

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

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Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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REP26/FL

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

Forty-ninth Session

CICG, Geneva, Switzerland

6-10 July 2026

REPORT OF THE FORTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD LABELLING

Ottawa, Canada

11-15 May 2026

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SUMMARY AND STATUS OF WORK

Responsible Party	Purpose	Text/Topic	Job No.	Step	Para.
CCEXEC90 CAC49	Critical review/ adoption	Annex to the <i>General standard for the labelling of pre-packaged foods</i> (CXS 1-1985): Guidelines on the use of precautionary allergen labelling	N10-2019	8	91i App III
		Amendments to the <i>General standard for the labelling of pre-packaged foods</i> (CXS 1-1985): Provisions relevant to joint presentation and multipack formats	N06-2023	5/8	115 App. IV
		Guidelines on application of food labelling provisions in emergencies	N20-2024	5/8	139 App. V
CCEXEC87 CAC47 CCSCH	Information /action	Conclusions on the use of “country of harvest and the mandatory declaration of country of origin in food labelling of spices			35
CCASIA CCFA CCFFV CCFO CCNE CCSCH	Information	CCFL endorsement decisions/recommendations			62 (i & ii)
CCSCH	Information	Any mandatory provisions in commodity standards shall align with the GSLPF, and any exemption to be clear and fully justified			62 (v)
All relevant Committees	Information	To carefully review the application of the GSLPF provisions related to the name of the food and incorporate these as appropriate.			62 (iv)
		Note the completion of the work on the guidelines of the application of labelling provisions in emergencies.			139 (ii)
CCFH/ CCNFSDU	Information/ Action	Completion of the guideline on the use of PAL, consider new work to ensure consistency between PAL and i) CXC 80-2020 (CCFH) and ii) CXS 118-1979 (CCNFSDU)			91 (ii & iii)
FAO/WHO/ Codex Secretariat	Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training and Capacity building activities on the implementation of the PAL to countries - Make digital tools on risk analysis for allergens available to Members 			92
New Zealand, Australia CCFL49	Drafting/ discussion	Develop a discussion paper related to the on a strategic forward plan for CCFL – including future work and direction of CCFL			152
Panama	Drafting	Update the discussion paper and project document on definition for small packages			170
Codex Secretariat	Action	Issue Circular Letter requesting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. proposals for new work; update to standards; emerging issues ii. comments on project document on small packages 			152(iii) & 170 (ii)

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CAC	Codex Alimentarius Commission
CCAFRICA	FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for AFRICA
CCASIA	FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Asia
CCEXEC	Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission
CCEURO	FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Europe
CCFA	Codex Committee on Food Additives
CCFFV	Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables
CCFH	Codex Committee on Food Hygiene
CCFL	Codex Committee on Food Labelling
CCFO	Codex Committee on Fats and Oils
CCLAC	FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean
CCMAS	Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling
CCNASWP	FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for North America and South West Pacific
CCNE	FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for the Near East
CCNFSDU	Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses
CCSCH	Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs
CFIA	Canadian Food Inspection Agency
COH	country of harvest
COO	Country of Origin
CL	Circular Letter
CRD	Conference Room Document
CXC	Codex Code of Practice
CXG	Codex Guideline
CXS	Codex Standard
EU	European Union
EWG	Electronic Working Group
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FBO	Food Business Operator
GIFNA	Global database on the Implementation of Food and Nutrition Action
GSLPF	General Standard for the Labelling of Pre-packaged Foods (CXS 1-1985)
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IgE	Immunoglobulin E
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
IWG	In-Session Working Group
NIV	Nutrient intake values
OIV	International Organisation of Vine and Wine
PAL	Precautionary allergen labelling
PWG	Physical Working Group
RfD	Reference Dose

SCH	Spices and Culinary Herbs
SOCO	State of Agricultural Commodity Markets
TBT	Technical Barriers to Trade
UAP	Unintended allergen presence
UN	United Nations
UPF	Ultra Processed Food
WG	Working Group
VWG	Virtual Working Group
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

INTRODUCTION

1. The Codex Committee on Food Labelling (CCFL) held its Forty-ninth Session in Ottawa, Canada from 11 - 15 May 2026, at the kind invitation of the government of Canada. The Session was chaired by Dr. Parthi Muthukumarasamy, Director General, International Policy and Trade Directorate, Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). The Session was attended by delegates from 69 Member countries and one Member Organization and 29 Observer Organizations. A list of participants is contained in Appendix I.

OPENING

2. Dr. Celia Lourenco, Associate Assistant Deputy Minister of the Health Products and Food Branch of Health Canada with the Government of Canada, opened the session by welcoming delegates to CCFL49 in Ottawa and underscoring the importance of Codex in promoting trust through science-based food labelling standards to protect consumer from misleading practices, ensure public health protection, and facilitate trade. The role of Codex standards in enhancing food security and resilient supply chains was also highlighted. The Committee's progress on allergen labelling was commended, and continued work in this area was encouraged to improve consumer safety and support informed choices. The Committee was further encouraged to address emerging labelling issues through collaborative, science-based approaches toward achieving safe food for all.
3. The Chairperson of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC), Mr Allan Azegele (Kenya) and the Codex Secretary, Dr Sarah Cahill also addressed the meeting.

Division of competence¹

4. CCFL49 noted the division of competence between the European Union (EU) and its Member States, according to paragraph 5, Rule II, of the Rules of Procedure of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda item 1)²

5. CCFL49 adopted the provisional agenda as its Agenda of the Session.

MATTERS REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE BY THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND/OR ITS SUBSIDIARY BODIES (Agenda item 2)³

6. CCFL49 noted the matters from CAC, Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CCEXEC) and other Codex subsidiary bodies that were for information only; and that certain matters were relevant to other agenda items.
7. CCFL49:
 - i. Noting the availability of the electronic working group (EWG) handbook in six languages, encouraged members to use this guidance and for experienced Members to provide mentorship mechanisms to support more members to take leadership roles in CCFLs' working groups.
 - ii. Agreed to consider issues related to the use of the term country of harvest (COH) in the labelling of spices and culinary herbs (SCH) under Agenda item 2.1, and the response from the 45th Session of the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling (CCMAS45) regarding the suitable methods of analysis to support precautionary allergen labelling under Agenda Item 5.

THE USE OF "COUNTRY OF HARVEST" IN ADDITION TO THE MANDATORY DECLARATION OF COUNTRY OF ORIGIN IN FOOD LABELLING OF SPICES (Agenda item 2.1)⁴

8. The Codex Secretariat introduced the item, provided history on discussions, and recalled that CCFL48, could not reach consensus on the endorsement of the mandatory nature of Section 8.3.2 – "Country of Harvest shall be declared", in the *Standard for dried floral parts – dried saffron* (CXS 351-2022) and thus referred the matter to CCEXEC87 and CAC47 for consideration.

¹ Division of competence between the European Union and its Member States (CRD01).

² CX/FL 26/49/1; CRD07 (Burundi, Rwanda, the United Republic of Tanzania)

³ CX/FL 26/49/2; CX/FL 26/49/2 Add.2; CRD08 (Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, the United Republic of Tanzania); CRD10 (AOECS); CRD24 (Burundi, East African Community, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania)

⁴ CX/FL 26/49/2 Add.1; CRD04 (Comments in reply to CL 2026/28-FL); CRD05 (Proposal from the CCFL Chairperson); CRD09 (Burundi, El Salvador, Kenya, Nigeria, Republic of Korea, Senegal, Thailand, United Republic of Tanzania, and Zambia); CRD19 (Morocco); CRD20 (Mexico); CRD21 (Ecuador); CRD24 (Ecuador); CRD26 (Ghana); CRD27 (Panama); CRD28 (Iran); CRD29 (Australia, Canada, Cook Islands, New-Zealand, Tonga and Vanuatu); CRD37 (Jamaica)

9. It was highlighted that CAC47 agreed: a) to use a Circular Letter (CL) to seek potential solutions regarding the use of COH in food labelling of spices; b) to establish an EWG jointly chaired by Iran and Canada and co-chaired by India and Madagascar, to review the information gathered from the comments to the CL as well as discussions at the Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH), CCFL and CAC47 and provide potential options. The comments submitted in response to CL 2025/07-FL were shared with both the EWG Chairs and CCSCH for consideration as directed by CAC.
10. The Codex Secretariat also presented two recommendations submitted by CCSCH8 (2025) to CCFL49 for consideration: i) to clarify section 4.5.2 of the GSLPF with respect to the statement “change in nature of the food” and ii) provide additional guidance by defining country of origin (COO) and COH.
11. Canada, on behalf of the EWG Joint-Chairs (Canada and Iran) and co-chairs (India and Madagascar), presented the outcome of the work of the EWG, indicating that the EWG had agreed that accurate COO labelling was important for transparency, consumer information, and fraud prevention. The EWG identified the main labelling issues were inconsistent application and interpretation of existing origin provisions, labelling of spice blends, and the interest by some Members in origin labelling for promotional or marketing purposes.
12. The EWG put forward nine conclusions on Codex provisions for origin labelling in spices and culinary herbs, which had also been circulated for comments through a CL. According to the comments received, there was broad support for the conclusions as the basis for horizontal labelling advice to be used by CCSCH in future consideration of origin labelling, and for use in the finalization of labelling provision on COH in the standard for dried saffron (CXS 351-2022). There was also broad support for a workshop or side session at CCSCH to improve understanding of horizontal labelling provisions.
13. The CCFL Chairperson expressed appreciation of the work of the EWG and referred CCFL49 to the Chairperson’s proposal in CRD05 containing revised conclusions based on written comments received and proposed options from the CCFL Chairperson on how to address the provisions on COO and COH in the standard for saffron.
14. CCFL49 agreed to use the Chairperson’s proposal in CRD05 as the basis for the discussions.

Discussions

Consideration of the revised nine conclusions of the EWG (CRD05)

15. CCFL49 endorsed all the nine conclusions to be used as guiding principles to support CCSCH when determining commodity specific labelling related to origin with the following clarifications and amendments:

Conclusion 3 - Interpretation of “Change in the Nature of the Food” under CXS 1 1985

16. A Member observed that while there was agreement that COO and COH were the same in the case of saffron, providing examples about the processing that leads to physical changes where the nature of the product does not change (e.g. cutting or grinding) would further clarify the conclusion, noting that saffron presented as cut filaments or powder remains the same product as they are considered the style according to Section 2.2 of CXS-351 and should not affect origin labelling.
17. The EWG Chair explained that the conclusion reflected consensus reached during EWG discussions, and that introducing new examples at this stage, which had not been fully examined by the group, could complicate agreement.
18. The CCFL Chairperson clarified that such technical details should be addressed by the commodity committee, as they have the competence and expertise to determine the processes.

Conclusion 5 - Determination of COO When COH Differs

19. CCFL49 agreed to delete the example of “paella spice” blend from the conclusion, as it could create confusion as to whether blending changed the nature of the food, and was not directly relevant to the discussion on single spices like saffron. It was agreed that only clear, technically relevant examples should be retained in the text.
20. Concerns were also expressed on the proposed replacement of the term “spices or culinary herbs” with “food”, noting that the term “food” was broader and its use could extend the scope of this conclusion beyond its purpose.
21. As a result, CCFL49 agreed to retain the more specific reference to “spices and culinary herbs” to maintain clarity and avoid any perception of expanding the applicability of the provision.

Conclusion 7 - Declaration of Multiple Countries of Origin for Blended Spices

22. A suggestion was made to change or delete a specific example referring to saffron blends, as mixing saffron from different origins is not permitted in some jurisdictions. CCFL49 agreed to delete the example and to maintain general applicability of the conclusion. A Member confirmed that the current Codex general provisions on labelling of food provided sufficient guidance regarding labelling of blends of the same spice sourced from different countries, and that no additional work was required. The Chairperson clarified that no new work proposal on blends had been submitted.

Conclusion 9 - Scope of Codex Labelling Provisions and CCFL Mandate

23. CCFL49 noted the divergent views, particularly regarding the characterization of promotion within the conclusion and whether it should be retained. While some delegates were of the view that the conclusion was unnecessary and should be expunged from the document, others considered that it provided important contextual information with regard to the purpose of Codex texts compared to other mechanisms which may cover voluntary labelling.
24. Following a brief discussion, CCFL49 agreed to retain the conclusion but to refocus it to the following three broad areas: i) Codex labelling provisions focus on health, safety, and fair trade; ii) promotion of products based on origin can occur through the use voluntary labelling statements or claims; iii) other mechanisms outside of Codex may be explored to support promotion of products (e.g., geographical indications). A Member expressed concern with the inclusion of geographical indications as an example, noting that other examples in the conclusions had been removed and that this one should be as well. However, the Committee agreed to keep the example.
25. CCFL49 endorsed the recommendation as revised noting the spirit of compromise in arriving to the consensus.

Consideration of the proposed Options for provisions under 8.2 Country of origin and country of harvest in the Standard for Saffron (CXS 351-2022)

26. The CCFL Chairperson noted that the standard for saffron currently listed the provision 8.2 as “to be developed” and would remain as such until a solution is found. The CCFL Chairperson further noted that CCFL49 had reached a consensus establishing that, for dried saffron, the COO and the COH were the same. Accordingly, CCFL49 considered how this principle should be integrated into the labelling provisions in the standard for saffron. Three options outlined in CRD05 (page 2) were presented for consideration by CCFL49. Members were encouraged to concentrate on the expression of this agreement, rather than revisiting the conceptual aspects which had already been agreed.
27. CCFL49 considered each of the three options in CRD05 and noted the following views as expressed on each of them:

Option I

28. Delegations in support of Option I, considered it to be consistent with the conclusions of the EWG, and that it maintained a clear focus on the mandatory declaration of COO, while allowing flexibility for indicating the COH.

Option II

29. Delegations in support of Option II, noted that, although the COO and the COH were identical in the context of saffron, these remained distinct concepts to be represented within labelling requirements, and that this Option would facilitate maximum transparency and consumer information, especially when considering saffron's high value and the significance of its geographical attributes. Some Members did not support this option, recalling that previous consideration of such an approach had impeded progress in agreeing to these labelling provisions.

Option III

30. Many delegations expressed support for Option III recognizing its balanced approach in maintaining the mandatory declaration of COO while recognizing that it was the same as COH; and that it effectively balanced the requirements for consumer information with operational flexibility, thereby mitigating undue burdens or potential trade issues.
31. The CCFL Chairperson summarized the discussion noting that there was general agreement on the objectives of labelling COO and COH, however the challenge remained in the wording of the provision and proposed narrowing the discussion to facilitate convergence toward a compromise solution. It was observed that while there was support for all three options, delegations supporting Option I had indicated that they could also accept Options II or III. The Chairperson therefore proposed focusing on Options II and III; and called upon the Committee to propose concrete textual revisions, with a view to identifying a compromise between Options II and III.

32. In the subsequent discussions, CCFL49 achieved consensus around Option III whereby the country of origin shall be declared, while the region of harvest and the year of harvest may be declared optionally, and that the accompanying footnote should reflect that, *“for this standard the country of origin is the same as the country of harvest”*, thereby ensuring consistency with the agreed conclusions and avoiding duplication. While there had been a proposal to also include COH as optional in section 8.2.2 it was agreed that this would be confusing and contradictory with the footnote to provision 8.2.1.
33. The final agreed draft provisions in the *Standard for dried floral parts – Saffron* (CXS 351-2022) read as follows:

8.2 Country of origin and country of harvest

- a) 8.2.1 Country of origin shall be declared*.
- b) 8.2.2 Region of harvest and year of harvest (optional).

**Footnote: for this standard the country of origin is the same as the country of harvest.*

34. Overall, the CCFL Chairperson emphasized that CCFL49 had achieved consensus on practical guidance, a labelling solution for 8.2 Country of origin and country of harvest for the saffron standard, and a pathway for improved cross-committee coordination.

Conclusion

35. CCFL49 agreed:
- i. To inform the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) on the outcome of the discussions and recommend that CAC share the nine conclusions, agreed by CCFL49, with the Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH), to be used as guiding principles by CCSCH when determining origin-related labelling provisions for SCH commodities (Appendix II, Part A).
 - ii. To inform CCSCH that any requests for endorsement by CCFL regarding mandatory labelling provisions that are inconsistent with the GSLPF be clear and fully justified.
 - iii. To recommend that the Codex Secretariat consider organising a workshop or side event for CCSCH to enhance coherence and consistency in the application of CCFL labelling texts and that would contribute towards improving the efficiency of the endorsement process.
 - iv. To forward the final agreed draft labelling provisions for 8.2 COO and COH for the saffron standard for consideration by CAC with a view to address the outstanding provisions on COO and COH in the *Standard for dried floral parts – Saffron* (CXS 351-2022) (Appendix II, Part B).

MATTERS OF INTEREST FROM FAO AND WHO (Agenda Item 3)⁵

36. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Representative informed the publication of the summary reports from the two joint FAO/ World Health Organization (WHO) expert consultations on risk assessment of food allergens. The main recommendations from the expert consultation on guidance for risk assessment emphasized that food allergens differed from other food hazards, and that allergen risk assessment is both common and readily achievable using qualitative or quantitative approaches. The expert consultation on gluten recommended a risk-based reference dose of 4 mg for gluten.
37. The FAO Representative also presented the outcomes of an FAO/WHO workshop held adjacent to CCASIA, noting that it contributed to knowledge sharing, the exchange of experiences, and the strengthening of food safety, and that the workshop report had already been released.
38. The FAO Representative reported on the following other Joint FAO/WHO activities:
- a. The extension of the United Nations (UN) Decade of Action for Nutrition to 2030 to align it with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the World Health Assembly for global nutrition targets.
 - b. Findings from the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) Report 2025 and the upcoming SOFI 2026 report to be released in July that will explore “Understanding and Addressing the High Costs of Healthy Diets”.
39. The FAO Representative also highlighted key updates from the FAO activities on:
- a. Food labelling publications, including the 2024 edition of The State of Agricultural Commodity Markets (SOCO 2024), which explored complex linkages between food trade and nutrition and a working paper examining front of pack nutrition labelling policy implementation in small sized food processing enterprises.

⁵ CX/FL 26/49/3; CRD11 (Burundi, Kenya, the United Republic of Tanzania); 21(Ecuador); CRD24 (East African Community)

- b. Ongoing work to improve the quality, availability and use of food composition data which are needed for setting international food policies, food security programs and national dietary assessments and the launch of the new FAO INFOODS food composition website.
 - c. The Joint International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)/FAO update of Human Energy Requirements.
 - d. The recent update of the Vision and Approach for FAO's work in Nutrition (2025-2031) and upcoming FAO publications, including a FAO High Level Report on Healthy Diets, to be published in 2026.
 - e. The Rome Nutrition Week 2026, to be held from 25 to 28 May 2026 at FAO Headquarters in Rome and online under the overarching theme "Shaping the Future of Joint Nutrition Action in a Changing World".
40. The WHO Representative introduced their initiatives as follows:
- a. Global Alcohol Action Plan 2022-2030: For the implementation of the plan, including alcoholic beverage labeling, WHO had been providing technical assistance and capacity-building activities and conducting research.
 - b. Food classification: Region-specific nutrient profile models had been developed for all WHO regions. The Information brief on food profiling for regulatory measures was under development which outlined a public health approach that integrated nutrient-based criteria with regulatory parameters to identify foods currently known as "ultra-processed food products".
 - c. WHO new guidelines: Three publications on healthy school food environments, use of lower-sodium salt substitutes and fortification of edible oils and fats with vitamins A and D for public health were published. The nutrition labelling policies guideline was forthcoming (mid-2026).
 - d. Activities to promote healthy diets and reduce noncommunicable disease risk factors: WHO worked on progress towards global targets, including a 30 percent reduction in sodium intake by 2030 and continued efforts on trans-fat elimination, with the launch of the updated SHAKE technical package and the use of the WHO's Global database on the Implementation of Food and Nutrition Action (GIFNA) and Country Score Cards.
 - e. Extension of Global Nutrition Targets to 2030: The global nutrition targets had been extended to 2030, with the process indicators introduced.
41. Uruguay and The Gambia, speaking as Coordinators for CCLAC and CCAFRICA regions, respectively, called for holding expanded, region-specific capacity building workshops by FAO/WHO on allergen risk assessment, focusing on knowledge development, and practical application of tools. It was highlighted that this would help ensure that food allergen issues are better aligned with international practices, and that the scientific sources from FAO/WHO can be applied in the regions. The Chairperson indicated that capacity building requests would be further discussed under Agenda Item 5.
42. Responding to the requests, the FAO and WHO Representatives confirmed their willingness to support Members for capacity building on risk analysis of food allergens, in coordination with the regional and country offices, if needed.
43. The Codex Secretariat informed CCFL49 of the initiation of the next round of FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees for regions, starting in October 2026, and noted that organizing capacity building activities in conjunction with these committees could be beneficial for Members and support the identification of the most appropriate approaches.

Conclusion

44. CCFL49:
- i. Thanked the FAO and WHO for the information provided and their work.
 - ii. Noted the information from FAO and WHO and that some information may be relevant under other agenda items (i.e. allergens to be addressed under Agenda Item 5).
 - iii. Noted the interest expressed by Members on the work of FAO and WHO to provide capacity building activities including workshops for CCLAC and CCAFRICA, on risk assessment of food allergens.

CONSIDERATION OF LABELLING PROVISIONS IN DRAFT CODEX STANDARDS (ENDORSEMENT) **(Agenda item 4)⁶**

45. The Codex Secretariat introduced the item recalling the relevant sections of the Codex Procedural Manual which state that “*general provisions should only be incorporated into commodity standards by reference unless there is a need for doing otherwise*”, and that provisions which are exemptions from, additions to, or which are necessary for the interpretation of the General Standards in respect of the product concerned, are only included provided that these can be justified fully.
46. CCFL49 considered the labelling provisions in nine standards submitted by the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (CCFFV), the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Asia (CCASIA), the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for the Near East (CCNE), the Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH), the Codex Committee on Fats and Oils (CCFO), and the Codex Committee on Food Additives (CCFA), and made the following decisions:

Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (CCFFV)

47. CCFL49 endorsed the labelling provisions in the draft standard for fresh curry leaves.

FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Asia (CCASIA)

48. A Member, while not objecting to endorsement, noted that while the recent drafting conventions appropriately reference the GSLPF, commodity committees do not consistently capture specific provisions related to the name of the food, particularly where additional information (e.g. fillings) must be declared alongside the name. While no immediate change was proposed, it was suggested that committees consider more explicit references to these provisions in future to improve clarity and ensure consumers receive complete information.
49. CCFL49 endorsed the labelling provisions of the draft regional standard for quick-frozen dumplings (Asia).
50. CCFL49 agreed to advise committees to carefully review the application of the GSLPF provisions related to the name of the food and incorporate these as appropriate.

FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Near East (CCNE)

51. CCFL49 endorsed the labelling provisions in the draft regional standard for maamoul (Near East).

Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH)

52. CCFL49 endorsed the labelling provisions in: the draft standard for spices in the form of dried fruits and berries - requirements for large cardamom; the draft standard for spices in the form of dried seeds - requirements for coriander; and the draft standard for herbs - requirements for sweet marjoram.

Draft standard for spices derived from dried or dehydrated fruits and berries - Requirements for vanilla

Section 8.1.3 – Trade name labelling

53. Concerns were expressed on the inclusion of a provision on mandatory labelling of trade name, noting that previously with other standards, only optional labelling for trade name had been proposed and subsequently endorsed by CCFL. In explaining the concern, it was highlighted that the term “trade name” appears inconsistent with the GSLPF, where similar terms (e.g. brand or coined names) are optional; however, the trade names listed could be interpreted as specific names and maybe consistent with provisions on the name of the food. Thus, the concern did not relate to the listed names themselves, but on the unclear and inconsistent use of the term “trade name” in CCSCH standards, particularly given uncertainty about its alignment with GSLPF naming categories and the challenge of making a non-exhaustive list mandatory. While noting the CCSCH Chairperson’s clarification in the report of CCSCH8 that this would not set a precedent, concerns about endorsing this as a mandatory provision remained.
54. CCFL49 agreed that for clarity and consistency with the report of CCSCH8 the provision should be divided in two separate statements as it included a mandatory provision related to trade names and an optional one regarding use of scientific names and that the use of “and/or” between these two concepts created ambiguity.

Section 8.2.2 – Country of harvest

55. A Member requested that the country of harvest labelling be considered as mandatory rather than optional and recalled that CCSCH8 had noted that there would be further opportunities to discuss the nature of this provision if mandatory declaration of COH would become acceptable.

⁶ CX/FL 26/49/4; CX/FL 26/49/4 Add.1; CX/FL 26/49/4 Add.2; CRD12 (Burundi, India, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, Thailand, United Republic of Tanzania); CRD20 (Mexico); CRD24 (East African Community); CRD26 (Ghana); CRD27 (Panama); CRD28 (Iran)

56. The CCFL Chairperson recalled that CCFL could only consider the provisions for endorsement as submitted by the commodity committee (i.e. CCSCH) and not make such a change at CCFL. Referring to the possibility of future discussion on, this as noted in the report of CCSCH8, the CCFL Chairperson indicated that it was linked to the outcome of the consideration of mandatory country of harvest labelling, and recalled that under Agenda item 2.1 that there was no support for mandatory labelling of country of harvest. In the specific case of saffron, country of origin is the same as the country of harvest and this provision does not apply to other standards.

Conclusion

57. CCFL49 endorsed the labelling provisions in the draft standard for spices in the form of dried fruits and berries - requirements for vanilla, with a modification to section 8.1.3 to read "The Trade name shall be declared. ~~and/or~~ The scientific name may be indicated.", noting the reservations of:
- the United States of America to the mandatory declaration of the Trade name in provision 8.1.3 as inspection agencies would then be required to attest to that which in their view was contrary to established inspection practices:
 - Madagascar to retaining country of harvest as an optional requirement in provision 8.2.2, as in their view it should be mandatory and there should be further opportunity to discuss the provision following the work of the EWG on country of origin/country of harvest.
58. CCFL49 reminded CCSCH that any mandatory provisions in commodity standards shall align with the GSLPF, and any exemption shall be clear and fully justified as required by the Procedural Manual.
59. In addition, recalling views expressed that the intent of the provision for Trade name was not particularly clear and that there were provisions in the GSLPF regarding name of the food in section 4.1, CCFL49 considered it would be helpful if CCSCH could clarify how the category "trade name" aligns with the types of names or specific names provided for in the GSLPF, for example whether they were considered synonyms of the name of the food, or whether they were something different e.g. coined name or brand name, or trademark which are optional, as this would inform how they should be applied as a voluntary or mandatory labelling requirement.

Codex Committee on Fats and Oils (CCFO)

60. CCFL49 endorsed the labelling provisions in the draft standard for microbial omega-3 oils.

Codex Committee on Food Additives (CCFA)

61. CCFL49 endorsed the labelling provisions in the draft standard for baker's yeast.

General Conclusion

62. CCFL49:
- i. Agreed to endorse the labelling provisions in the following standards and to inform the respective committees (CCFFV, CCASIA, CCNE, CCSCH, CCFO and CCFA) and CAC49 of the respective endorsement decisions.
 - a. Draft standard for fresh curry leaves.
 - b. Draft regional standard for quick-frozen dumplings (Asia).
 - c. Draft regional standard for maamoul (Near East).
 - d. Draft standard for spices in the form of dried fruits and berries - requirements for large cardamom.
 - e. Draft standard for spices in the form of dried seeds - requirements for coriander.
 - f. Draft standard for herbs – requirements for sweet marjoram.
 - g. Draft standard for microbial omega-3 oils.
 - h. Draft standard for baker's yeast.
 - ii. Amended provision 8.1.3 of the Draft standard for spices derived from dried or dehydrated fruits and berries - Requirements for vanilla, as outlined in paragraph 57 and with this amendment agreed to endorse the labelling provisions and inform CCSCH accordingly, noting the reservations of the USA and Madagascar for the reasons outlined in paragraph 57.

- iii. Agreed to inform CCSCH of the discussion on the intent of the category “Trade name” and consider where the trade names aligned with those types of names provided for in the provisions regarding name of the food in section 4.1 of the GSLPF, whether they were considered synonyms of name of the food, a common or usual name existing by common usage as an appropriate descriptive term, a “coined”, “fanciful”, “brand” name or “trade mark” or whether they were something different, as this would inform how they should be applied.
- iv. Advised commodity committees to carefully review the application of the GSLPF provisions related to the name of the food and incorporate these as appropriate.
- v. Reminded CCSCH that any mandatory provisions in commodity standards shall align with the GSLPF, and any exemption shall be clear and fully justified.

ANNEX TO THE GENERAL STANDARD FOR THE LABELLING OF PRE-PACKAGED FOODS (CXS 1-1985): GUIDELINES ON THE USE OF PRECAUTIONARY ALLERGEN LABELLING (Step 7) (Agenda item 5)⁷

- 63. The United States of America, Chair of the EWG, speaking also on behalf of the co-Chairs, Australia and the United Kingdom, introduced the reports of the EWG and the PWG that met prior to the Session, and summarized the key points of discussion and decisions in the WGs.
- 64. The EWG/PWG Chair recalled the progress on the development of guidelines for the use of precautionary allergen labelling (PAL). They also referred to the requests made by CCFL48 for scientific advice on risk assessment guidance, reference dose for gluten or cereals containing gluten, and capacity building together with the subsequent response from FAO and WHO. An overview was given of the requested feedback from CCMAS which confirmed that methods were available to detect and quantify unintended allergen presence (UAP) in foods from cross-contact. The EWG/PWG Chair further summarised the progress made on the outstanding issues, proposing that the outcome of the work of the PWG, as presented in CRD02 should be used as the basis for discussion and CCFL49 agreed.
- 65. The FAO Representative introduced the main recommendations from the joint FAO/WHO expert consultation on guidance for risk assessment, emphasizing that food allergens differed from other food hazards, and that food allergen risk assessment was both available and could be readily undertaken by all food business operators, using qualitative or quantitative approaches. The Representative noted that the expert consultation on gluten recommended a risk-based reference dose of 4 mg for gluten. Regarding the capacity building workshop on risk assessment of food allergens, the Representative indicated that the event provided participants with the necessary knowledge and tools to apply the PAL guidance and proposed that similar events be convened in different regions, resources permitting.

Discussion

- 66. CCFL49 reviewed the guidelines on the use of PAL section by section and made the following comments and decisions, in addition to editorial corrections, and amendments for clarity and consistency.

Section 1: Purpose

- 67. CCFL49 agreed to associate footnote 1 to the term “cross-contact” in Section 1 and to change “food allergens” to “food allergen(s)”.

Section 2: Scope

- 68. The reference to the footnote for “cross-contact” was deleted.

Section 3 Definitions

- 69. In the definition of PAL “allergenic food” was changed to “allergenic food(s)” for consistency with other parts of the guidelines.

⁷ CX/FL 26/49/5; CX/FL 26/49/5 Add.1 (Comments replied to CL 2026/07-FL); CRD02 (the PWG report); CRD13 (Burundi, El Salvador, India, Japan, Kenya, Nigeria, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Senegal, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, IFT); CRD19 (Morocco); CRD20 (Mexico); CRD21 (Ecuador); CRD22 (Peru); CRD24 (East African Community); CRD25 (Malaysia); CRD26 (Ghana); CRD28 (Iran); CRD31 (the United Kingdom); CRD33 (Australia); CRD34 (ISDI); CRD36 (IUFOST)

Section 4.2 Qualitative vs quantitative risk assessment

70. The draft provision was revised to better reflect the way in which risk assessment should be undertaken to support a decision about the use of PAL by clarifying that the risk assessment process begins with qualitative risk assessment and could be supplemented by quantitative risk assessment. This amendment was considered to more accurately reflect the way risk assessment would be used and to clarify that a quantitative risk assessment may not be needed. The EWG Chair noted that a footnote was also added for inclusion of a reference to Part 6 FAO/WHO guidance on risk assessment.

Section 4.3 Use of shall vs should

71. Noting that there had been extensive discussions on this provision in both the working groups, with regard to the nature of the provision i.e. an obligation (shall) versus strong recommendation (should) and the translation of the nature of the provision in different languages, the Chairperson proposed a revised text for this section, in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese. The Chairperson further highlighted that the intent of this section was two-fold i) that PAL must be used when the Unintended allergen presence (UAP) was above the action level and ii) that PAL should not be used when the UAP was at or below the action level.
72. There was general agreement on the two concepts on the use of PAL (in paragraph 71) that this provision was intended to portray. CCFL49 agreed on the proposed translations of the words **shall** and **should**⁸, and to split the two concepts into two different sentences with a view to ensure the clarity of the provision.
73. While supporting the progress made, a Member expressed their view that the word “shall” is not appropriate in this case because this could make PAL mandatory whereas the initial purpose of these guidelines has been to restrict overuse of PAL; however, the CCFL Chairperson clarified that PAL shall be used when the action level is exceeded, as it poses a risk to consumers. Another Member expressed concern that the provision was not sufficiently flexible and proposed to include a footnote to “acknowledge the responsibility of the competent authorities to determine the risk management measures appropriate to their national circumstances”. In their view this flexibility would be important in ensuring that the Codex text served as a support tool for development and not as an unintended trade barrier and that such flexibility would provide Members with the necessary space to adopt these provisions in a realistic and sustainable manner within their own domestic framework. This proposal did not receive general support as there were concerns that including such flexibility defeated the purpose of the draft guidelines, which was to avoid the overuse of PAL.
74. An Observer expressed concern that since reference doses were derived from heterogeneous populations and had not been specifically validated for all vulnerable subgroups, the reference values may not be sufficiently protective of those groups. In the absence of new data, it was proposed to add a footnote to indicate that, where relevant, for foods for special dietary use, stricter reference values may be applied based on the general principles established by these guidelines.
75. The Representative of FAO explained that the joint FAO/WHO expert consultation reviewed and utilized all available data from diverse population groups, and that should new data become available the issue could be considered. Another observer indicated that around 75% of the available data came from vulnerable populations and hence in their view, those groups were well represented in the assessment. In light of this and provision 4.2 on risk assessment, CCFL49 agreed that such a footnote was not needed.
76. Further editorial amendments were made to the provision to ensure clarity while maintaining all the agreed concepts. These included consideration of whether the term “at or below” should be used in both statements. The Representative of FAO confirmed that the term “at or below” should be kept at both places, in alignment with the recommendations of the joint FAO/WHO expert consultations. Noting that this however created potential confusion, it was agreed to use the term “above” to replace “at or below” for the first statement on when PAL should be used.
77. A suggestion was made to insert “gluten” after food allergen(s) in the provision 4.3. The EWG Chair clarified that the definition of “food allergens” encompasses IgE-mediated or other specific immune-mediated reactions, so it was not necessary to add “gluten” and doing so would require a change in the PAL definition for consistency. It was therefore agreed to retain the original text.

⁸ In this context, ‘shall’ in English translates to *deberá* in Spanish and *doit* in French and ‘should’ in English translates to *debería* in Spanish and *devrait* in French.

Table 4.3.1 and 4.3.2

78. There was general support for the separation of the Table of reference doses into two, i.e. a *Table for reference doses for allergenic foods* and a *Table for reference doses for gluten*, which enabled a clear distinction to be made between the reference dose for wheat and that for gluten. For clarity and consistency with other parts of the GSLPF, the title of the first column of the *Table for reference doses for gluten* was amended to read “allergenic foods”, and the title “cereals containing gluten” was moved to the row beneath. Reference to the footnote regarding oats was then moved to the title row.

Footnote (*) on oats

79. A Member highlighted that while the statement “oats are not a cereal containing gluten” in the footnote (*) was factual, it contradicted other Codex texts related to gluten, and proposed to delete that text to prevent inconsistencies and an Observer proposed CCFL inform CCNFSU that the gluten related texts under their purview may need to be reviewed to ensure they remained up to date. Further editorial changes were made to ensure clarity and readability of the footnote. CCFL49 also agreed to delete the last part of the footnote reading “which are already addressed in table 4.3.1.” as not needed.
80. The FAO Representative confirmed that the revised footnote was still technically correct, as oats do not cause allergenic reactions and the presence of any gluten in such products is mainly due to cross contamination. The avenin from oats causes a sensitivity reaction which is rare and outside of the scope. CCFL49 agreed with the proposed amendments to the footnote.
81. Thailand expressed their reservation regarding section 4.3 on the mandatory application of the reference doses in the Table 4.3.1 (Table for reference doses for allergenic foods) as a sole criterion for the use of PAL, as in their view, the reference doses may not sufficiently protect highly sensitive consumers within their specific population and enable them to uphold the highest level of consumer safety which remains their primary objective. Thailand stressed that there were still uncertainty and limitations regarding analytical methods to be used as reference for international trade.

Section 4.4

82. The need for follow-up on the efficacy and impact of education/information programs was highlighted, and the word “effective” was added before education /information programmes to maintain the essence of monitoring and evaluation of approaches and processes.

Section 5.2.2 and 5.2.3

83. CCFL49 agreed to revise the footnote associated with Section 5.2.2 to indicate that in PAL other terminology could be used to replace rye and barley on a label such as “gluten” or “cereals containing gluten” as follows:

“In addition to the specified name of wheat, rye, and barley, the word ‘gluten’ may be used. **Where permitted, the words ‘cereals containing gluten’ or ‘gluten’ may be used in place of the specified names rye and barley.**”

84. It was also agreed that the footnote associated with Section 5.2.3 be deleted and instead replaced with the above revised footnote.
85. It was further explained that the above change was made based on an Australian review of consumer research on the terminology that is easiest understood by relevant consumers and in acknowledgement that different jurisdictions may require different communication approaches.
86. With all outstanding issues addressed, the CCFL Chairperson expressed appreciation to the Chair and Co-Chairs of the WGs, FAO and WHO and members and observers for their active engagement in the work on allergens.

Capacity building activity

87. New Zealand, speaking on behalf of the Cook Islands, the Coordinator for North America Southwest Pacific (NASWP) region, expressed interest in working with FAO and WHO to conduct a capacity building workshop in conjunction with CCNASWP18 (February 2027), emphasizing the need to focus on regionally driven priorities, particularly for small island developing states with limited resources. This was supported by other Members from the region.
88. Members from CCAFRICA, CCEURO, CCLAC and CCNE reiterated the importance of training and capacity development relevant to adoption and use of the allergen food labelling work and noting the upcoming round of coordinating committees suggested that this could be a useful opportunity for training and development in this area. The importance of making resources available online to support all aspects of this work was highlighted. It was also noted that such training should be based on stakeholders’ identified training needs.

89. CCFL49 noted the importance of communication and education with the support of competent authorities regarding the new guidelines and that there would be a benefit in addressing this from a global perspective.
90. In response, the Codex Secretariat, FAO and WHO welcomed the requests and confirmed their willingness to collaborate with the regions to deliver workshops, training, and potentially digital tools tailored to members' needs, including communication and education.

Conclusion

91. CCFL49 agreed to:
 - i. Forward the revision to the *General Standard for the Labelling of Pre-packaged Foods* (CXS 1-1985) to include the Annex: guidelines on the use of precautionary allergen labelling to CAC49 for adoption at Step 8 (Appendix III).
 - ii. Inform CCFH of the completion of the guidelines and request the committee to consider new work to ensure consistency of the *Code of Practice on Allergen Management for Food Business Operators* (CXC 80-2020) with the guidelines on the use of precautionary allergen labelling.
 - iii. Inform CCNFSDU of the completion of the guidelines and to consider the need to review the consistency of the *Standard for foods for special dietary use for persons intolerant to gluten* (CXS 118-1979) with the guidelines on the use of precautionary allergen labelling.
92. Regarding the requests for capacity building activities in this area, CCFL49 further agreed to:
 - i. Request FAO, WHO and the Codex Secretariat to consider the requests from Members to provide training and capacity development on the implementation of the guidelines on the use of precautionary allergen labelling, particularly with regards to food allergen risk assessment, and workshops in the margins of the upcoming CCAFRICA, CCEURO, CCLAC, CCNASWP, and CCNE.
 - ii. Request FAO and WHO to make digital tools on risk analysis for allergens available to Members.

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) (Agenda item 6)⁹

93. Colombia, as the Chair of the EWG and speaking on behalf of the co-Chairs, Canada, India, and Jamaica, introduced the item virtually, recalled the background and terms of reference (ToRs) for the EWG's work, and summarized the EWG's work process, key points of discussion, conclusions, and recommendations as presented in CX/FL 26/49/6. The EWG Chair further informed CCFL49 that CRD06 provided a revised version of the proposed amendments based on comments submitted in response to CL 2026/08-FL.
94. CCFL49 agreed to use CRD06 as the basis for its discussion and proceed with the consideration of the amendments as follows.

Discussion

Sections 4.2.1(bis), 4.3.4, and 4.7.1(vi)(bis)

95. A Member Organization proposed amending section 4.2.1(bis) to add clarifying language, as it was unclear whether the mandatory labelling information on the outer packaging applied in all cases or only when the list of ingredients was not readily legible and discernible on at least one of each type of individually packaged foods. The Member Organization explained that, when read in conjunction with the general principle set out in section 8.1.3.1, the scope of application of section 4.2.1(bis) remained ambiguous as section 8.1.3.1 encompassed two distinct situations: where the information was readily legible and discernible, and where it was not. On this basis, the same clarification should subsequently apply to sections 4.3.4 and 4.7.1(vi)(bis) to enhance clarity regarding the condition for applying mandatory labeling to the outer packaging of single units of prepackaged foods presented in multipacks or joint presentations. It was further noted that the proposed language was consistent with that used in section 8.1.3.1.

⁹ CX/FL 26/49/6; CRD06 (Colombia); CRD14 (Burundi, El Salvador, India, Kenya, Nigeria, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Senegal, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia); CRD19 (Morocco); CRD20 (Mexico); CRD21 (Ecuador); CRD24 (the United States of America); CRD26 (Ghana); CRD28 (Iran); CRD30 (The European Union); CRD39 (Canada)

96. Members generally did not support the proposal to add further clarifying language to sections 4.2.1(bis), 4.3.4, and 4.7.1(vi)(bis), noting that section 8.1.3.1 clearly established that mandatory information may be provided on either the outer packaging or the individually packaged foods, provided it was readily legible and discernible. They also noted that these sections already cross-referenced section 8.1.3.1, so sections 4.2.1(bis), 4.3.4, and 4.7.1(vi)(bis) cannot be read separately from section 8.1.3.1. It was further noted that introducing specific references in selected provisions could create ambiguity by implying that the requirement applies only where explicitly stated. This could lead to inconsistent interpretation across other provisions, such as nutrition declarations.
97. The Member Organization clarified that sections 4.2.1(bis), 4.3.4, and 4.7.1(vi)(bis) were intended to operationalize the principle set out in section 8.1.3.1 by specifying its practical application as regards ingredients list, net content and date marking. These provisions address specific labeling requirements, including the option to provide a combined list of ingredients, the total net contents or the number of individual units and their respective net contents, and the handling of date marking when dates differed across individual units. These additional elements justified more detailed provisions in these sections, thereby limiting the need for broader clarification elsewhere.
98. Based on the above discussion, Members agreed that clarification may be warranted in sections 4.2.1(bis), 4.3.4, and 4.7.1(vi)(bis) regarding the repetition of the concepts of legibility and discernibility and the circumstances under which the outer packaging must be labeled rather than relying solely on the general provision in section 8.1.3.1. However, they preferred a succinct text rather than repeating the language already available in section 8.1.3.1.
99. CCFL49 therefore considered an alternative proposal to insert a reference to the outer packaging after the reference to section 8.1.3.1, to clarify that the provision in section 4.2.1(bis) applied when the labeling on at least one of each type of individually packaged food contained therein was not readily legible or discernible from the outside, and that, in such cases, the mandatory information that must be provided on the outer packaging shall consist of separate or combined lists of ingredients. It was further proposed to apply this approach consistently across sections 4.2.1(bis), 4.3.4, and 4.7.1(vi)(bis). This approach was intended to reconcile the reference to section 8.1.3.1 with the need to clarify the specific circumstances to which these provisions apply.
100. CCFL49 agreed with the proposal outlined in paragraph 99 and with its consistent application to sections 4.2.1(bis), 4.3.4, and 4.7.1(vi)(bis).

Section 4.3.4

101. A Member Organization proposed clarifying that the requirement for net contents in this section applied in two criteria/situations: (1) when the number of individually packaged foods cannot be easily counted, or (2) when the net contents were not readily legible and discernible on at least one of each type of individually packaged food. However, following the decision taken by the Committee on the reference to the mandatory provision of information on the outer packaging in sections 4.2.1(bis), 4.3.4, and 4.7.1(vi)(bis), the Member Organization indicated that it would be appropriate to also retain criterion (1), namely *“when the number of individually packaged foods cannot be easily counted.”*
102. Members raised concerns about the proposed amendments to section 4.3.4, particularly regarding the explanatory text for criterion 2 and the proper capture of the two criteria, especially the first criterion, in this section. Members noted that the revised wording blurred the distinction between declarations required on the outer packaging and those applicable to individually packaged units, creating ambiguity about the scope of the provision. They further noted that references to labeling on inner units were inconsistent with the section's objective, which was to address situations where such information was not readily discernible and therefore must be indicated on the outer packaging. It was further observed that the draft text lacked sufficient clarity and consistency, with discrepancies between the introductory statement and criterion 2 that could result in contradictory interpretations.
103. In addition, Members questioned the role and placement of the criterion on ease of counting and the legibility of inner units, noting uncertainty about its application and potential overlap with other provisions. In an attempt to adjust the text by placing the provision in the negative, i.e., *“... if they **cannot** easily be counted and their net content per type **are not** clearly discernible and legible.”*, Members cautioned that introducing a negative formulation could unintentionally restrict voluntary labelling by implying that declarations were permitted only where information was not discernible. Concerns were also raised that the proposed amendments added unnecessary complexity without improving clarity, and that inconsistent terminology, particularly the use of “pre-packaged” versus “packaged,” could create confusion.
104. Overall, Members emphasized the need to simplify the provision, ensure internal consistency, and avoid wording that could create ambiguity or inadvertently constrain existing labeling practices.

105. Members also agreed to delete the phrase “*and intended to be consumed separately*,” as there was no justification for limiting the provision to cases where the units were intended to be consumed separately.
106. Based on the above discussions, CCFL49:
- a. noted that the revised provisions did not preclude food business operators from voluntarily providing full or partial labelling on the outer packaging, when mandatory labelling requirements are readily legible and discernible on the individually packaged foods; and
 - b. agreed that the provisions are not limited to situations where the units are intended to be consumed separately.

Section 4.7.1(vi)(bis)

107. CCFL49 discussed a Member's concern about the wording of the final sentence of section 4.7.1(vi)(bis), which required that, when individually packaged foods carry more than one type of date marking, the earliest date of the foods that fall under 4.7.1(i) be declared on the outer packaging. The Member indicated that this approach could lead to unintended outcomes in which the earliest date is a quality-related date (e.g., “best-before”) rather than a safety-related date (e.g., “use-by date” or “expiration date”), potentially resulting in the omission of critical information. To address this, the Member referred to an alternative formulation under which both the earliest date and the earliest use-by or expiration date would be declared, unless the latter was already the earliest, to ensure that food safety information is always clearly communicated.
108. In response, it was clarified that the provision was based on two underlying concepts. First, when individually packaged units carry either the same type of date marking or different types of date marking with varying dates, the date declared on the outer packaging should correspond to the earliest date among all of those units, providing consumers with the most precautionary information. Second, when different types of date markings were present, particular importance was given to safety-related dates, i.e. use-by or expiration dates, which should be declared even if the earliest safety date is not as early as the earliest quality-related date.
109. Clarification was sought on whether the current wording effectively restricts declarations on the outer packaging to the earliest date, thereby precluding the inclusion of additional dates. In response, it was explained that the provision establishes a minimum requirement, namely that the earliest date, particularly when linked to food safety, must be declared, while voluntary additional date information remains permitted. While noting the explanation, and to avoid any ambiguity, a proposal was made to revise the first sentence of section 4.7.1 to state that “*at least the earliest ... shall be declared*,” thereby explicitly allowing the inclusion of additional dates. It was suggested to further simplify the provision by removing the detailed enumeration of date marking and replacing it with a more concise formulation.
110. CCFL49 agreed with the proposed revisions as explained in paragraph 109, while retaining the lists of date marking as presented in section 4.7.1(vi)(bis).

Establishment of an in-session working group

111. Noting that further technical review was needed to resolve outstanding issues and finalize the provisions, the Chairperson proposed establishing an in-session working group (IWG) chaired by Canada, with Colombia participating virtually, to facilitate progress on the proposed amendments. The Chairperson highlighted the need for a coherent, coordinated approach given the interlinkages among sections 4.2.1(bis), 4.3.4, 4.7.1(vi)(bis), and 8.1.3.1.
112. Following discussions in the IWG, Canada, as Chair, presented the outcome of the discussions as summarized in CRD39, highlighting that:
- The IWG agreed that no further changes were needed for the sections 4.2.1(bis) and 4.7.1 (vi)(bis). As such, these sections remained as agreed upon in plenary.
 - The IWG made the following adjustments to sections 4.3.4 and 8.1.3.1:
 - **Section 4.3.4:** Reintroduced wording that was deleted during plenary and further clarified in which cases the text applied. Specifically, it was agreed to retain the text “where the number of individually packaged foods in the container cannot be easily counted”, but to move it to the chapeau statement in section 4.3.4 to further clarify that this was an additional situation where the required information must be provided on the outer packaging.
 - **Section 8.1.3.1:** Deleted the text in square brackets and left the rest of the text as presented in CRD06, noting that the text in square brackets was no longer necessary due to changes to section 8.1.3.1 proposed in CRD06, and that it could potentially contradict other proposed provisions as part of this work.

113. CCFL49 agreed with the IWG's recommendations as contained in CRD39 and noted the following on the intent of section 4.7.1(vi)(bis):
114. Individually packaged units do not need to carry the same type of date marking, and the provision was intended to address both situations, where date markings are of the same type and where they differ, as clarified below:
- the first part of the provision (1st sentence) was intended to ensure that, at least, the earliest date—regardless of type—is declared on the outer packaging, including cases where a quality date (e.g., “best-before”) may be earlier than a safety-related date.
 - the second part of the provision (2nd sentence) was intended to address food safety considerations by requiring that, where a use-by or expiration date exists, the earliest such date must also be declared.
 - The use of the words “at least” in the first sentence was deliberate, allowing for situations where a quality date is earlier while still ensuring that safety-related date marking, (use-by date or expiration date), is not omitted, even if it is not the earliest date.
 - It was necessary to list the specific date markings to ensure that the text was not interpreted to include other date marking in labelling texts, such as date of packaging and date of manufacture.

General Conclusion

115. CCFL49 agreed to forward the amendments to the *General Standard for the labelling of pre-packaged foods* (CXS 1-1985): Provisions relevant to joint presentation and multipack formats to CAC49 for adoption at Step 5/8 (with omission of Steps 6 and 7) (Appendix IV).

GUIDELINES ON APPLICATION OF FOOD LABELLING PROVISIONS IN EMERGENCIES (Step 4) (Agenda item 7) ¹⁰

116. The United States, the Chair of the EWG/VWG, reported that the EWG had conducted two rounds of consultations, during which critical topics including - measures to prevent sale of unsafe products, the definition related to emergencies, and clarification of stakeholder responsibilities were considered. The discussions also focused on how to structure the guidelines with a view to providing clarity and, improved readability, while retaining a high-level, non-prescriptive approach that relies on descriptive guidance and integrated examples rather than rigid rules.
117. The EWG/VWG Chair indicated that the VWG focused its discussions on ensuring a safe and adequate food supply, clarifying the central role of competent authorities, addressing stakeholder communication, the need reflect issues such as vulnerable populations, technological approaches, and the requirement for agreement by importing countries. Based on these discussions and comments received, an updated draft guidelines was prepared as presented in CRD03 and it was proposed that this be used as the basis for discussions.
118. CCFL49 agreed to use CRD03 as the basis for the discussion of the draft guidelines, and took the decisions as outlined in the following paragraphs.

Discussion

119. The CCFL Chairperson made the following observations before opening the discussion:
- The work was approved by CAC following due process.
 - Acknowledged the concerns of the possible misuse of this guidance for commercial gains or other benefits, noting the need to strike a balance between flexibilities and the need for guardrails.
 - Noted that during COVID-19 many countries and competent authorities provided flexibilities without any Codex guidelines in place at the time, including any guardrails and this work intends to provide high level guidance and principles for competent authorities.
120. CCFL49 held a general discussion on the work of the EWG and noted the following general views:
- A Member called for the narrowing of the scope to exclude foods intended for infants and young children from the guideline. This view was supported by some Members and two Observers.

¹⁰ CX/FL 26/49/7; CX/FL 26/49/7 Add.1 (Comments replied to CL 2026/08-FL); CRD03 (the VWG report); CRD15 (Burundi, Cabo Verde, EL Salvador, Kenya, Nigeria, the Philippines, Republic of Korea, Senegal, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, and World Food Programme (WFP)); CRD19 (Morocco); CRD20 (Mexico); CRD21 (Ecuador); CRD24 (East African Community); CRD26 (Ghana); CRD27 (Panama); CRD28 (Iran); CRD34 (ISDI); CRD35 (IBFAN); CRD37 (Jamaica); CRD38 (The United States of America, Australia, New Zealand, Canada)

- b. Two Observers expressed concern regarding the potential risks associated with labelling flexibilities in emergency situations, and that such measures could lead to misuse, reduced consumer protection, weakened traceability, and the distribution of unsafe or misleading products. They stressed the need for strict safeguards and called for the exclusion from the scope foods intended for infants and young children, since many countries did not have adequate emergency plans and as such may lack the capacity to recognize inadequate labelling.
- c. One Observer supported the development of the guidelines, noting that temporary labelling flexibilities were important to address supply chain disruptions in emergency situations and to ensure access to safe and nutritionally adequate food. Flexibilities would be implemented within existing national regulatory and humanitarian frameworks.

1. Purpose

- 121. CCFL49 considered a proposal to amend the draft provision to provide for the supply of adequate and safe food during emergencies, noting that protection of consumer's health was part of the Codex mandate.
- 122. The WHO Representative noted that the draft text was missing a reference to the protection of consumers' health.
- 123. Following a brief discussion, CCFL49 agreed to align the section with the broad mandate of Codex, i.e. protecting the health of the consumer and ensuring fair practices in food trade. The third sentence was amended to read:

“They ensure that the food labelling flexibilities applied by competent authorities in such emergencies are temporary, justified, proportionate, and risk-based to protect the health of consumers and ensure fair practices in food trade in uncertain situations.”

2. Scope

- 124. CCFL49 noted that there was general consensus within the VWG that the guidelines were for use only by the competent authorities (CAs) within their jurisdictions and that other entities should be excluded from their use. It was stressed that the scope of the guidelines should remain within the limits of CAs to provide both the required flexibilities and to avoid emergencies being exploited.
- 125. CCFL49 considered the proposal to exclude food for infants and young children and other vulnerable populations from the scope due to the vulnerability of the consuming populations and the need to maintain full labelling safeguards on such food during emergencies to facilitate their appropriate preparation and use. It was highlighted that a blanket exclusion could restrict access to essential foods for vulnerable groups during shortages and considered that competent authorities should retain the ability to apply temporary, risk-based labelling flexibilities where appropriate.
- 126. CCFL49 agreed:
 - a. that the scope will remain general to cover all foods, including those intended for infants and young children but redrafted paragraph 2.1.1 to clarify that that the guidelines are intended to be used only by competent authorities.
 - b. To endorse all the other provisions under Section 2.

3. General Considerations for Food Labelling Flexibilities in Emergencies

- 127. CCFL49 considered Section 3 and endorsed all other provisions as presented and further clarified the following three sections:
 - 3.1.9 Use of Technology or Alternative Means to Provide Food Information*
- 128. CCFL49 noted that this provision was intended as a safeguard to provide missing food information where flexibility had been authorized, and that during emergencies flexible labelling conditions were required to ensure that issues like food safety were addressed in a timely manner. One Observer raised concerns about availability of technology in all parts of the world and in particular in emergency situations.
- 129. It was agreed to amend the draft provision to clarify that the information was related to food information to consumers and relevant stakeholders. The list of stakeholders was expunged from the provision.

3.1.10

130. A Member and an Observer called for the inclusion of *Code of Ethics for International Trade in Food including Concessional and Food Aid Transactions* (CXC 20-1979) to remind members of the labelling provision of the international code and resolution and ensure coherence with Codex documents. The CCFL Chairperson clarified that CXC 20-1979 applies broadly to all food introduced in international trade including concessional and food aid transactions and the Code includes provisions related to false and misleading labelling which is already included in the draft guidelines.

3.1.11 — Vulnerable Populations

131. CCFL49 noted that the VWG did not reach consensus on the provision and that some phrases and or terms like vulnerable populations were in square brackets.
132. The CCFL Chairperson highlighted that the intent of the provision is to provide a safeguard for vulnerable population groups and that the provision was one among a range of different safeguards included in the guidelines for this purpose. Other safeguards included the limitation of the guidelines to use by competent authorities only, risk-based and time-bound application; protection against misleading labelling; prevention of food safety risks and protection against commercial misuse among others.
133. The CCFL Chairperson proposed compromise wording requiring competent authorities to ensure that proposed flexibilities would not introduce specific food safety risks for vulnerable populations in the country where the food would be consumed.
134. CCFL49 noted the clarifications, agreed to the texts and endorsed the draft provision in 3.19, 3.1.10 and 3.1.11.

4. Implementing and Monitoring Authorized Flexibilities

3.2.2 – Importing country agreement

135. CCFL49 discussed the need for agreement by the importing country's competent authority where products subject to a labelling flexibility were exported and revised the draft provision to provide for concluding of agreements prior to export i.e.

“Recognize that any flexibilities implemented within their jurisdiction are subject to the prior agreement of the importing country's competent authorities, should such products be exported.”

136. The CCFL Chairperson:
- a. Noted that the Committee had reached broad consensus on the draft guidelines for the application of food labelling provisions in emergencies, noting that all outstanding issues had been resolved, and no provision remained in square brackets.
 - b. Noted that the final text provided an appropriate balance between flexibility and safeguards, emphasizing that it contained sufficient provisions to ensure food safety, prevent misleading information, and guide competent authorities in applying temporary, risk-based labelling flexibilities during emergencies.
 - c. Proposed that the draft guidelines were ready for advancement in the step procedure
137. CCFL49 endorsed the proposal by the Chairperson to advance the text for final adoption by CAC.
138. Two Observers reiterated their concerns that the guidelines lacked sufficient provisions for the strong protection of infants, young children, and other vulnerable groups, and maintained their view that formula and foods for infants and young children should be excluded from labelling flexibilities during emergencies and called for stricter safeguards.

Conclusion

139. CCFL49 agreed to:
- i. Forward the guidelines on application of food labelling provisions in emergencies to CAC49, for final adoption at Step 5/8, Appendix V.
 - ii. Inform other Codex Committees of the completion of the work on the guidelines of the application of labelling provisions in emergencies.

FUTURE WORK AND EMERGING ISSUES (Agenda Item 8)¹¹

140. Kenya, as the authors of the working document, introduced the item and summarized the key findings based on the updated discussion paper, taking into account the comments received in response to CL 2025/42-FL. It was explained that the paper presented areas of 1) potential work for CCFL; 2) emerging issues of relevance to CCFL; 3) proposals regarding work areas previously considered by CCFL; and 4) an inventory table of potential CCFL future work.
141. CCFL49 was further informed that three Members and three Observer Organizations had replied to the CL and that a new potential work for CCFL and two new work proposals, accompanied by project documents, had been submitted for consideration by CCFL49. No new emerging issues of relevance to CCFL were raised.

Ultra processed foods (UPF)

142. CCFL49 noted the recommendation from Kenya to remove the item on ultra processed food (UPF), which had been submitted as a new potential work item for CCFL, from the inventory of items "*previous work identified by the committee*" as this had not been discussed previously at CCFL and to consider whether it should be included in an inventory of *potential new work*.
143. The CCFL Chairperson, referring to Kenya's recommendation, invited Members to express their views on whether the topic of UPF should be included in the inventory table.
144. Members noted that no discussion paper or project document on UPF had been submitted to support the initiation of work, and that there is currently no clear scientific consensus on the definition of UPF. Further it was also indicated that the relevance of UPF to the mandate of CCFL, particularly in relation to food labelling, was not sufficiently clear at this point and it was therefore premature at this stage to start new work in this area.
145. The Codex Secretariat emphasized the importance of clearly identifying the problem to be addressed, supported by a discussion paper, before initiating new work in Codex.

Conclusion

146. Taking into account the absence of a discussion paper and the views expressed by Members, CCFL49 agreed to remove UPF from the inventory table in the Appendix of the working document and noted, however, that the topic could be reconsidered in the future should a well-defined proposal supported by a discussion paper and a project document be submitted.

Strategic forward plan for CCFL

147. The CCFL Chairperson noted that CCFL49 agreed to forward three items for final adoption and therefore would have capacity to consider additional topics at its future sessions.
148. In this context, the Chairperson suggested that this would be an appropriate time to consider the development of a discussion paper on a strategic forward plan for CCFL. The forward plan could enable CCFL to prioritize its future work; undertake a systematic, potentially multi-year review of existing Codex texts developed by CCFL to assess their continued relevance; and identify ways to strengthen the implementation of standards to support the effective use of CCFL texts.
149. The Codex Secretariat informed CCFL49 that other Codex Committees had also begun similar reflections to prioritize work and enhance the impact and use of Codex standards, highlighting the importance of identifying partners (e.g. FAO, WHO and Observers) to support capacity-building activities to enhance understanding and implementation of Codex standards.
150. Members generally supported the proposal to develop the strategic forward plan and to consider a discussion paper to guide such work at CCFL50, highlighting the establishment of a structured framework to undertake a review of existing Codex texts, which requires updating in light of evolving scientific knowledge and regulatory developments and to prioritize future activities.
151. A clarification was sought regarding the responsibility for reviewing existing Codex texts and the Codex Secretariat explained that, in general, the review of existing texts is undertaken collaboratively between the relevant Codex Committee and the Codex Secretariat. The Codex Secretariat further clarified that it might take a more direct role only in cases where a committee has been adjourned sine die.

¹¹ CX/FL 26/49/8; CRD16 (Burundi, Kenya, the United Republic of Tanzania, IFT); CRD21 (Ecuador); CRD24 (East African Community); CRD36 (IUFOST); CRD37 (Jamaica)

Conclusion

152. CCFL49 agreed to:

- i. Develop a discussion paper on a strategic forward plan for CCFL, including elements such as the need for and prioritization of the review of existing texts, identification of future work and emerging issues, and potential capacity building approaches and activities to enhance implementation of the Codex food labelling standards and related texts.
- ii. Request New Zealand as Chair, with Australia as Co Chair, to develop the discussion paper, with assistance from the Host Country (Canada) and the Codex Secretariats.
- iii. Request the Codex Secretariat to issue a CL requesting Members and Observers to provide input to inform the development of the discussion paper on proposals for new work (e.g. new and emerging issues and revisions of existing text).

Proposal for new work on the application of food labelling provisions to alcoholic beverages¹²

153. The United Republic of Tanzania, on behalf of co-authors, introduced the item, highlighting divergent regulatory approaches to alcohol labelling in the absence of coordinated international guidance, resulting in regulatory fragmentation and heightened compliance complexity. It was highlighted that the proposal aimed at updating relevant Codex standards and guidelines to ensure transparent, accurate consumer information and prevent misleading claims that could lead to health implications and ensure fair-trade practices by addressing a gap in existing Codex texts regarding clear and consistent labelling provisions for alcoholic beverages.

Discussion

154. CCFL49 considered the discussion paper and noted the views expressed by delegations.

155. Delegates, who supported the proposal, expressed the following views:

- a. The need for harmonisation and clarity: Divergence of existing national regulations would lead to inconsistencies and barriers to trade. Clarification of how existing Codex provisions apply to alcoholic beverages would support consistent implementation and prevent trade disputes over national alcohol laws.
- b. Gaps and lack of clarity in existing Codex texts: While alcoholic beverages fall within the definition of food, current texts did not sufficiently address alcohol specific aspects (e.g. alcohol content, nutrition and health claims), leading to inconsistent application by countries.
- c. Consumer protection and public health: Alcohol consumption pose significant health risks, including cancers, and clearer, more consistent labelling would improve consumer information, transparency and informed decision making.
- d. Consumer information: Noting existing knowledge gaps there is a role in labelling in providing clear information to consumers. This is a matter relevant to Codex objectives on protecting the health of consumers
- e. Alignment with Codex mandate: The proposal would be timely and consistent with objectives of protecting consumer health and ensuring fair practices in food trade.
- f. Progressing the work in a stepwise approach through an EWG: Establishment of an EWG would be appropriate mechanism to further refine the scope and develop draft provisions.

156. Delegates, who did not support the proposal, expressed the following views:

- a. Lack of demonstrated need and sufficient existing framework: Existing Codex standards already apply to alcoholic beverages and provide adequate guidance, and no clear evidence was provided that differences in national regulations create significant trade barriers. Therefore, the proposal was not considered a priority and was viewed as not reflecting Members' needs or an efficient use of limited Codex resources.
- b. Risk of duplication and overlap: The proposal could duplicate or overlap with existing Codex texts, WHO instruments and international standards such as OIV.

¹² CX/FL 26/49/8 Add.1; CRD17 (Burundi, Brazil, Cabo Verde, El Salvador, the European Union, India, Japan, Nigeria, the Republic of Korea, Senegal, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, FIVS, OIV, NCDA); CRD20 (Mexico); CRD23 (the United States of America); CRD24 (East African Community); CRD26 (Ghana); CRD32 (Dominican Republic); CRD33 (Australia)

- c. Concerns about scope and mandate: The proposal could go beyond the Codex technical mandate, potentially touching upon public health policy matters or interpretations that might not be aligned with Codex's objectives.
 - d. Regulatory and trade concerns: Risks of over regulation, increased administrative burden and creation of technical barriers to trade were highlighted, including possible inconsistencies with national regulatory systems and impacts on industry. It was highlighted that there were no known impediment to trade. It was also explained that, in some national contexts, alcoholic beverages were not considered as "food" for regulatory purposes.
 - e. Preference for national level regulation: Labelling of alcoholic beverages is more appropriately regulated at the national level and should remain under national authorities, particularly for health warning labels,.
 - f. Process-related concerns: Concerns were raised regarding the reference to the WHO recommendations as a justification for the work, the role of the WHO in developing and promoting the proposal and the potential implications for the Codex Member driven process.
 - g. Consideration of previous CCFL discussions: the proposal misrepresented and did not fully consider the discussions at previous sessions of CCFL, especially CCFL48
157. Tanzania acknowledged the concerns raised regarding the scope of the proposal and the potential for duplication of effort, and indicated its openness to suggestions for a more focused, stepwise approach with broad participation from Members. The Delegation proposed prioritizing areas where there appears to be greater convergence, in particular the declaration of alcohol content and the restriction of misleading claims.
158. Tanzania clarified that the intention of this proposal was not for Codex to regulate alcohol consumption, but rather to examine labelling provisions within the mandate of CCFL. While existing Codex texts were applicable, their interpretation and application to alcohol-specific labelling issues were not always sufficiently clear or consistent. With respect to more complex elements, such as health-related information and nutrition labelling, they could be addressed at a later stage. The Delegation indicated its willingness to: (i) refine the scope in line with the recommendations emerging from this session; and (ii) develop options for consideration by CCFL50.
159. While there were views supporting further refinement of the scope, comments from delegations opposing the new work whose responses were as follows: several delegations stated that narrowing the scope would not address the fundamental concerns. In response to a proposal to establish an EWG to further develop the new work proposal, some Members and Observers also indicated that it would not be appropriate to establish an EWG in the absence of consensus on new work and considered that further revised proposals should instead be developed by interested Members and submitted to a future session.
160. The Chairperson noted the divergent views, and lack of consensus to start new work and proposed to suspend further discussions in the meantime, however the topic should remain in the inventory of future work.

Conclusion

161. CCFL49:
- i. Noted that there was no consensus to begin new work on alcohol labelling at this time.
 - ii. Agreed that the topic will be retained in the CCFL Inventory of Future Work.
 - iii. Noted that this does not preclude the possibility of Members preparing a discussion paper that takes into account discussion at CCFL49 with a more limited scope for consideration by CCFL at any point in the future.

Proposal for new work on a guiding definition for a more uniform application of labelling provisions to "small packages" and their related exemptions set in existing Codex texts¹³

162. The International Chewing Gum Association (ICGA), as the author of the document, introduced the item and highlighted that this work would be focused on the development of a definition of "small packages" covering a wide range of foods and beverages, with the objective of ensuring a more uniform application of existing Codex labelling provisions and related exemptions. ICGA clarified that the proposal aimed to develop a single, overarching definition applicable to references already included in Codex texts, without revisiting the existing definition of "small unit".

¹³ CX/FL 26/49/8 Add.2; CRD18 (Burundi, Kenya, Nigeria, the United Republic of Tanzania); CRD20 (Mexico); CRD24 (East African Community); CRD26 (Ghana); CRD27 (Panama); CRD28 (Iran); CRD37 (Jamaica);

163. ICGA further clarified that the main objective of the proposed new work would be to develop (a) a description of what constitutes a “small pack” (qualitative criteria of the definition), (b) a relevant set of metrics / sizing references (quantitative criteria of the definition); and, (c) a set of recommendations for a full flexibility on how Codex members may decide to implement such a definition at national and/or regional levels (implementation criteria of the definition).
164. The Chairperson asked for any Member to support the work before the initiation of discussion, as this proposal had been submitted by an Observer and, in accordance with the Codex Procedural Manual, a Member would need to take the lead for the work to proceed. Panama expressed its willingness to lead the work should it be approved.

Discussion

165. Delegates expressed appreciation for the proposal and generally supported the new work, noting that the absence of a clear definition for “small packages” in Codex texts had led to different interpretations, potential inconsistencies, and possible barriers to trade.
166. Members and Observers in favour of this proposal considered that the development of a definition would provide clarity and improve consistency in the application of labelling provisions, while maintaining flexibility for national implementation.
167. Members who did not support the proposal for new work argued that there was no demonstrated technical or public health need to justify initiating new work; that existing national definitions and regulatory frameworks already covered the concept, making further Codex elaboration unnecessary; there was insufficient evidence to show that the absence of a Codex definition was creating concrete trade barriers. They further emphasized that the issue appeared to stem from divergent national implementation rather than from a lack of definition at the Codex level. In this context, concerns were raised about the added value of introducing a new definition, particularly given that an existing definition of “small unit” was already in place but applied inconsistently across jurisdictions.
168. The Chairperson, noting the general support expressed by Members, suggested reviewing the project document with a view to forwarding the new work for endorsement by CAC if consensus could be reached.
169. However, due to the lack of time to review the full project document, it was agreed to keep the item in the inventory of possible future work and to issue a CL to facilitate revisions to the project document for further consideration at the next session.

Conclusion

170. CCFL49 agreed:
- i. To keep this item in the inventory table under the agenda item on future work and direction for CCFL, noting the general support from Members for new work.
 - ii. To request the Codex Secretariat to issue a CL seeking comments from Members on the project document.
 - iii. That Panama, in collaboration with ICGA, would update the discussion paper and project document, taking into consideration comments made at CCFL49 during the plenary and in CRDs as well as written comments to be received in reply to the CL, for consideration at CCFL50.

OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda item 9)

171. CCFL49 noted that there was no other business to discuss.

DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT SESSION (Agenda item 10)

172. CCFL49 was informed that its 50th Session was tentatively scheduled to take place in 18 months-time, with the location to be confirmed, the final arrangements being subject to confirmation by the Host Country and the Codex Secretariat.

APPENDIX I

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LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS
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APPENDIX II**Part A: THE CONCLUSIONS OF CCFL49 ON THE USE OF “COUNTRY OF HARVEST” IN ADDITION TO THE MANDATORY DECLARATION OF COUNTRY OF ORIGIN IN FOOD LABELLING OF SPICES***Conclusion 1 - Role of CCFL and Application of Horizontal Labelling Provisions*

CCFL is the CAC’s subsidiary body established to prepare standards and related texts on food labelling and is well placed to support commodity committees to understand food labelling in general, including the horizontal labelling provisions of CCFL texts that apply to all foods. CCSCH and other commodity committees have the ability to refer items requiring labelling input to CCFL for response early in the step process, to inform the development of labelling provisions prior to seeking endorsement. As required, alternative ways for CCFL to provide guidance from a labelling perspective to commodity committees could also be explored, such as workshops held in parallel to sessions.

Conclusion 2 - Application of General Principles to Origin Labelling

All labelling information, including origin labelling statements whether mandatory or voluntary, are subject to the General Principles outlined in Section 3 of the *General Standard on the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods* (CXS 1-1985), which prohibits false, misleading, and deceptive labelling. This general provision applies also to mandatory country of origin labelling statements. When these General Principles are read in conjunction with the GSLPF (CXS 1-1985) country of origin requirements and commodity specific labelling requirements, it is clear that any false, misleading, or deceptive declarations of country of origin are prohibited in existing Codex texts. An example of a misleading declaration of origin that is not permitted under these provisions is the labelling of the country of packaging as the country of origin of a food when such a food is imported in its consumer ready form from a producing country into the packaging country, and no processing or production occurs in the packaging country.

Conclusion 3 - Interpretation of “Change in the Nature of the Food” under CXS 1-1985

Section 4.5.2 of the GSLPF (CXS 1-1985) states: “when a food undergoes processing in a second country which changes its nature, the country in which the processing is performed shall be considered to be the country of origin for the purposes of labelling”. When considering the labelling of foods, it is important to understand at what point the food underwent processing which changed its nature before being packaged and sold to consumers, as this step determines the country of origin for the purposes of labelling.

CCFL may not always have the expertise on specific processes that commodities undergo and how these may or may not result in a change of nature. However, in general, if a process results in a new and different food with a new name (as described in Section 4.1 of the GSLPF), this would likely be a change in nature. Conversely, if a process does not result in a new and different food, this would generally not be considered a change in nature. Considerable information was gathered through the CL and EWG to enable clarifications on whether some processing steps involve a change in nature—for example packaging, sorting, and grading would not be considered to change the nature of the food. These clarifications may be useful for CCSCH in considering labelling provisions going forward.

Conclusion 4 - Labelling when COO and COH are the same

When the country of harvest and the country of origin of a spice is the same, one statement of origin is sufficient as it avoids redundancy and potential confusion and minimizes burden on industry. This equivalence could be explicitly stated in the commodity standard where relevant. Dried saffron was an example provided by EWG members of a commodity for which country of harvest and country of origin are the same. In these situations, fulfilling the mandatory country of origin labelling requirement means declaring the country of harvest.

Conclusion 5 - Determination of Country of Origin When Country of Harvest Differs

When country of origin and country of harvest of a spice or culinary herb are different, the country of origin is the country in which the change of nature occurred. A spice and culinary herb related example of when country of harvest and country of origin are different include vanilla beans that are harvested in one country and then processed in another country to become vanilla extract, which is a new and different food not covered by the CCSCH standard. In this case, the country of origin for labelling purposes would be the country in which the processing resulted in the final product, and the GSLPF (CXS 1-1985) provisions apply.

Conclusion 6 - Understanding and Definition of “Country of Harvest”

The meaning of country of harvest is generally understood to be the country where a spice or culinary herb is grown and harvested. Given that “harvest” is already defined in the CCSCH glossary of terms as “the act or process of gathering agricultural crops”, and that the term has been used in several CCSCH texts, there may be limited benefit to developing a definition of country of harvest. While it would not hinder any resolution of issues, it is worth considering if it is the best use of Codex and Member resources. The root issue is not the understanding of the term, but rather the implications for labelling when country of origin and country of harvest

are the same, and when they are not. If country of harvest is to be defined, CCFL is not the appropriate Codex body to do so.

Conclusion 7- Declaration of Multiple Countries of Origin for Blended Spices

Products may exist in international trade that are blends of a single type of spice or culinary herb from multiple origins, packaged together. This may occur when spices are exported in non-retail containers from countries where they were harvested and dried, to another country where they are packaged together from all of the sources and labelled. It could also happen if a producing country imports a spice in non-retail containers, blends it with the same spice they produce, and packaged it together. In these cases, the spice or culinary herbs in the package are from multiple countries of origins, and the packaging of these spices together does not change their nature. These spices or herbs would continue to be those covered by CCSCH standards.

The existing general provisions of the GSLPF (CXS 1-1985), which, while not explicit on how to label blends of the same food from multiple origins, do not prevent the labelling of multiple countries of origin when that is the case. In addition, all countries of origin should be declared if their omission would mislead consumers, based on Section 3.1 of CXS 1-1985.

Conclusion 8 - Voluntary Labelling Statements and Applicable Codex Texts

In general, optional or voluntary statements or claims can be made on food labels, provided that such statements are not false or misleading. In all cases, any voluntary statements or claims are subject to CCFL texts that apply to all foods, including the General Principles in Section 3 of the GSLPF (CXS 1-1985) which prohibits false and misleading labelling, and the *General Guidelines on Claims*, which provide further guidance. This permission to make optional statements, such as the optional declaration of country of harvest, can be stated in Codex standards, but it does not need to be specified in order for voluntary information to be provided.

Conclusion 9 - Scope of Codex Labelling Provisions and CCFL Mandate

Labelling provisions are established by Codex with the intent to address health and safety matters and fair practices in trade. Interests in promoting products based on producing country, regional characteristics, or other qualities can be expressed through voluntary labelling statements or claims. Labelling for promotional purposes is subject to, in particular, the *General Guidelines on Claims* (CXG 1-1979) and the *Guidelines on Nutrition and Health Claims* (CXG 23-1997). Members may also explore other mechanisms outside of Codex that support promotion of foods from specific regions, such as geographic indications.

Part B: PROPOSED PROVISIONS UNDER 8.2 COUNTRY OF ORIGIN AND COUNTRY OF HARVEST IN THE STANDARD FOR DRIED FLORAL PARTS –SAFFRON (CXS 351-2022)

8.2 Country of origin and country of harvest

8.2.1 Country of origin shall be declared*.

8.2.2 Region of harvest and year of harvest (optional).

*Footnote: for this standard the country of origin is the same as the country of harvest.

APPENDIX III

**ANNEX TO
THE GENERAL STANDARD FOR THE LABELLING OF PRE-PACKAGED FOODS (CXS 1-1985):
GUIDELINES ON THE USE OF PRECAUTIONARY ALLERGEN LABELLING**

(For adoption at Step 8)

1. PURPOSE

To facilitate a consistent and harmonized approach to the effective use of precautionary allergen labelling (PAL) for communicating to consumers with food allergy or coeliac disease about the risk from the unintended presence of a food allergen(s) due to cross-contact¹⁴ with allergenic food(s).

2. SCOPE

These guidelines apply to PAL when used in the labelling of pre-packaged foods to indicate the risk from the unintended presence of a food allergen(s) caused by cross-contact with allergenic food(s).

3. DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of these guidelines, the following definition shall be used in conjunction with the definitions in Section 2 of the *General Standard for the labelling of pre-packaged foods* (CXS 1-1985):

“Precautionary allergen labelling” is a statement made in the labelling of pre-packaged foods to indicate a risk from the unintended presence of a food allergen(s) due to cross-contact with an allergenic food(s) that has been identified by a risk assessment.

4. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- 4.1** Effective food allergen management practices, including controls to prevent or minimize the unintended presence of a food allergen(s) caused by cross-contact with allergenic foods, shall be implemented in accordance with the *Code of practice on allergen management for food business operators* (CXC 80-2020). The use of PAL shall be restricted to those situations in which the unintended presence of a food allergen(s) cannot be prevented or controlled using these allergen management practices.
- 4.2** The decision to use PAL should be based on the findings of a risk assessment^{15,16}, which begins with qualitative risk assessment and may be supplemented with quantitative risk assessment of unintended food allergen presence.
- 4.3** PAL shall be used when, following the application of appropriate mitigation measures, it is demonstrated that unintended presence of a food allergen(s) is above the action level¹⁷ for the allergenic food based on the reference doses in table 1 for IgE-mediated food allergy and table 2 for coeliac disease. PAL should not be used when unintended presence of a food allergen(s) is at or below the action level.

¹⁴ Allergen cross-contact as defined in *Code of practice on allergen management for food business operators* (CXC 80-2020).

¹⁵ FAO and WHO (2023). *Risk assessment of food allergens – Part 3: Review and establish precautionary labelling in foods of the priority allergens* (Sections 3.3.1 to 3.3.6 provide guidance for the risk assessment of unintended food allergen presence). <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc6081en>

¹⁶ FAO and WHO. *Risk Assessment of Food Allergens – Part 6: Guidance for risk assessment*. (in press)

¹⁷ Action level (mg total protein from the allergenic food / kg food) = Reference dose (mg total protein from the allergenic food) / Amount of the food consumed (kg). The amount of food consumed should be established based on the quantity that can reasonably be expected to be consumed on a single eating occasion preferably using the 50th percentile.

Table 1 Reference doses for allergenic foods relevant to IgE-mediated food allergy risk analysis

Allergenic food (IgE-mediated food allergy)	Reference dose (RfD) (mg total protein from the allergenic food(s))
Almond	1.0
Brazil nut	1.0
Cashew	1.0
Pistachio	1.0
Macadamia	1.0
Pine nut	1.0
Walnut	1.0
Pecan	1.0
Celery	1.0
Mustard	1.0
Peanut	2.0
Egg	2.0
Milk	2.0
Sesame	2.0
Hazelnut	3.0
Wheat	5.0
Fish	5.0
Buckwheat	10.0
Lupin	10.0
Soy	10.0
Crustacea	200.0

Table 2 Reference dose for gluten relevant to coeliac disease risk analysis

Allergenic food(s) (Coeliac disease)	Reference dose (RfD) (mg of total gluten from all relevant sources)
Cereals containing gluten: * <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – wheat and other <i>Triticum</i> species – rye and other <i>Secale</i> species – barley and other <i>Hordeum</i> species and products thereof† 	4.0

* Oats have been listed in the *General standard for the labelling of prepackaged foods* (CXS 1-1985) as an allergenic food (Section 4.2.1.5). However, no specific RfD for gluten has been established for oats because individuals with coeliac disease may react to the ingestion of oats due to either wheat, barley or rye cross-contact.

† Includes spelt, Khorasan, and other specific cereals containing gluten that are species or hybridized strains under the genus names of *Triticum*, *Secale* and *Hordeum*.

- 4.3.1** Where a reference dose is not established for a particular allergenic food in the Table 1 above, regional/national competent authorities can establish a reference dose consistent with recognized principles¹⁸ for the purposes of determining an action level.
- 4.3.2.** If a PAL statement for cereal(s) containing gluten (wheat, barley, and rye) is necessary, then the term “gluten-free” shall not be used.¹⁹
- 4.4** PAL shall be complemented by effective education and information programs supported by competent authorities to promote appropriate use of PAL by food business operators and proper understanding by consumers, health care providers and other stakeholders.
- 5. PRESENTATION OF PAL**
- 5.1** Sections 8.1.1, 8.1.2 and 8.1.3 and 8.2 of the *General Standard for the labelling of pre-packaged foods* (CXS 1-1985) apply to PAL labelling.
- 5.2** PAL shall appear as a separate statement directly under or in close proximity to the ingredient list (when present).
- 5.2.1** Where a food is exempt from declaring a list of ingredients, and no list of ingredients is present, PAL shall be declared in a prominent position on the label. Where a separate statement made in accordance with Section 8.3.2.1 of the *General Standard for the labelling of pre-packaged foods* (CXS 1-1985) exists on the label, the PAL statement should appear directly under or in close proximity to the separate statement.
- 5.2.2** A PAL statement shall commence with the words ‘May contain’ (or equivalent words such as ‘may be present’, as determined by the competent authorities) and declare the allergenic food(s) using the specified names for the foods and ingredients as listed in Sections 4.2.1.4 and where applicable 4.2.1.5 of the *General Standard for the labelling of pre-packaged foods* (CXS 1-1985).²⁰
- 5.2.3** When gluten is present above the action level and the source of the gluten cannot be verified by risk assessment, the specified names of all cereals containing gluten (i.e. wheat, barley, and rye) shall be included in the PAL statement.²⁰
- 5.2.4** A PAL statement shall be declared in a clear and distinct manner such as through the same font type, style or colour that contrast from the surrounding text in accordance with Section 8.3.1 of the *General Standard for the labelling of pre-packaged foods* (CXS 1-1985). Where both a PAL statement and an allergen declaration are present, these shall be declared using the same clear and distinct manner.

¹⁸ FAO and WHO (2022). Risk Assessment of Food Allergens - Part 2: Review and establish threshold levels in foods of the priority allergens. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc2946en>.

¹⁹ “Gluten-free” foods as defined in the *Standard for foods for special dietary use for persons intolerant to gluten* (CXS 118-1979).

²⁰ In addition to the specified name of wheat, barley, and rye, the word ‘gluten’ may be used. Where permitted, the words ‘cereals containing gluten’ or ‘gluten’ may be used in place of the specified names barley and rye.

APPENDIX IV

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

(For adoption at Step 5/8)

(The proposed new text under each section is indicated in underline)

4. MANDATORY LABELLING OF PRE-PACKAGED FOODS**4.2** *List of ingredients.*

4.2.1(bis) For pre-packaged foods subject to Section 8.1.3.1, where the information is provided on the outer packaging, 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 such as 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, where the information is required to be provided on the outer packaging, or where the number of individually packaged foods in the container cannot be easily counted, the net contents shall be declared on the outer packaging by indicating:

1. the total net contents of the pre-packaged food sold as a single unit; and/or
2. the number of individually packaged foods per type and their respective net contents.

4.7 *Date marking and storage instructions*

4.7.1(vi)(bis) For pre-packaged foods subject to Section 8.1.3.1, where the information is provided on the outer packaging, at least the earliest best-before date, best quality-before date, use-by date, or expiration date shall be declared. If the individually packaged foods have more than one type of date marking, the earliest date of the foods that fall under Section 4.7.1(i) must be declared.

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

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.

APPENDIX V**GUIDELINES ON THE APPLICATION OF FOOD LABELLING PROVISIONS IN EMERGENCIES****(For adoption at Step 5/8)****1. PURPOSE**

The purpose of these guidelines is to support a safe and adequate food supply during emergencies, by providing principles and general decision-making criteria. These guidelines can be used for the consideration and flexible application of food labelling requirements in emergencies that cause significant supply chain disruptions. They ensure that the food labelling flexibilities applied by competent authorities in such emergencies are temporary, justified, proportionate, and risk-based to protecting the health of the consumer and ensuring fair practices in food trade in uncertain situations.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 These guidelines are intended to be used only by competent authorities to determine the flexible application of one or more food labelling requirements in emergencies to maintain a safe and adequate food supply without misleading the consumer or compromising food safety (hereafter referred to as “flexibilities”).
- 2.1.1 For the purpose of these guidelines, an emergency means an exceptional and temporary event as identified by the competent authorities that causes significant disruption to the international, regional, national, or local food supply chain, in whole or in part. Emergencies and consequent supply chain disruptions or food shortages may occur due to scenarios including human pandemics, animal or plant disease outbreaks, environmental or natural disasters, disruption of critical infrastructure, war and humanitarian crises, drought, or other similar scenarios.
- 2.1.2 For the purpose of these guidelines, flexibilities are an agreement by the competent authorities to allow specific, risk-based, non-compliance with certain labelling provisions implemented during an emergency to the extent and for the periods strictly necessary to facilitate a safe and adequate food supply, and to support stabilization of supply chains, without compromising food safety or misleading the consumer. Flexibilities may include considerations such as changes to labelling formats, labelling of ingredient substitutions that do not compromise food safety, managed depletion of existing labelling stocks, or language requirements for labelling elements that do not present food safety risk among other flexibilities as determined by competent authorities.
- 2.1.3 For the purpose of these guidelines, food labelling flexibilities are not intended as a means to reduce production costs, mitigate commercial trade pressures, facilitate improper disposal, or gain economic advantage to address non-emergency production or market-driven considerations.
- 2.2 These guidelines apply to both the *General standard on the labelling of prepackaged food* (CXS 1-1985) and the *General standard for the labelling of non-retail containers of foods* (CXS 346-2021). The terms “label” and “labelling” as used in these guidelines are defined in CXS 1-1985.
- 2.3 These guidelines are intended to facilitate the proposal, review, implementation and monitoring, and conclusion of flexibilities during and after emergencies.
- 2.4 These guidelines are applicable to domestic commerce and food in trade, subject to the agreement of the importing country.

3. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR FOOD LABELLING FLEXIBILITIES IN EMERGENCIES

During an emergency, when a competent authority becomes aware of a need or proposal for a flexibility, the following guidelines apply.

3.1 Reviewing and Authorizing a Flexibility

When reviewing a proposed flexibility and/or authorizing a flexibility during an emergency, competent authorities should:

- 3.1.1 Ensure, as determined prior to the emergency if possible, they have sufficient authority to grant flexibilities during an emergency.
- 3.1.2 Apply a risk-based approach for reviewing or authorizing requests for flexibilities during an emergency, considering any stakeholder responsibilities, procedures to be followed, and communication with consumers and all relevant stakeholders and foster clear and transparent communication to all relevant stakeholders regarding the application of such an approach.
- 3.1.3 Ensure that the proposed flexibility will not compromise food safety (e.g. safety-related instructions for use) nor introduce health risks such as allergenic foods and related food allergens that are not addressed by appropriate labelling, and that the proposed flexibility is not misused to introduce the use of an unapproved or unsafe food or ingredient.

- 3.1.4 Verify that the proposed flexibility will substantially assist in mitigating the effects of the emergency on the availability of a safe and adequate food supply in the country or region in which the food is traded and consumed, and that existing food labelling provisions, though effective under normal conditions, would now compromise or otherwise significantly negatively impact the availability of a safe and adequate food supply.
- 3.1.5 Base review of the proposed flexibility on an assessment of the food safety and consumer health risks triggered by the implementation of the flexibilities relative to the emergency using all relevant, available information, evaluating any alternatives to the proposed flexibility, and confirming that the flexibility does not lead to undue competitive advantage to one or more Food Business Operators (FBOs) over others.
- 3.1.6 Ensure that records related to the proposed flexibility be maintained as needed.
- 3.1.7 Confirm with all relevant stakeholders the expected timeframe that the proposed flexibility will be necessary, ensuring that the flexibility is effective only for the period in which significant negative impacts from the emergency are experienced, and that the proposed flexibility is tailored to proportionally address significant negative impacts resulting from the emergency.
- 3.1.8 When considering proposed flexibilities across commodities, apply consistent principles in the application of flexibilities based on the impacts of the emergency on the availability of a safe and adequate food supply.
- 3.1.9 Consider leveraging technology-based approaches (*Guidelines on the use of technology to provide food information in food labelling* (CXG 105-2024)) or other alternative means to provide food information to consumers and other relevant stakeholders.
- 3.1.10 Ensure that the proposed flexibility would not compromise adherence to Sections 3.1 and 3.2 of the *General standard on the labelling of prepackaged foods* (CXS 1-1985) and Section 4.1 of the *General standard for the labelling of non-retail containers of foods* (CXS 346-2021).
- 3.1.11 Ensure that the proposed flexibilities do not introduce any specific food safety risks for vulnerable populations within the country where the food will be consumed (e.g. infants, young children, persons with special dietary needs).

3.2 Implementing and Monitoring Authorized Flexibilities

When an FBO implements an authorized flexibility during an emergency, competent authorities should:

- 3.2.1 Recognize that any flexibilities implemented within their jurisdiction are subject to the prior agreement of the importing country's competent authorities, should such products be exported.
- 3.2.2 Monitor implementation of the flexibility, as supported by records kept by the FBO and the competent authority intended to document implementation of the flexibility and enable traceability²¹ when possible in the emergency situation, and;
- 3.2.3 Notify, in a timely manner using all effective means, the authorized flexibility including any uses of technology, to FBOs, countries, and the public, leveraging as appropriate international networks such as the International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN) and other relevant international bodies.

3.3 Concluding Implementation of Authorized Flexibilities

When concluding use of an authorized flexibility, competent authorities should:

- 3.3.1 Notify FBOs, countries, and the public that time-limited flexibilities offered during the emergency are no longer in effect.
- 3.3.2 Ensure the FBO demonstrates the cessation of the flexibility as determined by the competent authority, considering also how products produced during the emergency that remain available for sale after the emergency is over will be addressed (i.e. stock in trade).
- 3.3.3 Evaluate the results of any flexibilities provided during the period of the emergency in consultation with relevant stakeholders and adapt, where necessary, the country's relevant emergency plan(s) accordingly to promote resilience in future emergencies.

²¹ See the *Principles for traceability/product tracing as a tool within a food inspection and certification system* (CXG 60-2006).