more opposed than in favour. Reasons conveyed by those opposed included lack of flexibility, introduction of an additional burdensome labelling requirement, lack of alignment with some countries' requirements, and technical challenges in meeting the proposal. However, many opposed indicated that they would support the provision if more flexibility was provided. Conversely, a few members suggested removing flexibility by deleting or modifying the exemption from the proposed text about the easily counted individually packaged foods. Two members prefer to delete the entire provision, and one commented that this provision would be better placed in Section 8.

Proposed Path Forward

The EWG Chairs recognize that in order to achieve consensus on a new provision on net contents, it would need to be more flexible and not introduce additional labelling requirements. The previous draft required both the total net contents and the number of individual units and their net contents. The new draft provides flexibility by providing the option of declaring the net contents in either manner, while still providing clarity on how to provide the net contents for this type of pre-packaged food. The revised proposal would allow any of the following types of declarations to fulfill the net contents requirements:

- 600 mL (3 units of 200 mL)
- 3 x 200 mL
- 600 mL

One or more of the above options could be used to fulfil net contents requirements. It is important to note that a net contents declaration will be required for foods sold in these formats regardless of whether additional text is added to the GSLPF to specify how it should be declared. In addition, the total net contents of the product in joint presentation or multipack will always differ from the net content of the individual units that make up the container.

Revised Draft:

4.3.4 For pre-packaged foods that are subject to section 8.1.3.1 and intended to be consumed separately, the net contents shall be declared by indicating:

- the total net contents of the pre-packaged food sold as a single unit; and/or
- the number of individually pre-packaged foods per type and their respective net contents, either on the outer container or on the individually packaged foods that make up the container, if they can easily be counted and their net contents per type are clearly discernible and legible.

Section 4.7.1 – Date Marking

A draft provision on date marking for foods sold in joint presentation and multipack formats was included in both rounds of consultation. In the first round, a majority of EWG members supported the proposed draft, with some suggestions for adjustments to the wording that were introduced in the second round. The following was proposed during the second consultation:

4.7.1 (vi) bis: For pre-packaged foods subject to section 8.1.3.1, the manner to provide date marking is to either declare the date of the individually packaged food with the earliest date marking on the outer container, or, despite 8.1.3.1 (b), to ensure at least the earliest date marking is visible on the inner units.

Member Feedback

Generally, most commenters were fully in support of the proposal or would support this provision with minor editorial changes. Two members and two observers suggested specifying the types of date markings to which this section would apply. Three observers and one member expressed concerns with the option for the earliest date marking to be visible through the outer packaging, as there may be concerns with legibility (e.g. due to font size or movement within the outer package).

One member questioned how the provision would apply if the multipack consisted of inner units with mixed types of date markings (e.g., if some inner packages have a best before date and some have a use by date), and the potential for consumers to not have access to information for food safety purposes. This same member suggested that section 4.7.1 of the existing GSLPF already covers all scenarios for multipacks.

One member did not support the provision but would support the general intent appearing in section 8. Other editorial changes were suggested by several members.

Proposed Path Forward

Given that most EWG members were in support of this provision, it is proposed to retain it with edits to the wording to replace “date marking” with the type of date, e.g. best-before-date, use-by date, expiration date. To address the comments about legibility, the word “visible” is replaced by “clearly discernible and legible”.

With respect to the comment that there could be mixed types of dates, it is understood that consumers may use safety dates (use-by, expiration dates) differently than quality dates (best-before, best quality-before). For example, consumers may be more comfortable purchasing a food close to or even after its best-before date, while wanting to have more time to consume the food before a safety date.

As it may be possible in some circumstances for the best-before date to be before the safety date, the revised draft indicates that the safety-related use-by or expiration date must always be provided, even if it is not the earliest date for the foods within the joint presentation or multipack format.

Revised Draft:

4.7.1 (vi) bis: For pre-packaged foods subject to section 8.1.3.1, the best-before date, best quality-before date, use-by date, or expiration date shall be declared as the earliest date of the individually packaged foods that make up the container (if they differ), **If the inner units have more than one type of date, the earliest date and the earliest use-by or expiration date shall be listed— unless the use-by or expiration date is already the earliest.**

Section 4.2.1 – Ingredient Lists

The EWG consulted on an addition to Section 4.2.1 to clarify that multipacks that consist of foods intended to be consumed separately should have separate ingredient lists and allergen statements for those foods, while foods intended to be consumed together could declare ingredients and allergens either separately or as one composite ingredient list.

Feedback from the first consultation indicated significant support for the intent of the proposal, with comments including that it addresses a gap for this type of product, and that it will help consumers make safe and informed decisions. Some respondents suggested that individual lists of ingredients should always be required, even for individually packaged foods that are intended to be consumed together. Of the minority that did not support the proposed addition, they preferred to have flexibility by allowing a separate or combined list of ingredients at all times for these foods.

There were also comments on the inclusion of “allergen statements” in section 4.2.1, with suggestions that this may remove some of the flexibility provided in section 8.3 on the placement of the allergen statement. To address this, “as applicable, in accordance with Section 8.3” was added to the latest draft.

The most recent proposal consulted on was:

4.2.1 Except for single ingredient foods, a list of ingredients shall be declared on the label. (*existing text*)
New *Text:*

a) *For pre-packaged foods subject to section 8.1.3.1 that are intended to be consumed separately (for example, containing different types of individually packaged granola bars), separate lists of ingredients and allergen statements, as applicable in accordance with Section 8.3, shall be declared on the label of the container of the pre-packaged food, for each type of individually packaged food*

b) *For pre-packaged foods subject to section 8.1.3.1 that are intended to be consumed together (for example, a meal kit containing individually packaged tortillas, sauce, and seasoning), either separate or a single combined list(s) of ingredients and allergen statement(s), as applicable in accordance with Section 8.3, shall be declared on the label of the container of the pre-packaged food.*

Member Feedback

In response to the second consultation, a majority of EWG members indicated support for the intent of the draft additions to section 4.2.1, with some suggestions for placement or wording. An additional 4 members who were not in favour of the proposal indicated support for the intent with editorial changes needed. Among these, some requested that the content on allergens be moved to Section 8, or that it was already covered in Section 8 and did not need additional text. Those who did not support the intent of the proposal were in two categories:

- 3 EWG members would like separate lists of ingredients to always be provided, even for individual units intended to be consumed together,
- 2 Members believe the proposal removes flexibility and imposes an additional requirement rather than clarifying the application of existing requirements, and that the current flexible wording of the GSLPF is sufficient.

Comments were also provided on references to allergen statements in this section, and whether the text “as applicable, in accordance with Section 8.3” addresses concerns from the previous consultation round. Many members expressed concerns about the inclusion of allergen statements in the draft addition to section 4.2.1 for reasons including:

- it was difficult to achieve consensus on the provisions regarding allergen statements in section 8.3 and this workstream could re-open those discussions;
- section 4.2.1 is about the list of ingredients, and it is inconsistent with the structure of the GSLPF to reference allergen statements in that section;
- including allergen statements in this section creates confusion;
- the implications of including allergen statements in this section have not been fully assessed.

Many others agreed with the addition of “as applicable, in accordance with Section 8.3” to clarify that Section 8.3 would still apply to allergen statements.

There were also recommendations to remove the examples from the provision. One Member suggested the whole provision should move to Section 8 of the GSLPF.

Proposed Path Forward

While there was significant support for the intent of the provision, those not in favour have opposite views, some seeking more flexibility and others seeking more prescriptiveness. There is a general recognition that depending on type of pre-packaged product sold in joint presentation or multipack format, either individual lists of ingredients for the individually packaged foods that make up the product **or** a single combined list of ingredients may be appropriate options. In order to provide clarity on these options, while also enabling flexibility for competent authorities, the revised draft removes some of the specificity about which type of list of

ingredients to use in which situation. In addition, the examples were removed from the draft provision based on feedback.

With respect to allergen statements, these have been removed from the draft addition to section 4.2.1 based on several comments that these do not belong in that section. The provisions in Section 8.3 cover allergen statements for all pre-packaged foods including those sold in joint presentation and multipack formats.

Revised Draft:

4.2.1 (existing text) Except for single ingredient foods, a list of ingredients shall be declared on the label.

NEW Text: (a) For pre-packaged foods subject to section 8.1.3.1, either separate lists of ingredients for each type of individually packaged food that makes up the container, or a combined list of ingredients shall be declared, as appropriate to the nature of the food and whether the individually packaged foods are intended to be consumed separately or together.