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Food composition data & trade

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Outline of presentation

- > Food composition data for nutrition information
 - Nutrient declaration (nutrition labelling)
 - Nutrition and health claims
- Nutrition information on labels facilitate food trade
- > Codex Alimentarius and food trade
- Need for quality food composition data

Food composition data for nutrition information

- Food composition data, in this context, refers to 2 types of nutrition information on food labels
 - Declaration of amount of nutrient (and other components) or nutrition labelling
 - Nutrition and health claims
- Codex Alimentarius has provided definitions and guides to the use of these nutrition information
- Two Codex standards are of relevance, namely
 - ❖ Guidelines on Nutrition Labelling and Guidelines on Nutrition and Health Claims

Nutrition labelling

- Nutrition labelling is a description intended to inform the consumer of nutritional properties of a food
- Often taken to mean Nutrient Declaration
 - which is a standardised statement or listing of the nutrient content of a food (energy, protein, carbohydrate, fat, vitamins, minerals, etc)
 - Often known as Nutrition Information Panel (NIP)

- Nutrition claims
 - Nutrient content claim (e.g. source of, high in, low in, free of
 - * Comparative claim (e.g. more, higher, less
- > Health claims
 - nutrient function claim
 - other function claim and
 - reduction of disease risk claims
- Nutrient function claim describes the physiological role of the nutrient in the body, eg
 - Calcium aids in the development of strong bones and teeth
 - Iron is a factor in red blood cell formation

- Other function claim describes specific beneficial effects of the consumption of a food constituent in improving or modifying a physiological function, e.g.
 - Plant sterols helps in lowering blood cholesterol
- > Reduction of disease risk claim relates the consumption of a food or food constituent to the reduced risk of, e.g.
 - **❖** Soy protein reduces risk to heart disease

Nutrition information facilitates food trade

- Manufacturers can use the declaration of nutrients to inform the consumer of the nutrient profile of a food product
 - Content of nutrients, other food components
 - Help in choice of foods appropriate their needs
- They can use nutrition and health claims to highlight the nutritional quality of their products or the health benefits of certain nutrients or other food components
 - Through nutrition and health claims
 - Highlight superiority of their products, thereby promoting their products

- When presented factually and informatively, nutrition information can promote fair practices in food trade to prevent mislabeling and fraudulent claims
- Hence great deal of interest among regulators to ensure that information presented on labels are accurate and appropriate
 - increased interest and efforts of authorities to improve regulatory control of nutrition labeling and health claims
- More countries are looking towards Codex Alimentarius for guidance in establishing national regulations

Codex Alimentarius and food trade

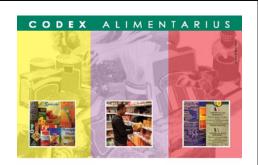
- In 1963, the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) was established
 - A joint FAO/WHO intergovernmental organisation
- > The main task of the CAC is to develop the Codex Alimentarius the food code
 - Protect health of consumers
 - Ensure fair practices in food trade
- Comprises international standards for a wide range of food products (commodity standards) and general /horizontal standards
- Aim to achieve international harmonisation in food quality and safety requirements

- > These standards are used to provide guidance to governments for their respective national food control systems
- ➤ The two World Trade Organisation (WTO) agreements on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) and Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) both encourage the international harmonization of food stds
 - Codex standards and texts used as benchmarks in WTO

 Codex published guidelines on nutrition labelling and nutrition and health claims (previously discussed)

Codex Alimentarius

Food labeling complete text (5th edn, 2008)



Food Labelling

Fifth edition





FOOD LABELLING PREFACE GENERAL STANDARD FOR THE LABELLING OF PREPACKAGED FOODS GENERAL STANDARD FOR THE LABELLING OF FOOD ADDITIVES WHEN SOLD AS SUCH GENERAL STANDARD FOR THE LABELLING OF AND CLAIMS FOR PREPACKAGED FOODS FOR SPECIAL DIETARY USES **CAC/GL 2-1985** GENERAL GUIDELINES ON CLAIMS 21 (Rev. 1-1993; 2003) GUIDELINES ON NUTRITION LABELLING GUIDELINES FOR USE OF NUTRITION AND HEALTH CLAIMS 33 **CAC/GL 23-1997** GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR USE OF THE TERM "HALAL" 39 (Rev. 1-2004)

Codex Nutrition Labeling guide

CAC/GL 2-1985 (Rev. 1-1993; 2003)



Food Labelling

Fifth edition

First published over 15 years ago, with several amendments





Codex Nutrition and Health Claims

CAC/GL 23-1997 (Rev. 1-2004)



Food Labelling

Fifth edition





- Several countries have adopted Codex guidelines on nutrition labelling and health claims into national food laws
 - However there are considerable differences in the national food laws as evidenced from a review of status in selected Asian countries
- > The food industry is concerned with this lack of harmonised regulations as different labels have to be used for different countries
 - Impede international food trade

- Continuing work on nutrition labelling within CCFL and CCNFSDU
 - Implement Action Plain identified in the Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health
 - Expanding list of nutrients to be labelled
 e.g. saturated fat, sugars, sodium/dalt
 - * NRV for macronutrients
 - improving legibility of NIPs

Need for quality food composition data

- Quality food composition data and laboratory capability are vital to enable nutrition information to be useful
- For truthful nutrition labeling, food manufacturers must ensure accurate data on the composition of the nutrients contained in the food
- Similarly, for nutrition and health claims, accurate data on the amounts of the nutrients or food components are needed
- > For scientific substantiation of the claimed health effects, accurate quantitation of the amounts of these nutrients or components is essential

- Vital to have good laboratory capability
 - > For regulatory agencies, well-equipped laboratories and well-trained personnel are required for surveillance and enforcement purposes
 - Lack of expertise and expenses to obtain nutrient content for declaration, particularly for smaller industries