

Codex Alimentarius Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses Revision of the Codex Standard for Follow-up Formula (Codex Stan 156-1987)

What is Codex?

The Codex Alimentarius, is a joint body of the two UN agencies, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) for the purpose of developing guidelines and standards for food commodities and food and drinks products. Its overarching dual mandate is to protect consumer health and ensure fair practices in trade. The committees are composed of governmental delegations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the latter as Observer organization. IBFAN is an independent, public interest NGO that has official Observer status and has been attending Codex meetings since 1995.

Current Action

The Codex Committee on Nutrition and foods for Special Dietary Uses (CCNFSDU) is currently undergoing a comprehensive review of the Standard for Follow-up Formula (FUF) (Codex Stan 156-1987).

Since Codex standards frequently form the basis for national legislation and are the benchmarks in trade disputes, the outcome of the revision for follow-up formula is critical to ensure that infant and young child health is protected and not compromised by trade priorities. Moreover, it must be acknowledged that poor diets are the biggest cause of death and disability globally, and the cost of diet-related disease is fast consuming health budgets

Protecting infant and young child health

IBFAN has been opposed to the revision of the FUF standard because these products are not necessary: infant formula can be used beyond 6 months of age.

However **IF** the Committee agrees to adopt the standard, safeguards must be included to prevent products from being labelled and promoted in ways that undermine exclusive and sustained breastfeeding and optimal infant and young child feeding. Decisions made by Member States at the World Health Assembly (WHA) must be included especially the recommendations outlined in *the Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding*¹ and reconfirmed in WHO fact sheet(2017)².

Also important are the WHA resolution 69.9 (2016) and its accompanying *WHO Guidance on Ending the Inappropriate Marketing of Foods for Infants and Young Children*.³

Having multiple standards may facilitate the trade of products that are unnecessary and risky. It will also be confusing for regulators who need to ensure that **ALL** breastmilk substitutes are covered by the above safeguards.

1. <http://www.who.int/nutrition/publications/infantfeeding/9241562218/en/>
2. <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs342/en/>
3. http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA69/A69_7_Add1-en.pdf?ua=1&ua=1

IBFAN is proposing that FUF products should be included in the standard for Infant Formula and Formula for Special Medical Purposes intended for Infants Codex Stan 72-1981. This one standard can easily accommodate all breastmilk substitutes into four sections that differentiate clearly as follows:

Section A: Infant formula (birth onwards or 0-12month and beyond)

Section B: Formulas for Special Medical Purposes

Section C: Follow-up formula for older infants (6 months onwards)

Section D: [Name of the Product] for Young Children (12-36 months)

Important health protection safeguards that must be included in the revised standard

1. The Scope

IBFAN does **not** agree with the deletion of 1.4 in the scope and is proposing the following text:

*The application of this Standard **requires** conformity with the recommendations made in the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes (WHA 34.22(1981), the Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding, the **WHO Guidance on Ending the Inappropriate Promotion of Foods for Infants and Young Children** and all subsequent **relevant** World Health Assembly resolutions,*

Since 1986 and the adoption of WHA 39.28 the WHA has stated that:

“the practice being introduced in some countries of providing infants with specially formulated milks (so-called ‘follow-up-milks’) is not necessary.”

2. The Definition

In 2016 the WHO *Guidance on Ending the Inappropriate Promotions of Foods for Infants and Young Children* clarified that: **the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes and subsequent relevant Health Assembly resolutions covers all these products up to the age of 3 years.** This must be reflected in the definition.

As WHO is the parent UN agency of Codex, and the WHA is the world’s highest policy setting body there should be policy coherence between WHA decisions and Codex.

IBFAN proposes the following definition:

*Follow-up formula for older infants and young children **means a product, in liquid or powdered forms, intended for use as a total or partial substitute for breastmilk, breastfeeding or infant formula as the liquid part of the diet for older infants and young children up to the age of 36 months when complementary feeding is introduced after the age of six months***

3. Labelling Requirements

Labelling safeguards are required to prevent the needless use of products and ensure that parents have all the information needed to prepare products as safely as is possible.

IBFAN recommends the following key labelling provisions:

A statement that these products are not necessary for the growth and development of older infants and young children (WHA resolution 39.28)

*Products in powder form should be reconstituted with water **at 70 degrees centigrade and in accordance with the WHO/FAO Guidelines on the preparation, storage and handling of powdered infant formulas and the Code of Hygienic Practice for Powdered Infant Formula for Infants and Young Children CAC/RCP 66 - 2008.***

*The product shall not be introduced before 6 months of age, and shall **not** to be used as a sole source of nutrition. Older infants and young children should continue to receive breastmilk and complementary foods.*

The label of Follow-up Formula should not undermine breastfeeding. It shall include a statement as follows:

Breastfeeding is the normal and healthy way to feed your baby. When your baby is not breastfed she will be sick more often.

Exclusive breastfeeding is recommended from birth to 6 months of age, and breastfeeding should continue to two years of age or beyond.

IBFAN also recommends that there should be:

- ***no pictures of infants and women nor any other picture or text which idealizes the use of follow up formula;***
- *no pictures images, text or other representation that might suggest use for infants under the age of 6 months (including references to milestones and stages); recommend or promote bottle feeding;*

- **no statements that undermine or discourage breastfeeding, make a comparison to breastmilk, or suggest that the product is nearly equivalent to or superior to breastmilk;**
- **no endorsement or any text, image or logo that may be construed as an endorsement by a professional or any other body;**
- **no use of words such as humanized, maternalized (the product shall not compete with breastmilk);**
- **no cross branding that implies a continuum of use and create confusion between products.**

There should be no cross branding

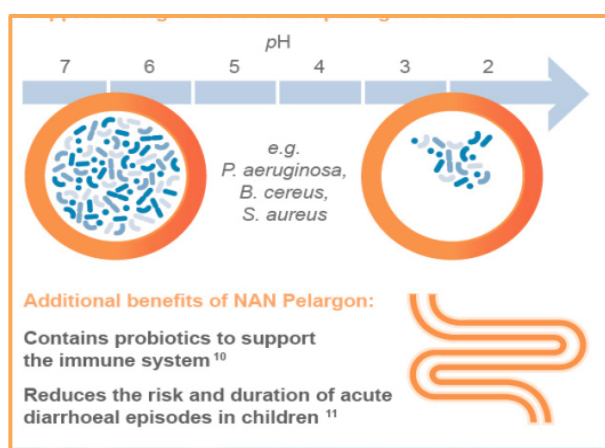
Cross branding must be forbidden to prevent confusion and needless and inappropriate use of products. Packaging, labelling, presentation, logos, colours and all other information must clearly differentiate between the type of products. The appropriate age of use and whether products are powdered, concentrated or ready to serve must also be clearly visible, as well as all mandatory nutrition information.

Nutrition and health claims or any convenience claims should not be permitted for follow-up formula

Claims for essential or optional ingredients or related to convenience should not be permitted because they mislead parents and idealize the products. Claims on product labels and in promotions (all in violation of the *International Code* and WHA resolutions) mask the inherent risks of the product.

Regardless of its name, any milk (or milk replacement product) intended to be fed to young children, functions as a breastmilk substitute and must be marketed in accordance with the WHO Guidance on Ending the Inappropriate Promotions of Foods for Infants and Young Children (2016).

Examples of International Code **VIOLATIONS** using misleading nutrition and health claims ([IBFAN/ICDC Breaking the Rules](#), 11th ed. 2017)



Products intended to be fed to young children should be considered as breastmilk substitutes in compliance with the WHO Guidance on Ending the Inappropriate Promotions of Foods for Infants and Young Children (2016) irrespective of its nomenclature.

IBFAN requests Codex member states and all concerned to take note of above-mentioned recommendations for consideration in the development of the revised standard for FUFs.