

# CODEX ALIMENTARIUS

INTERNATIONAL FOOD STANDARDS



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of  
the United Nations



World Health  
Organization

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## GUIDELINES ON THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY TO PROVIDE FOOD INFORMATION IN FOOD LABELLING

CXG 105-2024

Adopted in 2024

## 1. PURPOSE

Provide guidance on the use of technology to provide food information to consumers<sup>i</sup> about pre-packaged foods.<sup>i</sup>

## 2. SCOPE

These guidelines apply to food information that is accessed by consumers using technology via a reference on a pre-packaged food's label<sup>i</sup> or labelling.<sup>i</sup>

## 3. USE

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with Codex texts related to labelling of pre-packaged foods, including but not limited to *General standard for the labelling of pre-packaged foods* (CXS 1-1985).<sup>1</sup>

## 4. DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of these guidelines:

**Food information** means the information that is the subject of a Codex text about a pre-packaged 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 INFORMATION REQUIRED ON A PRE-PACKAGED FOOD LABEL OR LABELLING COULD INSTEAD BE PROVIDED TO CONSUMERS USING TECHNOLOGY

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

- a) 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;
- b) the general population, including specific subsets thereof, should have widespread, adequate and easy access to the technology in that geographic area or country, and have adopted its use; and
- c) it is reasonable for the consumer to use technology to access the food information during the normal and customary circumstances of purchase and use.

The name of the food, food information concerning safety and nutrition, and any other mandatory food information as determined by the competent authority, should not be provided exclusively using technology.

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 FOOD INFORMATION THAT IS NOT ACCESSIBLE ON THE LABEL

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.

## 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 pre-packaged food's label or labelling shall be based on the following principles, whether the food information is required on a mandatory basis or provided voluntarily:

The general principles in Section 3 of the *General standard for the labelling of pre-packaged foods* are applicable to food information that is described or presented using technology.

Food information described or presented using technology shall not conflict with information provided on the label or labelling of the pre-packaged food, including when shown in different languages.

Where mandatory food information is provided using technology, the reference on the label or labelling shall link directly to this information, and the mandatory food information shall be presented together, readily identifiable and easily distinguishable from other information.

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<sup>i</sup> As defined in the *General standard for the labelling of pre-packaged foods* (CXS 1-1985).

Where food information is provided using technology, the food information shall be in accordance with applicable Codex texts.

Subject to Section 5, where mandatory food information is solely provided using technology, the food information shall be available for 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 pre-packaged food that is labelled with a use-by date or expiration date, this means for at least the period up to and including this date.

Food information described or presented using technology shall be readily accessible without consumers having to provide or disclose any information.

When the label or labelling of a pre-packaged food references food information to be accessed using technology, the information 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 pre-packaged food.

If the purpose of the reference on the label or labelling of the pre-packaged food is not self-explanatory to consumers, it shall 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").

The reference and any explanatory statement shown on the label or labelling that links to food information to be accessed using technology shall adhere to sections 8.1.2 and 8.1.3 of the *General standard for the labelling of pre-packaged foods* (CXS 1-1985).<sup>1</sup>

Food information described or presented using technology shall be clear, prominent and readily legible, and, if applicable, audible to the consumer under normal settings and conditions of use of the technological platform.

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.

Where food information is provided using technology, it shall be provided to the consumer without a charge to access the information.

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> FAO and WHO. 1985. *General standard for the labelling of pre-packaged foods*. Codex Alimentarius Standard. No. CXS 1-1985. Codex Alimentarius Commission. Rome.