

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS

INTERNATIONAL FOOD STANDARDS



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Organization of
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GUIDELINES ON THE PROVISION OF FOOD INFORMATION FOR PRE-PACKAGED FOODS TO BE OFFERED VIA E-COMMERCE

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1. PURPOSE

The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure consumers buying pre-packaged foods via e-commerce have the information needed to make informed choices, similar to the information they would find on the physical label of the food.

2. SCOPE

2.1 These guidelines apply to the food information required, or provided voluntarily, that is displayed on the product information e-page for pre-packaged foods offered for sale via e-commerce, and to certain aspects relating to the presentation thereof.

2.2 They do not apply to information that is required on the label of pre-packaged foods at the point of delivery as set out in the *General standard for labelling of pre-packaged foods* (CXS 1-1985).¹

3. DEFINITIONS

The following terms shall be used in conjunction with Section 2 of the *General standard for labelling of pre-packaged foods* for the purposes of this guideline.

At the point of delivery means the moment when consumers receive pre-packaged food.

E-commerce means the production, distribution, marketing, sale or delivery of goods and services by electronic means as applicable to foods.”

Food information means the information that is the subject of a Codex text about a pre-packaged food.

Prior to the point of e-commerce sale means provided before consumers commit to ordering and purchasing the food.

Product information e-page means the virtual space on any consumer-facing transactional electronic platform, which is intended to facilitate informed e-commerce sale.

4. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The general principles in Section 3 of the *General standard for the labelling of pre-packaged foods* are applicable to food information shown on the product information e-page of the pre-packaged food that is being offered for sale.

5. FOOD INFORMATION PRINCIPLES

The food information required to be provided on the label of a pre-packaged food or in associated labelling, shall be provided on the product information e-page of the pre-packaged food prior to the point of e-commerce sale, except to the extent otherwise expressly provided in these guidelines, or any other Codex text. This includes the following food information indicated in:

- Section 4 and Section 5 of the *General standard for the labelling of pre-packaged foods* except information required by 4.6 and 4.7.1.;
- Section 3 of the *Guidelines on nutrition labelling* (CXG 2-1985);² and
- any other relevant Codex text.

A statement shall appear on the product information e-page prior to the point of e-commerce sale to direct the consumer to check the food information on the physical label before consumption.

The labelling exemption of small units as outlined in Section 6 of the *General standard for labelling of pre-packaged foods* does not apply unless allowed in specific circumstances by competent authorities.

The food information about the pre-packaged foods offered for sale in e-commerce shall be provided to the consumer without a charge to access the information.

6. OPTIONAL INFORMATION PRIOR TO THE POINT OF E-COMMERCE SALE

Section 7 of the *General standard for labelling of pre-packaged foods* is applicable to food information shown to consumers on the product information e-page for the pre-packaged food that is being offered for sale.

A statement may be provided on the product information e-page prior to the point of e-commerce sale to inform the consumer about the relation between the best before, best quality before, use-by, or expiration date and the product shipping date or at the point of delivery.

7. PRESENTATION OF MANDATORY FOOD INFORMATION

Food information required by these guidelines shall be clear, prominent, and readily legible by the consumer under normal settings and conditions of use for a product information e-page.

The language or languages on a product information e-page shall be suitable to the consumer in the country in which the food is marketed and to which it may be delivered.

NOTES

¹ FAO and WHO. 1985. *General standard for labelling of pre-packaged foods*. Codex Alimentarius Standard, No. CXS 1-1985. Codex Alimentarius Commission. Rome.

² FAO and WHO. 1985. *Guidelines on nutrition labelling*. Codex Alimentarius Guideline, No. CXG 2-1985. Codex Alimentarius Commission. Rome.