

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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Agenda Item 4, 5.1, 5.2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13

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ORIGINAL LANGUAGE ONLY

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD LABELLING

Forty-eighth Session

Québec City, Québec, Canada

27 October - 01 November, 2024

(Comments from East Africa Community)

Agenda item 5.1 Revision to the General Standard for the Labelling of Pre-packaged Foods (CXS 1-1985): Provisions relevant to allergen labelling (Step 7) - Comments in reply to CL 2024/53-FL (CX/FL 24/48/5 Add.1 (Part A))

Issue 1: Definition of food allergy

EAC Position

EAC supports the adoption of the second option text with slight editorial amendment.

“Food Allergen” means a food or (including ingredients, including food additives and processing aids) that can elicit IgE-mediated or other specific immune-mediated reactions in susceptible individuals, usually caused by a protein or protein derivative in the food”.

Rationale: The improvement of text is to ensure that both food and ingredients, which independently may be a source of allergen, are considered in the definition.

Issue 2: Section 4.2.1.4 and 4.2.1.5 – Scientific names for tree nuts

EAC Position:

EAC supports the scientific names as provided in Section 4.2.1.4 and 4.2.1.5

Rationale: The names accommodate all species of the tree nuts

Issue 3: Section 4.2.1.6 – Exemptions

EAC Position

EAC supports the use of the criteria for exemption established in FAO and WHO (2024) Risk assessment of food allergens: Part 4: Establishing exemptions from mandatory declaration for priority food allergens rather than developing or adopting a list of exemption

Rationale: The FAO/WHO publication provides a scientific basis for determining criteria for exemption from mandatory listing.

Issue 4: Section 4.2.1.7 – Sulphite when present in concentrations of 10 mg/kg or more in a food [as offered to the consumer/as consumed] shall always be declared using the specified name ‘sulphite’ or ‘sulfite’ in addition to or as part of the ingredient name.

EAC Position

EAC supports deleting the square brackets and declaring sulphites as consumed

Rationale: It is a challenge to be certain that consumers will prepare the products offered in strict adherence to the direction of use especially where reconstitution or dilution is required before consumption. As a result, a significant population may be exposed to the risk of exposure especially where the dilution/reconstitution is expected to reduce the concentration.

Agenda item 5.2 Guidelines on the use of precautionary allergen labelling (Step 4) (CX/FL 24/48/5 (Part B)) - Comments in reply to CL 2024/53-FL (CX/FL 24/48/5 Add.1 (Part B))

Issue 1: Purpose section to determine if and how PAL thresholds can address cross contact from gluten containing cereals for consumers with coeliac disease. The text below was proposed:

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 allergens in food due to cross-contact.

EAC Position

EAC supports the amended proposed text.

Rationale: Inclusion of coeliac disease as part of PAL will provide necessary information to people who react to glutes to make informed decision about the product The FAO Expert Committee reports have also stated the thresholds based on science, therefore EAC supports the proposed thresholds aligned to the reports availed.

Issue 2: To consider principle 4.2 in regard to proposed alternative text on the types of risk assessment. The EWG discussed the text in square brackets []

EAC Position

EAC supports the text as agreed by the EWG.

Rationale: To use PAL, Food Business Operators should ensure that risk assessment has been conducted to ensure exposure levels are below the reference doses. The type of risk assessment can be quantitative and/or qualitative. There is a need for regulatory authorities to ensure that all foodstuffs with or without PAL have undergone a risk assessment (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) for priority allergenic foods.

Issue 3: To consider principle 4.3 and the table of reference doses in 4.3.1 particularly in relation to inclusion of gluten

EAC Position:

EAC supports the reference doses as proposed in section 4.3.1.

Rationale: The established values are based on a strong scientific basis of ED05 reference doses as recommended by FAO/WHO experts committee and where risk management approach was used in establishing the values, consideration was made to ensure that consumers' safety was prioritized.

Issue 4: CCFL to consider whether the Annex to the GSLPF – Guidelines on the use of precautionary allergen labelling (Appendix II) is ready to advance to Step 5

EAC Position

EAC supports progression of the document.

Rationale: The EWG have addressed most of the areas of concern and taken into consideration the relevant reports of the Expert Committee.

Issue 5: Whether to provide further advice to CCFH to ensure consistency of the Code of Practice on Food Allergen Management for Food Business Operators (CXC 80-2020) and the Annex to the GSLPF, and request CCFH to consider providing guidance on UAP risk assessment.

EAC Position

EAC supports the proposed approach.

Rationale: The recommendation for CCFH to ensure consistency with the CoP/ Annex to GSLPF is to ensure alignment of Codex text for effective allergen management.

Agenda item 6 Guidelines on the provision of food information for pre-packaged foods to be offered via e-commerce (Step 7) (CX/FL 24/48/6)

Issue: Clause 5.1: Durability

EAC Position

EAC supports option A. The definition of durability may be moved to definition clause.

Rationale: It is important for consumers before they make final decision to procure an item to be aware of the durability of the product. This is especially important when the product is being imported into a country where other regulations related to the durability of the product may apply. It will also prevent dumping or buying of a lot of goods, especially where it is offered on a promotional basis with short expiry, hence expiring before use.

Agenda item 7: Guidelines on the use of technology to provide food information in food labelling (Step 7) (CX/FL 24/48/7) - Comments in reply to CL 2024/55-FL CX/FL 24/48/7-Add.1

Issue: Review the addition of [audible] in section 7.10 and the new provision on costs in section 7.12 to align with the work on e-commerce.

EAC Position

Regarding clause 7.10 the text should be drafted such that audible should be provided optionally in addition to the requirement that information being clear, prominent and readily legible but not to replace such requirement, so as to read, 'Food information described or presented using technology shall be clear, prominent and readily legible [or and may be presented in audible] to the consumer under normal settings and conditions of use of the technological platform'

Rationale: The information presented about the use of technology should be to great extent possible be aligned with CXS 1-1995 regarding legibility and that any further forms should be to supplement and not to replace the legibility.

Agenda item 8: 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) (CX/FL 24/48/8) - Comments in reply to CL 2024/56-FL (CX/FL 24/48/8-Add.1)

EAC Position

EAC supports the proposed amendments to the GSLPF (CXS 1-1985) relevant to joint presentation and multipack formats and recommends advancement of the text in the step process.

Rationale: To provide for labelling of multipacks and joint packaging.

Agenda Item 9: Discussion paper on Labelling of Alcoholic Beverages - CX/FL 24/48/10

EAC Position

EAC supports the initiation of work as proposed in the discussion papers except the discussion paper on Labelling of alcoholic beverages where in recognition of the negative impacts that alcohol has on health, the need to capacitate countries to develop national regulations on labelling of alcoholic beverages, and the international guidelines that exist for countries to use to develop their legislation, EAC looks forward to the clarification on whether "alcohol" is food or a non-food item.

Further, EAC agrees with the proposal on withdrawal of the discussion paper on TFAs.

Agenda Item 10: Application of Food Labelling in Emergencies - CX/FL 24/48/10

EAC Position

EAC supports the initiation of work as proposed in the discussion papers except the discussion paper on Labelling of alcoholic beverages where in recognition of the negative impacts that alcohol has on health, the need to capacitate countries to develop national regulations on labelling of alcoholic beverages, and the international guidelines that exist for countries to use to develop their legislation, EAC looks forward to the clarification on whether "alcohol" is food or a non-food item.

Further, EAC agrees with the proposal on withdrawal of the discussion paper on TFAs.

Agenda Item 11: Discussion Paper on Trans Fatty ACIDS - CX/FL 24/48/11

EAC Position

EAC supports the initiation of work as proposed in the discussion papers except the discussion paper on Labelling of alcoholic beverages where in recognition of the negative impacts that alcohol has on health, the need to capacitate countries to develop national regulations on labelling of alcoholic beverages, and the international guidelines that exist for countries to use to develop their legislation, EAC looks forward to the clarification on whether "alcohol" is food or a non-food item.

Further, EAC agrees with the proposal on withdrawal of the discussion paper on TFAs.

Agenda Item 12: Discussion Paper On Sustainability Labelling Claims - CX/FL 24/48/12

EAC Position

EAC supports the initiation of work as proposed in the discussion papers except the discussion paper on Labelling of alcoholic beverages where in recognition of the negative impacts that alcohol has on health, the need to capacitate countries to develop national regulations on labelling of alcoholic beverages, and the international guidelines that exist for countries to use to develop their legislation, EAC looks forward to the clarification on whether “alcohol” is food or a non-food item.

Further, EAC agrees with the proposal on withdrawal of the discussion paper on TFAs.

**Agenda Item 13: Discussion Paper On The Establishment of a Definition of Added Sugars - CX/FL
24/48/13**

EAC Position

EAC supports the initiation of work as proposed in the discussion papers except the discussion paper on Labelling of alcoholic beverages where in recognition of the negative impacts that alcohol has on health, the need to capacitate countries to develop national regulations on labelling of alcoholic beverages, and the international guidelines that exist for countries to use to develop their legislation, EAC looks forward to the clarification on whether “alcohol” is food or a non-food item.

Further, EAC agrees with the proposal on withdrawal of the discussion paper on TFAs.