

## **Labeling of prepackaged food stuffs**

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**Issuing Status** : Technical regulations

**Foreword**

GCC Standardization Organization (GSO) is a regional Organization which consists of the National Standards Bodies of GCC member States. One of GSO main functions is to issue Gulf Standards /Technical regulations through specialized technical committees (TCs).

GSO through the technical program of committee TC No.:(5) " Gulf technical committee for standards of food and agriculture products " has updated the GSO Standard No.GSO 9/1995 " Labeling of prepackaged food stuffs " . The Draft Standard has been prepared by (STATE OF QATAR ).

This standard has been approved as a Gulf (Standard / Technical Regulation) by GSO Board of Directors in its meeting No.(6), held on 19/5/1418h (5/6/2007G) . The approved standard will replace and supersede the GSO standard No. (9/1995).

## Labelling Of Prepackaged Foodstuffs

### 1. SCOPE AND FIELD OF APPLICATION:

This Gulf standard applies to the labelling of prepackaged foods to be catered as such to the consumer , and specifies the requirements relating to the presentation method thereof.

### 2. COMPLEMENTARY REFERENCES:

- 2/1 GSO 150/2007 " Expiration Dates of Food products " ;
- 2/2 GSO 654/1996 "General Requirements for Prepackaged Foods for Special Dietary Use";
- 2/3 GSO 839/1997 " Food packages, Part-1 , General Requirements " .

### 3. DEFINITIONS

#### 3/1 Label:

Any statement, brand, mark , pictorial or any other descriptive matter whether written, printed / impressed or stuck on the container of a foodstuff or attached thereto , in such a manner as not to be removable .

#### 3/2 Labelling :

Includes any marking, imaging or graphic matter that is present on the label associated with the qualities, components or nutritional characteristics of a food product, or with its nature, preparation , consumption or any other properties thereof .

#### 3/3 Foodstuff:

Any edible substance whether processed, semi-processed or unprocessed which is intended for human consumption, and comprises drinks, chewing gum or any other matter which has been involved in the manufacture, preparation , processing of 'food', but does not include cosmetics, perfumes , tobacco or any other material used only as drugs .

#### 3/4 Container:

Any material in which a foodstuff is prepackaged to be delivered for sale as a separate individual unit , whether by completely or partially wrapping the food . It may enclose several units or types of wrappings when such is offered to the consumer.

#### 3/5 Food ingredient:

Any substance, including a food additive, used in the manufacture or preparation of a foodstuff and present in the final product , albeit , in a modified form.

#### 3/6 Date of production:

Means the date from which a foodstuff starts becoming the product available with the qualities described as per the labelling .

3/7

Date of packaging:

The date on which a foodstuff has been packed in the immediate container in which it will be eventually sold .

3/8

Expiration date (Best before...):

The date signifying the end of estimated period beyond which a product, under any given storage conditions , may not retain certain qualities for which the consumer expect ; or such becomes unsafe and , so , never marketable thereafter.

3/9

Sell- by-date:

The last date for offering the foodstuffs for sale to the consumer and after which remains a reasonable period for storage in the home.

3/10

Food additive:

Any substance neither normally consumed as a food by itself nor normally used as a basic element in food ingredients , whether or not it has a nutritive value, which is intentionally added to the food for a technological (including sensory properties such like colour, taste and odour) purpose in the manufacture, processing, preparation, treatment packaging , transportation, preservation , or distribution of such a food , to the extent of likely becoming (either directly or indirectly) a component affecting the properties of food .

3/11

Lot:

A definitive quantity of a commodity produced essentially under the same given conditions.

3/12

Production code:

A code for quantity of a foodstuff produced under the same conditions, during a certain period of time and , normally, attributed to the same production line, production unit .

3/13

Processing aids:

Any substance, not including apparatus or utensils, not to be consumed as a food ingredient, but intentionally used in the processing of raw materials, foods or their ingredients, so as to fulfill a particular technological purpose during the treatment or processing , and which may result in the non- intentional but unavoidable presence of residues or derivatives thereof in the final product .

3/14

Foods for catering purposes:

Foods intended for use in restaurants , canteens , schools , hospitals and any similar institutions where food is offered for immediate consumption.

4.

#### **GENERAL REQUIREMENTS:**

Without prejudice to the provisions of the Gulf standards relevant to each food product, the following shall be observed:



4/1 A prepackaged foodstuff shall not be described or presented on any label or in any labelling whether by words, pictorial or any other medium which refer to or are suggestive either directly or indirectly of any other foodstuff, with which such food might be confused; or by such a manner as to lead the purchaser or consumer to suppose that this food is connected with the other product.

4/2 A prepackaged foodstuff shall not be described or presented on any label or in any labelling in a manner that is false, deceptive; or is likely to entail an erroneous impression regarding its characteristics in any respect.

## **5. MANDATORY LABELLING ON FOOD PREPACKAGES:**

### **5/1 NAME OF THE FOOD:**

5/1/1 The name shall identify the true nature of the food and shall normally be specific and not generic.

5/1/2 Where a name or names have been established for a foodstuff in an individual Gulf Standard, at least one of these names shall be used, otherwise, the usual or common name used in the country where the food is distributed shall be adopted.

5/1/3 In the absence of any such names, either usually or commonly existing, an appropriate descriptive name which is not misleading or confusing to the consumer shall be used.

5/1/4 There shall be placed, either in conjunction with or in close proximity to the name of the food, such additional words or phrases as necessary to avoid misleading or confusing the consumer as regards the true natural or physical condition of the contents of a prepackaged foodstuff including the type of packing medium, style, the conditions or type of treatment it has undergone; for instance: dried, condensed, reconstituted, or smoked.

### **5/2 LIST OF INGREDIENTS:**

5/2/1 With the exception of single ingredient foods, a list of all ingredients shall be shown on the label in a descending order of ingoing weight proportions (m/m), at the time of the manufacture of such a foodstuff.

5/2/2 The list of ingredients shall be either preceded or headed by an appropriate title including the term 'INGREDIENTS'.

5/2/3 A list of food additives to the product or their numerical codes (international classification system (ICS) or European index) need to be declared.

5/2/4 The foodstuffs and ingredients which are known to cause hypersensitivity shall always be declared; these are:

5/2/4/1 Cereals containing gluten substance; i.e., wheat, barley, oats, rye, spelt or their hybridized strains and products of these;

5/2/4/2 Crustacea and products of these;

5/2/4/3 Eggs and egg products;

5/2/4/4 Fish and fish products;

5/2/4/5 Peanuts, soybeans and products of these;

- 5/2/4/6 Walnuts and nut products ;
- 5/2/4/7 Milk and milk products (lactose included) ;
- 5/2/4/8 sulphite in concentration of 10 mg/kg or more.
- 5/2/5 Added water shall be declared in the list of ingredients except when the water forms a part of an ingredient such as brine, syrup or broth used in compound foods and mentioned as such in the list of ingredients. However, water or other volatile particles evaporated in the course of manufacture need not to be declared.
- 5/2/6 In the case of dehydrated or condensed foods which are intended to be reconstituted by adding water only, the ingredients may be listed after the addition of water in the order of weight proportion (m/m) in the reconstituted product, provided the inclusion of an explanatory statement such as *"ingredients of the product when prepared in accordance with the instructions on the label"*.
- 5/2/7 The presence in any foodstuff or any of its ingredients being obtained via biotechnology of an allergen probably transferable from it to any of the products listed in Clause 5/2/4 shall be declared.
- 5/2/8 A specific name shall be used for ingredients in compliance with the provisions laid down in Clause 5/1), except :-
- 5/2/8/1 For generic nomenclature: unless a universal class title would be more informative, the following names may be used:-

Title of classes	Specific class names
-Refined oils , other than olive oil.	-The term 'Oils' accompanied by either the quality 'vegetable' or 'animal' and a statement as to indicate whether it is 'hydrogenated' or 'partially hydrogenated' as appropriate .
-Refined fats.	- The term 'fat' together with either the quality 'vegetable' or 'animal, as appropriate.
-Starches , other than chemically modified Starch.	- 'Starch'.
- All types of fish where the fish constitutes an ingredient of another food , provided that the labelling and presentation of such a food does not refer to a specific species of fish.	- 'Fish'.
-All types of poultry meat where such meat constitutes an ingredient of another food , provided that the labelling and presentation of such a food does not refer to a specific kind of poultry meat.	- 'Poultry meat.'
-All types of cheese where the cheese or a mixture of cheeses constitutes an ingredient	

of another food , provided that the labelling and presentation of such a food does not refer to a specific type of cheese.	- ' Cheese '
All spices and spice extracts, not exceeding 2% of the weight, whether added individually or in combination in the foods. - All herbs or parts of herbs as appropriate, not exceeding 2% of the weight, whether added singly or as a mixture in the foods.	- 'Spices' , 'spice' or 'mixed spices' as appropriate .  - 'Essential herbs 'or ' mixed essential herbs', as appropriate .
-All types of gum preparations used in producing the gum base for the manufacture of chewing gum . - All types of sucrose .	- 'Gum base'.  - 'Sugar'.
-Anhydrous dextrose and dextrose monohydrate . - All types of caseinates	- 'Dextrose'or 'glucose'.  - 'Caseinates'
- Raw , pressed or refined cocoa butter -All crystallized fruits not exceeding10%of the weight of food.	- 'cocoa butter' - ' Crystallized fruit '

5/2/8/2 For the food additives permitted for use in Gulf Standards the following names shall be used beside the specific name or international number:-

- Acidity Regulators
- Acids
- Anti-caking Agents
- Anti-foaming Agents
- Anti-oxidants
- Bulking Agents
- Colours
- Gelling Agents
- Glazing Agents
- Humectants



- Preservatives
- Colour Retention Agents
- Emulsifiers
- Emulsifying Salts
- Firming Agents
- Flour treatment Agents
- Flavour Enhancers
- Foaming Agents
- Raising Agents
- Stabilizers
- Sweeteners
- Thickeners.

5/2/8/3 The following names may be used for food additives permitted in foods, in general :-

- Flavour(s) and flavouring(s): can be described as 'natural', 'natural identical' or 'artificial ' as appropriate;
- Modified starch(es).

5/2/9 Shall be included in the list of ingredients, however, any food additive carried over from a food into another in a significant quantity or in an amount sufficient to perform a particular technological function in that food as a result of the use of raw materials or other ingredients in which the additive was used. Exempted from that, are the additives and processing aids .

5/2/10 Exempted from appearing in the list of ingredients is any food additive carried over into a food in a proportion less than that required for achieving a certain technological function in that food, . This exemption does not apply to the other food additives or processing aids.

5/2/11 Nutritional Information:

The following nutritional information may be preferably set out, however, in the case of foods catered for special dietary use the declaration of this information on the label is mandatory:

5/2/11/1 The nutritive value of the prepackaged foodstuffs to include

such essential elements as: (Carbohydrates- Fats- Protein- Dietary fibers - Energy).

5/2/11/2 In the case of adding vitamins , mineral salts or any other dietary elements in the food ingredients, then , the value of each dietary element shall be separately declared in the nutritional information accompanying the prepackaged foodstuff.

5/2/11/3 All nutritional information and /or net content shall be set forth as percentage by weight if, it is less than 100 g or 100ml.



- 5/2/11/4 The information shall be set out in international units (g. mg. µg- IU ) and (kilocalories) for Energy items).
- 5/3 NET CONTENTS:
- 5/3/1 The net contents , since packed, shall be declared in metric system .
- 5/3/2 The net contents shall be declared by volume as for liquid foods, by weight for solid foods and either by weight or volume for semi-solid or viscous foods.
- 5/3/3 The drained weight (weight of food after the liquid has been drained) of a packed shall be declared. A liquid medium means water, or any aqueous solutions of sugar or salt , fruit or vegetable juices in canned such products only, or vinegar, either in a single or combined form.
- 5/4 NAME AND ADRESS:
- The name and address of the manufacturer, packer, distributor, importer, exporter or vendor shall be declared.
- 5/5 COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:
- 5/5/1 The country of origin of the food shall be declared on the food containers if its omission would mislead or deceive the consumer about the item , especially in the case of repacking.
- 5/5/2 When a foodstuff undergoes processing in a second country which may probably change its fundamental nature, the country where the processing has taken place shall be considered as the country of origin for labelling purposes.
- 5/6 LOT IDENTIFICATION:
- Each container shall be embossed or permanently marked either in such a coded or express terminology as to identify the processing lot numerical.
- 5/7 DATE MARKING AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR STORAGE AND USE:
- 5/7/1 Without prejudice to what has been mentioned in Gulf standard stated in item (2.1) the production date : and expiration date shall be declared as follows:-
- 5/7/1/1 For food products with a minimum durability less than three months (i.e Day - Month -Year) .
- 5/7/1/2 For food products with a minimum durability of more than three months (i.e Month –Year).
- If the month is December, the years is declared, and the minimum durability shall be counted up to the end of the month in which the expiration is dated.
- 5/7/2 The expiration date shall be preceded by such phrases as:-
- 5/72/1 'Best before...'accompanied by the date;
- 5/72/2 'Best before end...' in other cases.
- These phrases shall be accompanied by either the date itself , or a reference to where the date is given .

- 5/7/3 The day, month and year shall be indicated in a clear (uncoded) manner in the same order .
- 5/7/4 The expiration date shall not be declared in case of the following products:-
- 5/7/4/1 Fresh fruits and vegetables, including potatoes which have not been peeled, cut or similarly treated;
- 5/7/4/2 bakers' ware or pastry which are normally consumed within 24 hours from their manufacture ;
- 5/7/4/3 vinegar ;
- 5/7/4/4 edible salt;
- 5/7/4/5 sugar;
- 5/7/4/6 confectionery products consisting of flavoured and /or coloured sugary items;
- 5/7/4/7 chewing gum.
- 5/7/5 In addition to the expiration date, any specific requirements pertaining to the storage conditions of the food shall be laid down on the label, should the minimum durability be dependent thereupon.
- 5/7/6 Instructions for use including reconstitution directives , where applicable, shall be indicated on the label, if necessary for ensuring a correct and sound utilization of the foodstuff .
- 5/8 IRRADIATED FOODS:
- 5/8/1 The labelling of a food which has been treated with ionizing radiation shall include a written statement indicating such a treatment in close proximity to the food name. The use of International Food Irradiation Symbol is optional ; however, whenever declared on the label it shall be placed in conjunction with the name of food.
- 5/8/2 In the case where an irradiated product is used as an ingredient in an other food , so, this shall be set out in the list of ingredients.
- 5/8/3 When a single ingredient product is prepared from a raw material which has already undergone a treatment by radiation , this shall be stated in the list of ingredients.
- 6. EXEMPTIONS FROM MANDATORY LABELLING REQUIREMENTS:**
- Except for spices and essential herbs, small units, where the area largest surface is less than 10 cm<sup>2</sup>, may be exempted from the requirements stipulated in Clauses 5/2, 5/6 up to 5/7 .
- 7. PRESENTATION OF MANDATORY INFORMATION:**
- 7/1 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS:**
- 7/1/1 Labels stuck to the prepackaged foods shall be applied in such a manner as to prevent their removal from the container.

- 7/1/2 Statements intended to appear on the label shall be marked in a clearly visible and easily legible manner, under the normal conditions for purchase and use.
- 7/1/3 When the container is covered by a wrapper, this shall carry the necessary information ; or the labelling on the container shall be readily legible through the wrapping and not obscured thereby.
- 7/1/4 The name and net contents of the food shall appear in a prominent position within the same scope of vision.
- 7/1/5 Any illegal or unauthorized nomenclature, terminology, coding ; pictorial...etc, shall not be used.
- 7/1/6 If the informative label is in contact with the foodstuff, it shall not contain any chemicals or so. The ink used therein shall not be oozing or leaking in any way. The containers shall meet the requirements laid down in the relevant GS (vide Clause 2/3).
- 7/2 LANGUAGE :
- 7/2/1 Labelling and adjoining explanatory statements shall be in Arabic and, where another language is used, it shall be alongside the Arabic. All the information provided in another language shall be identical with those written in Arabic.
- 7/2/2 If the Arabic information is stated in a supplementary sticker adjacent to the original label , the following shall be met:-
- 7/2/2/1 It shall be a single sticker provided by the manufacture only, to fulfill all the relevant stipulations provided in this standard.
- 7/2/2/2 It shall not obscure any information required by this standard.
- 7/2/2/3 It shall not contain any statement discrepant with the original labelling.
- 7/2/2/4 It shall be irremovable in the ordinary handling and circulation conditions of the prepackaged foodstuff.
8. OPTIONAL LABELLING:
- 8/1 Additional statements, pictorial or graphic matters may be either written impressed or photographed on the label, provided that they shall neither contradict with mandatory labelling method , nor contain any medicinal or therapeutic declaration, or breach the provisions of this standard
- 8/2 When marking the product grade declaration it shall be legibly understandable and not entail deception or misleading in any way.
- 8/3 If the foodstuff consists of two ingredients or more, the class name of the main ingredient may be listed with the rest of ingredients in a descending sequence by weight (m/m); but an ingredient with the proportion of less than 5% of the foodstuff shall not be included in the list of ingredients.