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GUIDELINES ON NUTRITIONAL LABELLING

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FOREWORD

The Standardisation Organisation of the Gulf Cooperation Council has based this Standard Specification on the "Nutritional Labelling of Foodstuffs" document which was issued as International Foodstuffs Codex No. 1985/2 - amendment 1993/1 - and it has been translated into Arabic without making any technical amendments to any of its clauses.

GUIDANCE FOR NUTRITIONAL LABELLING OF FOODSTUFFS

1. The scope and area of application:

This Standard Specification is intended to provide an explanatory guide for the process of clarificatory nutritional labelling on all types of foodstuffs. More detailed information must be provided for special foodstuffs.

2. Supplementary sources:

- 2.1. GS No. 9 "Labelling of packed foodstuffs"
- 2.2. GS No. 150 "Periods of validity of foodstuff products - Part One"
- 2.3. GS No. 174 "Unprocessed milk"
- 2.4. GS No. 570 "Physical and chemical methods of testing milk"
- 2.5. GS No. 994 "Detecting salmonella in milk and its products"

3. Definitions:

3.1 Clarificatory nutritional information

This comprises a clarificatory description for the consumer explaining the nutritional characteristics of the food.

3.2 The nutritional information must be comprised of two elements:

- 3.2.1 An explanation of the nutrients
- 3.2.2 Additional nutritional information

3.2. [sic] Nutritional declarations

This means a list of the contents of the nutrients in the foodstuff.

3.3. Nutritional claims

This means any suggestion maintaining or proposing or claiming that the food has particular nutritional characteristics, such as an energy value or referring to the content in the food of protein, fats, carbohydrates or additional vitamins and minerals.

Below is set out a list of information details which are not considered to be nutritional declarations:

- A. Drawing attention to substances in the list of ingredients or contents.
- B. Referring to or drawing attention to nutrients which form an essential part of the nutritional declaration information anyway.

- C. Providing information about the quantity and type of some nutrients or ingredients on the label if that is required by legislation in force anyway.

3.4 Nutrient

This is something which provides the body with energy or with what is required for growth and development or for maintaining life and where a lack of it will result in changes in biochemical and physiological traits.

3.5 Sugars

All the mono- and disaccharide sugars in the food.

3.6 Dietary fibres

Plant and animal material which is edible but which is not digested by human digestive enzymes when administered in the approved manner.

3.7 Polyunsaturated fatty acids

These are fatty acids which contain non-connected paired bonds separated by non-exchangeable methylene units.

4. Requirements

4.1 General conditions

4.1.1 The ingredients of foodstuffs

4.1.1.2 *[sic]* Nutritional declarations are compulsory for foodstuffs which have nutritional claims as referred to in Clause 3.3.

4.1.1.3 Nutritional declarations are optional for all other types of foodstuffs.

4.1.2 List of nutrients

4.1.2.1 When providing nutritional information, it must be ensured that the following information is provided:

- A. The energy value
- B. The permitted quantity of protein and carbohydrate (such as carbohydrates with the exception of dietary fibres), and fats.
- C. The amount of any other nutrient where its nutritional or health effect is referred to (such as salts).

D. The amount of any other nutrient relating to good nutritional status - in accordance with the approved requirements or national foodstuffs guidance.

4.1.2.2 If there is a declaration about a particular nutrient - in addition to the list (Clause 4.1.2.1) it is required to give an obligatory explanation of any other related nutrient in order to maintain good nutritional status.

4.1.2.3 Where a particular health or nutritional claim is made, it is compulsory that a statement be made of the quantity of any other related nutrient in order to maintain good nutritional status as required by the national legislation or the national foodstuffs guidelines.

4.1.2.4 If a declaration is made about the quantity of carbohydrate, or the type of it, or both, it is also essential to state the total quantity of sugars, and a statement should also be made of the quantities of starch and / or other carbohydrate ingredients. Similarly, mention must be made of the quantity of dietary fibres if there is a specific declaration about the fibre which the foodstuff contains.

4.1.2.5 If a declaration is made about a quantity and / or type of fatty acids or cholesterol, it is necessary to state quantities of unsaturated fatty acids and monounsaturated fatty acids and polyunsaturated fatty acids.

4.1.2.6 In addition to the compulsory declarations stipulated for in Clauses 4.1.2.1, 4.1.2.2 and 4.1.2.3, the following vitamins and minerals must be included, in accordance with the following standard:

A.*[sic]* Only those vitamins and minerals need be stated for which a recommendation concerning them has been issued, or which are of nutritional importance in the country concerned, or which meet both these criteria.

4.1.3 In respect of the application of the requirements to nutrients, vitamins and minerals which are found in quantities of less than 5% of the nutrient reference value (NRV) or in the official guidelines of the national authority which specify values per 100 grams or per 100 millilitres or amounts per part, there is no need to refer to them on the label.

4.1.4 If the product is subject to the requirements of labelling under the standard specifications, priority must be given to the provisions set out in that specification and it must be ensured that they do not conflict with the conditions referred to in Clauses 4.1.2.1 to 4.1.3 of these guidelines.

5. Calculation of nutrients

5.1 Calculation of energy

The quantity of energy which is indicated on the label should be calculated using the conversion rates shown in the following table:

Carbohydrate	kilocalorie / g - (17) kilojoule
Protein	kilocalorie / g - (17) kilojoule
Fats	kilocalorie / g - (37) kilojoule
Alcohol (ethanol)	kilocalorie / g - (29) kilojoule
Organic acid	kilocalorie / g - (13) kilojoule

5.2 Calculation of protein

To calculate the amount of protein, the following equation must be used:

$$\text{Protein} = \text{total nitrogen (Kjeldahl method)} \times 6.25$$

6. Stating the content of nutrients

- 6.1 The nutrient content must be stated in figures, in addition to the possibility of using other means.
- 6.2 The information relating to the energy content in kilojoules and kilocalories must be stated per 100 g or per 100 ml or per pack if the contents is in the form of one piece, and similarly the information must be stated for each piece of the food in accordance with the quantity as specified on the label or per piece in the packet on the basis of stating the number of pieces in the packet.
- 6.3 The information relating to the content of protein, carbohydrate and fats must be stated in grams per 100 g or 100 ml per pack if the contents is in the form of one piece, and similarly the information must be stated for each piece of the food in accordance with the quantity as specified on the label or per piece in the packet on the basis of stating the number of pieces in the packet.
- 6.4 The numerical information relating to vitamins and minerals should be stated in metric units and / or as a percentage of the recommended value of the nutrient, per 100 g or 100 ml per pack if the contents is in the form of one piece, and similarly the information must be stated for each piece of the food in accordance with the quantity as specified on the label or per piece in the packet on the basis of stating the number of pieces in the packet.
- 6.5 The information relating to protein may be expressed as a percentage of the nutrient reference value in the guidelines.

6.5.1 The following nutrient reference values may be used for the purposes of labelling information, providing that it conforms to the international standard specifications.

protein	gram	50
vitamin A	microgram	800 ⁴
vitamin D	microgram	5 ⁵
vitamin C	milligram	60
thiamine	milligram	1.4
riboflavin	milligram	1.6
niacin	milligram	18 ⁵
vitamin B ₆	milligram	2
folic acid	microgram	200
vitamin B ₁₂	microgram	1
calcium	milligram	800
magnesium	milligram	300
iron	milligram	14
zinc	milligram	15
iodine	microgram	150 ⁵
copper	value under study	
selenium	value under study	

6.6 In the case of those countries where the usual measure is by piece, then the information detailed in Clauses 6.2 - 6.4 is all that should appear on the piece label, whether it relates to quantity or piece, and always stating the number of pieces in the pack.

6.7 If any carbohydrates are present this must be stated on the label as "carbohydrate". If the type of carbohydrate is specified, this must follow the total carbohydrate content in the following format:

Carbohydrate..... grams, of which sugars grams

Followed by (x) grams

Where (x) represents the specific name of any other carbohydrate element.

6.8 If reference is made to a quantity and / or type of fatty acids or the quantity of cholesterol, this must be followed directly by a statement of the total fat content as referred to in Clause 6.3, and the information should be set out in the following format:

Total fat content grams, represented by:

- saturated fatty acids grams
- trans fatty acids grams
- mono-unsaturated fatty acids grams
- poly-unsaturated fatty acids grams
- cholesterol grams

7. Variation and reaction
 - 7.1 The tolerance limits under public health regulations should be stated, and the assumed age, and precise analyses of any generic alterations and amendments and changes in the product and whether the nutrient has been added or whether it is present naturally.
 - 7.2 The values used in stating the nutrient are the average of the values extracted from the data obtained from the product analysis and must represent the product stated on the label.
 - 7.3 If the product has an international specification, the requirements of variations in the nutrient referred to in the specification must be observed, in addition to these guidelines.
8. Supplementary nutritional information
 - 8.1 Supplementary nutritional information is intended to increase the consumers' awareness of the nutritional value on the foods and to assist in an understanding of the nutritional statements. There are a number of methods for presenting that information which are appropriate for use on food labels.
 - 8.2 The use of supplementary information on food labels is optional, and it must be in addition to the nutritional statement and not instead of it, unless the local residents are illiterate and have little knowledge of nutrition. In this case, foodstuff group symbols can be used or else colours and pictures may be used in order to provide nutritional information.
 - 8.3 The nutritional information on the labels of foodstuff products must be accompanied by informational programs for consumers in order to increase consumer awareness and understanding of the information.
9. Regular amendments to the nutritional information
 - 9.1 The statement of nutrients must be amended regularly in order to keep the statement of nutrients up to date with any new composition, and in accordance with the public health regulations concerning foodstuffs.
 - 9.2 It is necessary to review the optional information concerning the nutritional benefits of groups of foodstuffs.
 - 9.3 The current definitions of sugars (Clause 3.5), and dietary fibres (Clause 3.6) and the statement of energy (Clause 4.1.2.1.A) are subject to review in new versions.

10. Technical expressions

[English]

polyunsaturated fatty acids
nutrition claim
nutrition declaration
dietary fibres
label
nutrition labelling
nutritional
nutrition
fats
sugars
energy
nutrient
unsaturated
carbohydrates
saturated

[Arabic]

polyunsaturated fatty acids
nutrition claim
nutrition declaration
dietary fibres
label
nutrition labelling
nutritional
nutrition
fats
sugars
energy
nutrient
unsaturated
carbohydrates
saturated