

## Summary of the 2010 Codex Committee on Food Labelling Meeting

International Dairy Foods Association works with the International Dairy Federation (IDF) to monitor, review and provide advice on issues related to international Codex labeling regulations that could impact milk and dairy foods. This includes a number of work items proposed under the World Health Organization (WHO) Report on Diet, Nutrition, and Chronic Diseases and the WHO Global Strategy on Diet Physical Activity and Health (Global Strategy). In this report you will see a common theme to increase labelling and add new international regulations to inform consumers of foods that contain nutrients such as saturated fat, added sugars or sodium that should be limited in consumption. Unfortunately, there is little or no emphasis on labelling of nutrients that should be encouraged for good health or nutrition.

The recommendations in the Global Strategy are: *achieve energy balance and a healthy weight, limit energy intake from total fats and shift fat consumption away from saturated fats to unsaturated fats and towards elimination of trans-fatty acids, increase consumption of fruits, vegetables and legumes, whole grains and nuts, limit intake of free sugars (The term “free sugars” are used in the report from the Expert Consultation and refers to all monosaccharides and disaccharides added to foods by the manufacturer, cook or consumer, plus sugars naturally present in honey, syrups and fruit juices), limit salt (sodium) consumption from all sources and ensure that salt is iodized.*

Codex Committee on Food Labelling (CCFL) recently met in Quebec, Canada during May 1-7 to continue work related the Global Strategy. The meeting was attended by over 250 people representing 61 different countries and 21 non-government organizations including an IDF delegation.

Some areas of work and proposed changes to the international labelling standards at CCFL included.

- Agreement by the committee to move forward to step 5, of the 8 step Codex process, the text below relative to if a food label includes a claim (nutrient content, or health claim) then the mandatory declaration of the following nutrients applies:

3.2 Listing of Nutrients

3.2.1 Where nutrient declaration is applied, the declaration of the following should be mandatory:

3.2.1.1 Energy value; and

3.2.1.2 The amounts of protein, available carbohydrate (i.e. dietary carbohydrate excluding dietary fibre), fat, saturated fat, ~~trans fatty acids~~, [sodium/salt], total sugars, ~~added sugars~~, and ~~dietary fibre~~;

3.2.1.3 The amount of any other nutrient for which a nutrition or health claim is made; and

3.2.1.4 The amount of any other nutrient considered to be relevant for maintaining a good nutritional status, as required by national legislation or national dietary guidelines<sup>1</sup>.

**<sup>1</sup> Countries where the level of TFA is a public health concern should consider the declaration of TFA in nutrition labeling.**

IDF was unsuccessful with getting reconsideration by CCFL to exclude saturated fat and total sugars from this list, but was supportive of the footnote that will only require

the labeling of trans fatty acids under specific circumstances. It is important to note that the Codex definition for trans fatty acids does not include the conjugated forms naturally found in milkfat such as conjugated linoleic acid.

- The CCFL progressed work on guidance (not regulations) for legibility of nutrition labelling information.
- The CCFL agreed to start work on new definitions for nutrient content claims for labeling foods that have no added of sugar or salt and the addition of explicit comparative claims for reduced sugar and/or sodium.
- IDF was successful in getting the European Union to support our request to not add new labeling requirements to declare "packaging gas" (used to gas flush cheese and other foods) or "carriers" (used as part of flavors, colors and other additives) in the ingredient declaration by a class name.
- At the CCFL a representative from WHO provided information on the following work areas for expert consultations and recommendations:
  - Salt/sodium reduction including the convening of three population salt/sodium reduction strategy platforms: 1) creating an enabling environment (jointly with the UK Food Standard Agency); 2) monitoring and evaluating dietary salt intake (jointly with the Government of Canada); and 3) salt as a vehicle for fortification to prevent iodine deficiency disorders.
  - A regional expert group that had prepared a policy statement aiming at reducing dietary salt intake to reach national targets or the internationally recommended target of less than 5g salt (2000 mg sodium) per day per person by 2020. The expert group had further recommended to the CCFL to consider that: the declaration of sodium/salt be mandatory; the decision on whether sodium or salt is declared be made by competent authorities in each country; communicating effectively about sodium/salt content of foods to consumers be mandatory (e.g., front-of-package information); the nutrient reference value for sodium to be set as low as possible while keeping with an achievable health promoting diet.
  - Nutrient Profiling methodology guidance and a manual on guiding principles for developing and implementing nutrient profiling had been developed in 2009. In 2010 a WHO would develop a framework and manual for the country level development of nutrient profiling.

A full copy of the CCFL meeting report should be available in the next few weeks on the Codex web site at this link under the reports tab: <http://www.codexalimentarius.net>

The next meeting of the IDF Standing Committee on Labeling and Food Terminology will take place prior to the 2010 World Dairy Summit in Auckland, NZ on Saturday, November 6 from 14:00 - 18:00. We welcome interested IDFA members to attend. Feel free to contact Cary Frye IDF SCFL&T, vice chair, via email at [cfrye@idfa.org](mailto:cfrye@idfa.org) if you have any questions or would like any additional information.