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**PROPOSED DRAFT GUIDELINES ON THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY TO PROVIDE FOOD INFORMATION  
IN FOOD LABELLING  
(FOR ADOPTION AT STEP 5)**

**1. PURPOSE**

Provide guidance on the use of technology to provide **scientific, factual** information to consumers<sup>[1]</sup> about pre-packaged foods<sup>1</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>1</sup> or labelling<sup>1</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).

**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 MANDATORY FOOD LABELLING INFORMATION COULD INSTEAD BE PROVIDED TO CONSUMERS USING TECHNOLOGY**

IBFAN's position is that all mandatory food information must be present on both the label of the product and if technology is used to provide information about the product, this must include all mandatory information.

**5.1** 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, or a sub-set of the population for whom the food information is intended,

should have widespread and adequate 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 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** Name of the food and food information concerning health and safety should not be provided exclusively using technology. **Nutrition and health claims must not be permitted for foods for infants and young children. Health warnings about inappropriate and needless use, and safe preparation of the product must be communicated in any information 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.

## **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 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 Pre-packaged 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 pre-packaged food, including when shown in different languages.
- [7.3** Food information described or presented using technology shall be presented in one place, 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 provided using technology, the reference on the label or labelling should link directly to this information and the food information should be available for the duration of the food's shelflife [at least and not less than best before date or expiry date]. [The link shall not include advertising<sup>[21]</sup> pertaining to the food.]
- 7.6** Food information described or presented using technology 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 used to identify an individual.
- 7.7** [When the label or labelling of a pre-packaged food references food information to be accessed using technology, sufficient information shall be displayed on the technology platform to enable consumers to ascertain that the food information pertains to that pre-packaged food.
- 7.8** If the purpose of the reference on the label or labelling of the pre-packaged food is not self-explanatory to consumers, it 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 should adhere to sections 8.1.2 and 8.1.3 of the *General Standard for the Labelling of Pre-packaged Foods* 9 (CXS 1-1985).

- 7.10** Food information described or presented using technology shall be **truthful**, clear, prominent and readily legible 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** **The food information accessible via technology for foods for infants and young children must be in conformity with the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and subsequent WHA resolutions**
- 7.13** **Reference must be made to the Code of Ethics for International Trade in Food including Concessional and Food Aid Transactions (CXC 20-1979) in order to safeguard the marketing of foods for infants and young children and ensure that all labelling conforms to the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and subsequent relevant WHA resolutions**
- 7.14** **Electronic labelling relating to foods for infants and young children should not lead consumers to commercial websites and other commercial and promotional information.**
- 7.15** **No user data should be collected or tracked through electronic means.**

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[1]

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

[2]

As defined in the *Guidelines for Use of Nutrition and Health Claims* (CXG 23-1997)