

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



JOINT OFFICE: Viale delle Terme di Caracalla 00153 ROME Tel: 39 06 57051 www.codexalimentarius.net Email: codex@fao.org Facsimile: 39 06 5705 4593

Agenda Item 6

CX/LAC 08/16/8-Add.1
October 2008

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

16th Session

Acapulco, Mexico, 10-14 November 2008

NUTRITIONAL ISSUES WITHIN THE REGION

COMMENTS IN RESPONSE TO CL 2008/16-LAC, PART D FROM
BARBADOS, BRAZIL, HAITI AND JAMAICA

Nutritional issues within the country or region such as: obesity, nutritional profiles, and any public health-oriented actions taken including the use of nutritional labelling and claims.

Barbados

Barbados like the Codex family is very concern about the increased incidence of non communicable diseases and would support any efforts to reduce this global problem including the improvement of declarations on the nutritional label.

Brazil

The economic, social and demographic changes that occurred in the last decades due to the growth in modernization and urbanization contributed to modify the lifestyle and diet of Brazilian population. Epidemiological researches reveal a nutritional transition with the increase in overweight and obesity and the decrease in underweight prevalence.

Nutrition labelling of foods is an important tool in the promotion of health diets. Nutrition declaration became compulsory in Brazil in 2002 to provide consumers with information on nutritional composition of food and to help them making wise food choices. The mandatory nutrient declaration was harmonized in Mercosul in 2003. The labels of food covered in the mandatory nutrient declaration regulation must inform the energy value and the amount of carbohydrates, protein, fat, saturate fatty acids, *trans* fatty acids, dietary fibers and sodium in the portion of food.

Many documents and tools have been developed to help the implementation of nutrition labelling.

Nutrition Labelling – Consumers Folder: http://www.anvisa.gov.br/alimentos/rotulos/guia_bolso.pdf

Nutrition Labelling – Food Industry Manual: http://www.anvisa.gov.br/rotulo/manual_industria.pdf

Nutrition Labelling – Consumers Manual: http://www.anvisa.gov.br/alimentos/rotulos/manual_consumidor.pdf

Program to Calculate Nutrition Information: <http://www.anvisa.gov.br/rotulo/>

Nutrition Labelling – New Regulations Approved: <http://www.anvisa.gov.br/alimentos/rotulos/resolucoes.htm>

In 1999, Brazil approved technical regulations for the assessment of novel foods and foods that carry functional or health claims in their labels. Anvisa instituted a scientific commission (CTCAF) to help in the assessment of these foods (<http://www.anvisa.gov.br/alimentos/comissoes/tecno.htm>).

Haiti

Nutritional labelling is not required at national level.

Jamaica

Jamaica, like many other Caribbean countries, has experienced a transition in the prevailing nutrition problems of the region, requiring a change in the focus of prevention and control programmes. Over the past four decades, there has been an increase in the prevalence of chronic nutrition-related diseases affecting the population. Prevalence of obesity and overweight has a combined prevalence of 30% in men and 60% in women, while prevalence of hypertension is 20% and diabetes 8%¹.

Among children, 3.4% of children under 3 years old are undernourished and 6.7% are obese². The last study of iron status, carried out in 1997 revealed a problem of anaemia in children and pregnant women. The current food price increases and their effect on vulnerable groups are being closely monitored.

Among the intervention strategies being implemented is the Healthy Lifestyle Project by the Ministry of Health. This is an integrated behavioural change project which uses the media, educational activities in various social settings such as the workplace, schools, clubs, churches, communities, sports, health facilities and the home; as well as other intervention strategies.

There is a National Strategic Plan for the Promotion of Healthy Lifestyles, and Jamaica is now developing a Food and Nutrition Security Policy, as well as finalizing a National Infant and Young Child Feeding Policy. Health-oriented actions are supported by initiatives in other sectors, such as the Agricultural Development Strategy. Nutrition labelling on foods is not mandatory, but is widely used, driven by consumer demand and the need to meet export standards. There is growing interest in the issue of trans fats, and many products now carry the claim “trans fat free”, although in some cases the substitutes being used also raise health concerns.

¹ The Jamaican Lifestyle Survey, 2000.

² Ministry of Health.