

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS

INTERNATIONAL FOOD STANDARDS



Food and Agriculture
Organization of
the United Nations



World Health
Organization

E-mail: codex@fao.org - www.codexalimentarius.org

GENERAL STANDARD FOR THE LABELLING OF NON-RETAIL CONTAINERS OF FOODS

CXS 346-2021

Adopted in 2021

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Standard is to facilitate appropriate harmonized labelling of non-retail containers of food and to outline what information shall be presented on the label and what information, while not required on the label, must be provided for a non-retail container by other means.

2. SCOPE

This Standard applies to the labelling of non-retail containers of food (excluding food additives and processing aids)^{1,2} not intended to be offered directly to the consumer³ including the information provided in the accompanying physical documents or by other means, and the presentation thereof.

3. DEFINITION OF TERMS

For the purpose of this Standard, the relevant definitions in the *General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods* (CXS 1-1985) apply. In addition, the following terms have the meaning as defined below:

“Food business” means an entity or undertaking, carrying out one or more activity(ies) related to any stage(s) of production, processing, packaging, storage and distribution (including trade) of food.⁴

“Non-retail container” means any container⁵ that is not intended to be offered for direct sale to the consumer.⁶ The food⁷ in the non-retail container is for further food business activities before being offered to the consumer.⁸

4. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

4.1 The general principles established in the *General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods* (CXS 1-1985) apply equally, as appropriate, to the labelling of non-retail containers of foods.

4.2 The labelling requirements for non-retail containers of foods shall be differentiated clearly from the labelling requirements for prepackaged⁹ foods.

4.3 Non-retail containers shall be clearly identifiable as such.

4.4 The non-retail status of a container shall be determined by the food business selling or distributing the container of food

4.5 The labelling requirements for non-retail containers shall be established taking into account the information requirements and implementation capabilities of food businesses and competent authorities.

4.6 Subject to the requirements outlined in Section 5, the information requirements in respect of non-retail containers of food may be met through means other than on a label as allowed by the competent authority in the country in which it is sold.

4.7 The information on the label and the information in the accompanying documents or provided by other means shall be traceable to the food in the non-retail container and shall provide information to enable the labelling of the food- intended for sale to the consumer.

5. MANDATORY INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS ON THE LABEL

The following information shall appear on the label of non-retail containers of food:

5.1 The name of the food

5.1.1 The name shall indicate the true nature of the food and normally be specific and not generic.

5.1.1.1 Where a name or names have been established for a food in a Codex standard, at least one of these names shall be used.

5.1.1.2 In other cases, the name prescribed by national legislation shall be used.

5.1.1.3 In the absence of any such established or prescribed name, either a common or usual name existing by

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

² This Standard is not intended to apply to the labelling of food additives and processing aids for which the *General Standard for the Labelling of Food Additives When Sold as Such* (CXS 107-1981) applies.

³ See Note 1 above.

⁴ See Note 1 above.

⁵ See Note 1 above.

⁶ See Note 1 above.

⁷ See Note 1 above.

⁸ See Note 1 above.

⁹ See Note 1 above.

common usage as an appropriate descriptive term which is not misleading or confusing to the food business or in the country in which the food is intended to be sold shall be used.

5.1.1.4 A “coined”, “fanciful”, “brand” name or “trade mark” may be used provided it accompanies one of the names provided in Subsections 5.1.1.1 to 5.1.1.3.

5.1.1.5 Where the non-retail container contains multiple types of food, the names of all the foods contained therein and/or a commonly understood descriptor that best explains the foods present together in the container shall be provided on the label, as allowed by the competent authority in the country in which the product is sold.

5.2 Lot identification

Each non-retail container shall be marked in code or in a manner to clearly identify the producing factory and the lot(s) of the food in the non-retail container.

5.3 Date marking and storage instructions¹⁰

Date marking and storage instructions shall be provided when required for the safety or integrity of the product.

5.4 Identification of a non-retail container

The non-retail containers of foods shall be clearly identifiable as such. If the container is not clearly identifiable as a non-retail container, the container shall:

- bear a statement to indicate that the food is not intended to be sold directly to the consumer¹¹ or to clearly identify it as a non-retail container. Some examples of such statements are:

“NON-RETAIL CONTAINER”

“NON-RETAIL CONTAINER – NOT FOR DIRECT SALE TO CONSUMER”

Or,

- carry any other mark that indicates that the container is not intended to be sold directly to the consumer

5.5 Name and address

Name and address of the manufacturer, packer, distributor, importer, exporter or vendor of the food shall be declared.

6. MANDATORY INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS BY MEANS OTHER THAN ON THE LABEL

6.1 The following information shall be provided in the accompanying documents, or through other means:

- Information required under Section 5.
- Information sufficient to enable the safe preparation and to meet the requirements for labelling of prepackaged foods from the food in the non-retail container.¹²
- Net contents of the non-retail container.

6.2 The information required under Subsection 6.1 shall be traceable to the food in the non-retail container.

6.3 If all information required under Subsection 6.1 is made available on the label, Sections 6.1 and 6.2 do not apply.

7. PROVISIONS FOR SPECIFIC TYPES OF NON-RETAIL CONTAINERS

7.1 Non-retail container used as food transportation unit¹³

In the case of a non-retail container used as a food transportation unit that is not amenable to possess a label, all the information required under Section 5 and Subsection 6.1 shall be provided in the accompanying documents or through appropriate other means (e.g. electronically between food businesses) and shall be effectively traceable to the food in such containers.

¹⁰ Information to be provided as in the relevant section of the *General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods* (CXS 1-1985).

¹¹ See Note 1 on previous page.

¹² See Note 1 on previous page.

¹³ “Food transportation unit” and “bulk” as defined in the *Code of Hygienic Practice for the Transport of Food in Bulk and Semi-Packed Food* (CXC 47-2001).

7.2 Non-retail container containing multiple types of food

Where a non-retail container contains multiple types of food, the mandatory information required by Section 5 and Subsection 6.1 shall be provided for all the types of foods contained therein.

7.3 Non-retail container providing visual access

In the case of a non-retail container, which provides visual and legible access to all the information required by Section 5 on the label of prepackaged foods within the non-retail container, the information stipulated in Section 5 is not required.

8. PRESENTATION OF INFORMATION**8.1 General**

8.1.1 Labels on non-retail containers of foods shall be applied in such a manner that they will not become separated from the container.

8.1.2 Information and the statements required to appear on the label by virtue of this Standard or any other Codex standards shall be clear, prominent, readily legible and applied in such a manner that any tampering with it will be evident.

8.1.3 The mandatory information required on the label under Section 5 shall appear in a prominent position on the non-retail container and shall be readily accessible under normal handling and use of the container.

8.1.4 Information that is provided by means other than the label shall be readily accessible, legible and clearly displayed.

8.2 Language

8.2.1 If the language on the original label is not acceptable to the competent authority or the food business in the country in which the product is sold, the mandatory information in the required language should be provided in the form of re-labelling, a supplementary label and/or in the accompanying documents or by means other than on the label to meet the requirements of the country in which the product is sold.

8.2.2 The mandatory information provided in the required language shall fully and accurately reflect that of the original label.