



Agenda item 3.1

CX/NE 25/12/4

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR THE NEAR EAST

Twelfth Session

Muscat, Oman

28 September - 2 October 2025

ALIGNMENT OF REGIONAL STANDARDS: PROVISIONS ON THE LABELLING OF NON-RETAIL CONTAINERS IN CCNE COMMODITY STANDARDS

Prepared by the Electronic Working Group chaired by Saudi Arabia and co-chaired by Oman

Codex Members and Observers wishing to submit comments should do so as instructed
in CL 2025/46-NE available on the Codex webpage/Circular letters:
<http://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/circular-letters/en/>

Background

1. In response to the request of the 44th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC44)¹ to align labelling provisions for non-retail containers with the *General Standard for the labelling of non-retail containers of foods* CXS 346-2021, CCNE11 reviewed the proposed revisions for eight regional commodity standards.
2. It was noted that six of these standards lacked such provisions, although the commodities might still be distributed in non-retail containers. Some members supported adding labelling provisions immediately to prevent delays, while the Codex Secretariat raised key points regarding the importance of investigating the necessity of such provisions, the sufficiency of a cross-reference to CXS 346-2021, and how to handle existing provisions in two standards that already included labelling requirements for non-retail containers.
3. Based on these considerations, CCNE11 agreed that more time was needed to complete the task and assigned the work to an Electronic Working Group (EWG) chaired by Saudi Arabia and co-chaired by Oman, working in Arabic and English, and open to all Members and Observers from the region².

Participation and Methodology

4. Saudi Arabia and Oman, as chair and co-chair of the EWG respectively, invited all interested CCNE Members and Observers to consider the provisions on labelling of non-retail containers in the regional commodity standards. In addition to the chair and co-chair, two Members from the region and two members from outside the region, namely: Algeria, Guatemala, United Arab Emirates, and United States of America participated in the EWG (Annex II).
5. The initial draft prepared by the EWG Chairs was circulated twice, in accordance with the proposed timeline of activities (Table 1), to collect comments from the participants to the EWG. During the first round of comments, two countries provided input, which was taken into consideration. Based on this feedback, a subsequent draft was issued, which recommended the inclusion of non-retail containers labelling provisions in all six relevant standards.
6. No comments were received during the second round. The final proposal was submitted to the Codex Secretariat for consideration by CCNE12.

¹ REP21/CAC, paragraph 86

² REP23/NE, paras. 21-25

Table 1. Timeline of activities

Date	Subject
18 March, 2025	Deadline for response to invitation and registration EWG members
17 April, 2025	First round –Draft 1 of the provisions posted on the forum for comments.
8 May, 2025	Deadline for receipt of comments on Draft 1 of the provisions.
22 May, 2025	Second round - Draft 2 of the provisions posted on the forum for comments.
12 June, 2025	Deadline for receipt of comments on Draft 2 of the provisions.
26 June, 2025	Provisions submitted to the Codex Secretariat.

Discussions

7. The proposed provisions for the labelling of non-retail containers were developed based on comments received during the first round of the EWG consultation and discussions between chairs. Key areas of focus and resulting actions included:
- A review of six regional commodity standards that currently lack labelling provisions for non-retail containers (NRC) was conducted, following feedback from Members indicating relevant trade practices. These standards are listed in Annex I.
 - Comments from one Member indicated that all six commodities are traded in non-retail containers such as bulk shipments, food service distribution, or other commercial means. In contrast, another Member reported that such trade is limited to only two commodities, Tehena (CXS 259R-2007) and Harissa (CXS 308R-2011), which are imported in large barrels and repackaged into smaller containers.
 - Some responses also noted that these products are typically handled in large barrels, industrial containers, or bulk bags, emphasizing the need for clear labelling requirements for such formats.
 - Based on this input, a recommendation was made to include NRC labelling requirements in all six standards to ensure consistency in trade practices and alignment with the *General standard for the labelling of non-retail containers of foods* (CXS 346-2021).
 - Section names were introduced to ensure that any proposed provisions remain consistent with the recommendations contained in the Codex Procedural Manual
 - The existing NRC provisions also in the *Regional standard for doogh* (Near East) (CXS 332R-2018) and the *Regional standard for mixed zaatar* (Near East) (CXS 341R-2020) were reviewed and it is proposed to replace the existing text with reference to the provisions contained in *General standard for the labelling of non-retail containers of foods* (CXS 346-2021).

Conclusion

8. Following discussions in the EWG, it is proposed to include and align the provisions on the labelling of non-retail containers in all regional commodity standards with the *General standard for the labelling of non-retail containers of foods* (CXS 346-2021).

RECOMMENDATION

9. CCNE12 is invited to:
- i. consider the proposed provisions for labelling of non-retail containers in the regional commodity standards, as presented in Annex I, for finalisation and recommendation for adoption at Step 8 by CAC, and if agreed:
 - a. submit the provisions on food labelling in CXS 257R-2007, CXS 258R-2007, CXS 259R-2007, CXS 308R-2011, CXS 309R-2011 and CXS 314R-2013 to the Codex Committee on Food Labelling (CCFL) for endorsement, prior to CAC adoption.
 - b. forward CXS 332R-2018 and CXS 341R-2020 for adoption at Step 8 by CAC48.

Table 2. Regional commodity standards proposed for the inclusion of non-retail container labelling provisions

Reference	Title
CXS 257R-2007	Regional Standard for canned humus with tehena (Near East)
CXS 258R-2007	Regional Standard for canned foul medames (Near East)
CXS 259R-2007	Regional Standard for tehena (Near East)
CXS 308R-2011	Regional standard for harissa (red hot pepper paste) (Near East)
CXS 309R-2011	Regional standard for halwa tehenia (Near East)
CXS 314R-2013	Regional standard for date paste (Near East)

Table 3. Regional standards with revised NRC labelling provisions

Reference	Title
CXS 332R-2018	Regional Standard for doogh (Near East)
CXS 341R-2020	Regional Standard for mixed zaatar (Near East)

PROPOSED INCLUSION OF NON-RETAIL CONTAINERS LABELLING PROVISIONS**PART A - REGIONAL STANDARD FOR CANNED HUMUS WITH TEHENA****CXS 257R-2007****Adopted in 2007.**

New texts added are shown in **bold/underlined** font. Texts proposed for deletion are shown in ~~strikethrough~~.

9. LABELLING

The product shall be labelled in accordance with the *General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods* (CXS 1-1985).

9.1 Name of Food

The name of the food shall be "Humus with Tehena".

9.2 Labelling of non-retail containers

The labelling of non-retail containers should be in accordance with the *General standard for the labelling of non-retail containers of foods* (CXS 346-2021).

PROPOSED INCLUSION OF NON-RETAIL CONTAINERS LABELLING PROVISIONS**PART B - REGIONAL STANDARD FOR CANNED FOUL MEDAMES****CXS 258R-2007****Adopted in 2007.**

New texts added are shown in **bold/underlined** font. Texts proposed for deletion are shown in ~~strikethrough~~.

9. LABELLING

The product shall be labelled in accordance with the *General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods* (CXS 1-1985).

9.1 Name of Food

The name of the food shall be "Foul Medames".

9.2 Labelling of non-retail containers

The labelling of non-retail containers should be in accordance with the *General standard for the labelling of non-retail containers of foods* (CXS 346-2021).

PROPOSED INCLUSION OF NON-RETAIL CONTAINERS LABELLING PROVISIONS**PART C - REGIONAL STANDARD FOR TEHENA****CXS 259R-2007****Adopted in 2007.**

New texts added are shown in **bold/underlined** font. Texts proposed for deletion are shown in ~~strikethrough~~.

8. LABELLING

The product shall be labelled in accordance with the *General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods* (CXS 1-1985).

8.1 Name of Food

The name of the food shall be "Tehena".

8.2 Labelling of non-retail containers

The labelling of non-retail containers should be in accordance with the *General standard for the labelling of non-retail containers of foods* (CXS 346-2021).

PROPOSED INCLUSION OF NON-RETAIL CONTAINERS LABELLING PROVISIONS**PART D - REGIONAL STANDARD FOR HARISSA (Red hot pepper paste)****CXS 308R-2011****Adopted in 2011. Subject to endorsement by CCFL, CCFA and CCMAS.**

New texts added are shown in **bold/underlined** font. Texts proposed for deletion are shown in ~~strikethrough~~.

8. LABELLING

The product shall be labelled in accordance with the *General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods* (CXS 1-1985).

8.1 Name of Food

The name of the food shall be " harissa".

8.2 Labelling of non-retail containers

The labelling of non-retail containers should be in accordance with the *General standard for the labelling of non-retail containers of foods* (CXS 346-2021).

PROPOSED INCLUSION OF NON-RETAIL CONTAINERS LABELLING PROVISIONS**PART E - REGIONAL STANDARD FOR HALWA TEHENIA****CXS 309R-2011**

New texts added are shown in **bold/underlined** font. Texts proposed for deletion are shown in ~~strikethrough~~.

8. LABELLING

Labelling should comply with the provisions of the *General Standard for the Labelling of Pre-packaged Foods* (CODEX STAN 1-1985).

8.1 Name of Product

The name of the product for labelling purposes shall be: “Halwa Tehenia”, “Halwa Shamia” or “Halva”

Optional ingredients, if used, shall be mentioned next to the name of the product.

The label shall not be applied directly on the product.

8.2 Labelling of non-retail containers

The labelling of non-retail containers should be in accordance with the *General standard for the labelling of non-retail containers of foods* (CXS 346-2021).

PROPOSED INCLUSION OF NON-RETAIL CONTAINERS LABELLING PROVISIONS**PART F - REGIONAL STANDARD FOR DATE PASTE****CXS 314R-2013**

New texts added are shown in **bold/underlined** font. Texts proposed for deletion are shown in ~~strikethrough~~.

9. LABELLING

The product shall be labelled in accordance with the Codex *General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods* (CODEX STAN 1-1985), with the additional provisions that the label shall not be placed directly on the date paste, and that the following information shall appear on the container:

9.1 Name of Product

The name of variety and, if more than one variety of dates have been used, the names of each variety.

9.2 Labelling of non-retail containers

The labelling of non-retail containers should be in accordance with the *General standard for the labelling of non-retail containers of foods* (CXS 346-2021).

PROPOSED REVISION TO THE LABELLING PROVISIONS FOR NON-RETAIL CONTAINERS

PART A - REGIONAL STANDARD FOR DOOGH

CXS 332R-2018

Adopted in 2018.

New texts added are shown in **bold/underlined** font. Texts proposed for deletion are shown in ~~strikethrough~~.

7. LABELLING

In addition to the provisions of the *General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods* (CXS 1-1985) and the *General Standard for the Use of Dairy Terms* (CXS 206-1999), the following specific provisions apply:

8.1 Name of the food

8.1.1 The name of the food shall be "Doogh".

8.1.2 The descriptions of "Carbonated/Uncarbonated" and/or "Heat treated/Un-heat treated" shall be used in conjunction with the word "Doogh". For carbonated doogh, the terms "Fermenting" or "Injecting" shall be applied before the word "Carbonated" in product designation to represent the source of carbonation.

8.1.3 The designation of "Flavoured Doogh" shall be used as the name of product if any flavouring substance is added.

8.1.4 When probiotic microorganisms are incorporated in doogh, the word "Probiotic" may be applied somewhere on the label.

8.1.5 For doogh powder, the name "Doogh Powder" or "Dried Doogh" shall be inserted on the label.

8.2 Declaration of fat content

If the consumer would be misled by the omission, the milk fat content shall be declared in a manner acceptable in the country of sale to the final consumer, either as (i) a percentage of mass or volume, or (ii) in grams per serving as qualified in the label, provided that the number of servings is stated. Any labelling should be in accordance with the *Guidelines for use of nutrition and health claims* (CXG 23-1997).

8.3 Labelling of non-retail containers

~~Information required in Section 8 of this Standard and Sections 4.1 to 4.8 of the General Standard for the Labelling of Pre-packaged Foods, and, if necessary, storage instructions, shall be given either on the container or in accompanying documents, except that the name of the product, lot identification, and the name and address of the manufacturer, packer, distributor or importer, shall appear on the container. However, lot identification, and the name and address of the manufacturer, packer, distributor or importer may be replaced by an identification mark, provided that such a mark is clearly identifiable with the accompanying documents.~~

The labelling of non-retail containers should be in accordance with the General standard for the labelling of non-retail containers of foods (CXS 346-2021).

PROPOSED REVISION TO THE LABELLING PROVISIONS FOR NON-RETAIL CONTAINERS**PART B - REGIONAL STANDARD FOR MIXED ZAATAR****CXS 341R-2020****Adopted in 2020.**

New texts added are shown in **bold/underlined** font. Texts proposed for deletion are shown in ~~strikethrough~~.

7. LABELLING

The products covered by this Standard shall be labelled in accordance with the *General standard for the labelling of prepackaged foods* (CXS 1-1985). Any health claims shall be in conformity with the *Guidelines for use of nutrition and health claims* (CXG 23-1997), when necessary. In addition, the following specific provisions apply:

7.1 Name of Product

7.1.1 The name of the product shall be “mixed zaatar”.

7.1.2 The classification shall be indicated according to Section 2.2 next to the product name.

7.2 Labelling of non-retail containers

~~Information for non-retail containers shall be given either on the container or in accompanying documents, except that the name of the product, lot identification, and the name and address of the manufacturer, packer, distributor or importer, as well as storage instructions, shall appear on the container. However, lot identification, and the name and address of the manufacturer, packer, distributor or importer may be replaced by an identification mark, provided that such a mark is clearly identifiable with the accompanying documents.~~

The labelling of non-retail containers should be in accordance with the *General standard for the labelling of non-retail containers of foods* (CXS 346-2021).

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