



Proposed draft Guidelines on the Use of Technology to Provide Food Information in Food Labelling

(at step 7)

1. PURPOSE

Provide guidance on the use of technology to provide food information to consumers¹ about prepackaged foods¹.

2. SCOPE

These guidelines apply to food information that is accessed by consumers using technology via a reference on a prepackaged food's label¹ or labelling¹.

3. USE

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with Codex texts related to labelling of prepackaged foods, including but not limited to *General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods* (CXS 1-1985).

4. DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of these guidelines:

"Food information" means the information that is the subject of a Codex text about a prepackaged food.

"Technology" refers to any electronic or digital means, including but not limited to websites, online platforms and mobile applications.

5. CONSIDERATIONS FOR DECIDING IF MANDATORY FOOD LABELLING INFORMATION REQUIRED ON A PREPACKAGED FOOD'S LABEL OR LABELLING COULD INSTEAD BE PROVIDED TO CONSUMERS USING TECHNOLOGY

5.1 The food information should be readily accessible to consumers during normal and customary circumstances of purchase and use, which means:

- there should be sufficient technological infrastructure to support providing food information using that technology within the geographic area or country where the food is sold, such as in regards to prevalence and reliability of service,
- the general population, ~~or a including specific sub-sets -thereof the population for whom the food information is intended~~, should have widespread, and adequate and easy access to the technology in that geographic area or country, and have adopted its use, and
- it is reasonable for the consumer to use the technology to access the food information during the normal and customary circumstances of purchase and use ~~and that there is evidence of similar consumer understanding of the technology.~~

5.2 The Name of the food, and food information concerning health and safety, and nutrition, and any other mandatory food information as determined by the competent authority, [and other information essential for the consumer at the time of sale to make an informed purchasing decision] should not be provided exclusively using technology.

5.3 Food information that relates to an individual physical product (e.g. lot code, date marking) should not be provided only using technology if doing so would compromise the ability to relate the information to that individual product.

6. USE OF TECHNOLOGY TO PROVIDE CONSUMERS ACCESS TO MANDATORY FOOD INFORMATION THAT IS NOT ACCESSIBLE ON THE LABEL

6.1 In cases where food labelling information is not accessible to consumers, due to conditions of sale or to exemptions from having to be provided on the label or labelling, consideration should be given to the use of technology to provide consumers with access to that information.

¹ As defined in the *General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods* (CXS 1-1985)

7. PRINCIPLES THAT ARE APPLICABLE WHEN FOOD INFORMATION IS PROVIDED TO CONSUMERS USING TECHNOLOGY

Food information that is accessed by consumers using technology via a reference on the prepackaged food's label or labelling ~~shall~~^{should} be based on the following principles, whether the food information is required on a mandatory basis or provided voluntarily:

- 7.1 The general principles in Section 3 of the General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods (CXS 1-1985) are applicable to food information that is described or presented using technology.
- 7.2 Food information described or presented using technology shall not conflict with information provided on the label or labelling of the prepackaged food, including when shown in different languages.
- 7.3 ~~Where mandatory food information is provided solely described or presented using technology, the reference on the label or labelling shall link directly to this information, and the mandatory food information shall be presented together in one place, readily identifiable, grouped together, and easily distinguishable separately from other commercial information intended for sale or marketing purposes.~~
- 7.4 Where food information is provided using technology, the food information shall be **shown** in accordance with applicable Codex texts.
- 7.5 Where mandatory food information is **solely** provided using technology, ~~the reference on the label or labelling should link directly to this information and the food information shall be available for the duration of the food's shelf life [at least and not less than best before date or expiry date]. [The link shall not include advertising² pertaining to the food.]~~ **at least the period, established under intended conditions of distribution, storage, retail and use, that the food would remain safe and suitable for sale, consumption or use. For prepackaged food that are labelled with a use-by date or expiration date, this means for at least the period up to and including this date.**
- 7.6 Food information described or presented using technology ~~shall~~^{should} be readily accessible to consumers ~~[and comply with the data protection policies of parent organizations]~~ without having to provide or disclose information that is ~~may be used to identify [a person or organization] an individual [for that is protected according to data protection rules applicable in the country or region in which the food is marketed].~~
- 7.7 ~~When the label or labelling of a prepackaged food references food information to be accessed using technology, sufficient information shall be displayed on the technology platform~~ **the information displayed presented on the platform shall be sufficient and presented in such a way as** to enable consumers to ascertain that the food information pertains to that prepackaged food.
- 7.8 If the purpose of the reference on the label or labelling of the prepackaged food is not self-explanatory to consumers, it ~~shall~~^{should} be accompanied by an explanation of how to use it or the type of food information that will be found when used (e.g. "scan here for more information on ingredients").
- 7.9 The reference and any explanatory statement shown on the label or labelling that links to food information to be accessed using technology ~~shall~~^{should} adhere to sections 8.1.2 and 8.1.3 of the *General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods* 9 (CXS 1-1985).
- 7.10 Food information described or presented using technology shall be clear, prominent and readily legible ~~for and~~ **if applicable, audible** to the consumer under normal settings and conditions of use of the technological platform.
- 7.11 The language or languages of food information described or presented using technology shall be suitable to the consumer in the country in which the food is marketed.]
- 7.12 Where food information is provided using technology, it shall be provided **to the consumer** without **a charge to access the information**. ~~any additional costs for the consumer.~~

² As defined in the *General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods* (CXS 1-1985)