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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



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

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

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Codex Nutrition Labeling guide

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

First published over 15
years ago, with several
amendments



Food Labelling

Fifth edition



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 Plan 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**