



Codex Point of Contact for Canada
Food Directorate, Health Canada
Room C416
Tunney's Pasture
Ottawa, ON K1A 0K9

Dec 6, 2022

Submitted Via Email

To Whom It May Concern:

RE: CL 2022/70-FL Request for information on emerging issues/future work

On behalf of the Canadian Produce Marketing Association, it is my pleasure to provide comments to inform the Government of Canada's contribution to the Codex consideration on emerging issues and future work.

About CPMA

The produce industry generates over \$17 billion annually in economic activity throughout the supply chain and supports over 249,000 jobs across Canada. Based in Ottawa, the Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA) is a not-for-profit organization representing companies active in the marketing of fresh fruit and vegetables in Canada, from the farm gate to the dinner plate spanning the entire produce industry. The Association's members include major growers, shippers, packers and marketers; importers and exporters; transportation and logistics firms; brokers, distributors and wholesalers; retailers and foodservice distributors; and fresh cut operators and processors. Founded in 1925, CPMA is today proud to represent over 850 domestic and international members who are responsible for 90% of fresh fruit and vegetable sales in Canada.

Comments

Promoting international trade and investment with export markets is a priority for the Canadian produce sector. To increase market access and sustainability of the Canadian fresh fruit and vegetable industry, the harmonization of international standards must occur. This requires collaboration both within Canadian governmental agencies, and between the Canadian government and other governments with which we trade.

CPMA would therefore like to provide the following comments and responses to the discussion paper on future work and direction for CFFL:

Potential work for CCFL

B. Establish a definition for ‘added sugars’

CCFL #8: ICGA proposed that CCFL consider further work on establishing a definition for “added sugars”. It was argued that a harmonized definition for “added sugars” would facilitate the interpretation of data to determine the public health significance of such claims and that the current lack of definition may present barriers to CCFL work on harmonising nutrition labelling; and that a harmonized definition would further reduce the risks of misinterpretations which could mislead the consumer.

CPMA comments:

- CPMA agrees that a definition for ‘added sugars’ should be established, to distinguish sugars naturally found in foods that provide health benefits, such as fresh fruits and vegetables, versus sugars found in other sources (i.e. artificial and natural sweeteners). This definition should also be harmonized to reduce the risk of misinterpretation by consumers and harmonize claims made on labels.

C. Review the definition of ‘small unit’

CCFL #9&10: ICGA proposed to review and harmonize the definition of and exemptions relating to “small units”. It was highlighted that the GSLPF defines “small unit” as a product with a surface area of less than 10 cm squared. These foods are exempt from mandatory labelling requirements regarding the list of ingredients, lot identification, date marking, storage instructions and instructions for use.

10. ICGA argued that exemptions for small units regarding front-of-pack nutrition labelling and the back of pack nutrient declaration should also be aligned. Within Codex provisions, nutrient declaration is mandatory for all pre-packaged foods for which a nutrition or health claim is made, but certain foods may be exempted on the basis of small packaging.

CPMA comments:

- Exemptions for small units in relation to front-of-package nutrition labelling should be aligned at the Codex level. The HSLPF defines “small unit” as a product with a surface area of less than 10 cm squared. However, in the newly released Canadian front-of-package nutrition regulations, the Government of Canada fully exempts front-of-package nutrition labelling for small products with an available display surface of less than 15 cm squared ([FDR, B.01.350\(5\)](#)). Exemptions for small packaging needs to be consistent across borders, to facilitate trade.

Emerging issues

B. Sustainability claims

CCFL #14: New Zealand also identified that, as issues related to the environment and climate change grow in importance for consumers, there may be a need for CCFL to consider guidance on potential ‘sustainability’ or credence claims that could be made on or about foods.

CPMA comments:

- In July 2022, the Government of Canada, through Environment and Climate Change Canada, launched a consultation in support of its Zero Plastic Waste agenda, to develop labelling rules for recyclability and compostability. It is important that the outcomes of this initiative are considered at the Codex level, when defining sustainability, recycling, and compostable claims on packaging. As there is increased interest on environmental impact and climate change from consumers, it is important that harmonization occurs in defining these claims, to build consumer trust in the food system, avoid “greenwashing,” and facilitate trade across borders.

Work previously considered by the committee

B. Consumer Preference Claims

19. At CCFL43, there was discussion of a proposal to revise the General Guidelines for the use of the term “Halal” (CXG 24-1997). The Committee agreed not to proceed with the revision as proposed but noted that the proposal raised a question on how to deal with consumer preference claims in a broader way.

CPMA comments: Given the ambiguity in consumer preference claims, CPMA recommends that future work be considered for how consumer preference claims are defined at the CODEX level, and this be consistent with Canadian labelling regulations. This includes defining consumer preference claims, such as local, natural, non-GMO, sustainable, etc. Consideration should also be made when these terms exist in logos, and whether these logos are considered claims. It is CPMA’s position that consumer value claims should be clearly defined by government to improve consumer clarity and reduce confusion. Consumer preference claims should be harmonized as much as possible, to remove trade barriers and promote consumer trust in the food system.