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GCC STANDARDIZATION ORGANIZATION (GSO)



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بطاقات المواد الغذائية المعبأة
Labeling of Prepackaged Food Stuffs

ICS : 67.040.00

Labeling of Prepackaged Food Stuffs

Date of GSO Board of Directors' Approval : 26/11/1434h(02/10/2013)
Issuing Status : Technical regulation

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 TC05/SC1 "GSO Technical Subcommittee for Food Labels "has updated the GSO Technical regulation No. : GSO 9/2007 "Labeling of Prepackaged Food Stuffs" The Draft Technical regulation has been prepared by Sultanate of Oman .

This Technical regulation has been approved by GSO Board of Directors in its meeting No.(18), held on 26/11/1434h(02/10/2013), The approved standard will replace and supersede the standard No. GSO 9/2007.

Labeling of Prepackaged Food Stuffs

1- SCOPE AND FIELD OF APPLICATION

This GSO standard is concerned with the labelling of all prepackaged foods and to requirements relating to the presentation thereof.

2- COMPLEMENTARY REFERENCES

- 2.1 GSO CAC /GL 1 "General guidelines on claims".
- 2.2 GSO 2233 " Requirements on nutritional labeling".
- 2.3 GSO 150 " Expiration Periods of food products".
- 2.4 GSO 654 " General Requirements for prepackaged foods for special dietary use".
- 2.5 GSO 839 " Food packages- part 1: general requirements".
- 2.6 GSO 1366 " General requirements for handling of foods for special medical purpose".
- 2.7 GSO/CAC 107 " Labelling of food additives when sold as such".
- 2.8 GSO ISO 1000:2009 "SI units and recommendations for the use of their multiples and of certain other units"
- 2.9 GSO 1931 " HALAL FOOD Part1:General Requirement".
- 2.10 GSO 2142 "General Requirements for Genetically Modified Processed Food and Feed".
- 2.11 GSO 1863 " Food packages –Part 2: Plastic package - General requirements"
- 2.12 GSO 2333 "Standard to be approved by the organization on "Requirements of the nutritional and health claims " .
- 2.13 GSO CAC GL 32 "Production, Processing, Labelling and Marketing of Organically Produced Foods".
- 2.14 GSO OIML R 79 " Labeling requirements for prepackaged products " .

3- DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 Label: Any label, mark, pictorial, or written descriptive matter, whether printed, stuck, or impressed on the food container or attached to it, in such a way as not to be removable.
- 3.2 Labelling: Any written, or printed information or pictorial mark on the label relating to the food product or Nutritional properties, nature or prepared or consumed, or any one of its components, or any other properties.
- 3.3 Foodstuff: Any substance whether processed, semi-processed or unprocessed, which is intended for direct human consumption or to be used in manufacturing, preparing or treating a foodstuff. It does not include perfumes, tobacco and any other substances used only as drugs.

- 3.4 Container: Any packaging of food for delivery as a single item, whether by completely or partially enclosing the food and includes wrappers. A container may enclose several units or types of packages when such is offered to the consumer.
- 3.5 Ingredient(s): Any substance, including food additives, used in the manufacture or preparation of a foodstuff and is present in the product although possibly in a modified form.
- 3.6 Production date (Manufacturing Date): The date on which the food becomes the product as described and written by manufacture.
- 3.7 Date of packaging: The date on which the food is placed in the immediate container in which it will be ultimately sold to the consumer .
- 3.8 Expiration date : The date which signifies the end of the estimated period under any stated storage conditions, after which the product probably will not have the quality and safety attributes. After this date, the food should not be regarded as marketable or displays.
- 3.9 Food Additives: Any substance not normally consumed as a food by itself and not normally used as a typical ingredients of the food, whether or not it has nutritive value, the intentional addition of which to food for a technological (including organoleptic such as; color, taste and odor) purpose in the manufacture, processing, preparation, treatment, packaging, transport or holding of such food results or may by reasonably expected to result directly or indirectly in it or its by-products becoming a component of or otherwise affecting the characteristics of such food.
- 3.10 Lot: a definitive quantity of a commodity produced essentially under the same conditions.
- 3.11 Production code: A code given to the quantity of a foodstuff produced, under the same conditions during a certain period of time, normally by the same production line or production unit.
- 3.12 Processing Aid: a substance or material not including apparatus or utensils and not consumed as a food ingredients by itself intentionally used in the processing of raw materials foods or its ingredients to fulfill a certain technological purpose during treatment or processing and which may result in the non-intentional but unavoidable presence of residues or derivatives in the final products.
- 3.13 Foods for catering purpose: Those foods for use in restaurants, canteens, schools, hospitals and similar institutions where food is offered for immediate consumption.

4- GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

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

- 4.1 Prepackaged food shall not be described or presented on any label or in any labeling by words, pictorial or other devices which refer to or are suggestive either directly, of any other food product with which such food might be confused or in such a manner as to lead the purchaser or consumer to suppose that the food is connected with the other product.

- 4.2 Prepackaged food shall not be described on any label or in any labeling in a manner that is false, misleading or deceptive or is likely to create an erroneous impression regarding its character in any respect.
- 4.3 When use any logo a special for quality or organic product...etc, must provide a proof of the validity of this claims .
4. 4 Do not write phrases or logo or symbols related to quality management system.

5- MANDATORY LABELLING OF PREPACKAGED FOODS

5.1 The Name of the Food

- 5.1.1 The name shall indicate the true nature of the food and normally be specified and not generic.
- 5.1.2 Where a name or names have been established for a food in Gulf standards, at least one of those names shall be used and in other case the name prescribed by national legislation shall be used.
- 5.1.3 In the absence of any such name, either a common or usual name existing by common usage as an appropriate descriptive term which was not misleading or confusing to the consumer shall be used.
- 5.1.4 Accompanied by the name of the food or next to, such additional words or phrases as necessary to avoid misleading or confusing the consumer in regard to the true nature and physical condition of the food including but not limited to the type of packing medium, style and the condition or type of treatment it has undergone, for example; dried or concentrated or reconstituted or smoked.
- 5.1.5 In the case of foods in which a component or ingredient that consumers expect to be normally used or naturally present has been substituted with a different component or ingredient, the labelling shall bear in addition to the list of ingredients a clear indication of the component or the ingredient that has been used for the partial or whole substitution next to the name of the product .

5.2 List of Ingredients

- 5.2.1 A list of all ingredients shall be declared in descending order of ingoing weight (m/m) at the time of manufacture of the food , except for a single ingredient food.
- 5.2.2 Where an ingredient is itself the product of two or more ingredients, such a compound ingredient may be declared, as such, in the list of ingredients, provided that it is immediately accompanied by a list, in brackets, of its ingredients in descending order of proportion (m/m).
- 5.2.3 The list of ingredients shall be headed or preceded by an appropriate title which consists of or include the term " ingredient".
- 5.2.4 A list of food additives to the product or their numerical codes (international classification system (ICS) or European index) need to be declared and its functional as in item (5.2.8.2) .
- 5.2.5 Declared names of foods and ingredients which cause hypersensitivity by written contain of :

- 5.2.5.1 Cereals containing gluten substance ;i.e., wheat, barley ,oats, rye, spelt as such or their hybridized strains and their products.
- 5.2.5.2 Crustacea and their products.
- 5.2.5.3 Eggs and egg products .
- 5.2.5.4 Fish and fish products .
- 5.2.5.5 Peanuts, soybeans and their products.
- 5.2.5.6 Walnuts and their products.
- 5.2.5.7 Milk and milk products (lactose included) .
- 5.2.5.8 sulphite in concentration of 10 ppm or more.
- 5.2.5.9 Celery and their products.
- 5.2.5.10 Mustard and their products
- 5.2.5.11 Sesame seeds and their products.
- 5.2.5.12 Clams and their products.
- 5.2.5.13 Lubin and their products.
- 5.2.6 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.
- 5.2.7 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".
- 5.2.8 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 5/2/5 shall be declared.
- 5.2.9 A specific name shall be used for ingredients laid down in Clause (5/1), except :-
- 5.2.9.1 For generic nomenclature: The following names are used for components with the exception of those listed in item (4/2/5) only if the use of labeled more clearly:

Title of classes	Specific class names
5.2.9.1.1 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 .
5.2.9.1.2 Refined fats.	The term 'fat' together with either the quality 'vegetable' or 'animal, as appropriate.

5.2.9.1.3	Starches , other than chemically modified Starch.	'Starch'.
5.2.9.1.4	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'.
5.2.9.1.5	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.'
5.2.9.1.6	All types of cheese where the cheese or amixture of cheeses constitutes an ingredient of another food , provided that the labeling and presentation of such a food does not refer to a specific type of cheese.	' Cheese '
5.2.9.1.7	All spices and spice extracts, not exceeding 2% of the weight, whether added individually or in combination in the foods.	'Spices' , 'spice' or 'mixed spices' as appropriate .
5.2.9.1.8	All herbs or parts of herbs as appropriate, not exceeding 2% of the weight, whether added singly or as a mixture in the foods.	'Essential herbs 'or ' mixed essential herbs', as appropriate .
5.2.9.1.9	All types of gum preparations used in producing the gum base for the manufacture of chewing gum .	'Gum base'.
5.2.9.1.10	All types of sucrose .	'Sugar'.
5.2.9.1.11	Anhydrous dextrose and dextrose monohydrate .	'Dextrose' or 'glucose'.
5.2.9.1.12	All types of caseinates	'Caseinates'
5.2.9.1.13	Milk products containing a minimum of 50% of milk protein (m/m) in dry matter.	'milk protein'

5.2.9.1.14	Raw , pressed or refined cocoa butter	'cocoa butter'
5.2.9.1.15	All crystallized fruits not exceeding 10% of the weight of food.	'Crystallized fruit '

5.2.9.2 For the food additives permitted for use in Gulf Standards the following functional names shall be used beside the specific name or international number:-

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| - Acidity Regulators | - Colour Retention Agents |
| - Acids | - Emulsifiers |
| - Anti-caking Agents | - Emulsifying Salts |
| - Anti-foaming Agents | - Firming Agents |
| - Anti-oxidants | - Flour treatment Agents |
| - Bulking Agents | - Flavour Enhancers |
| - Colours | - Foaming Agents |
| - Gelling Agents | - Raising Agents |
| - Glazing Agents | - Stabilizers |
| - Humectants | - Sweeteners |
| - Preservatives | - Thickeners |

5.2.9.3 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).

5.2.9.4 Artificial sweeteners or nutritive are not allowed in all baby foods.

5.2.10 A food additive carried over into a food in a significant quantity or in an amount sufficient to perform a technological function in that food as a result of the use of raw materials or other ingredients in which the additive was used shall be included in the list of ingredients.

5.2.11 A food additive carried over into foods at a level less than that required to achieve a technological function, and processing aids, are exempted from declaration in the list of ingredients. The exemption does not apply to food additives and processing aids listed in item (5.2.4.).

5.2.12 To declare the source of animal if the food item or one of its components contain animal component.

5.3 Nutritional Information:

The following nutritional information shall be declared on labels of prepackaged Foodstuffs intended for direct consumption or after heating.

5.3.1 The nutritive value of the prepackaged foodstuffs to include such essential elements as: (Carbohydrates- Fats- Protein- Dietary fibers - Energy).

- 5.3.2 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.
- 5.3.3 All nutritional information and /or net content shall be set forth as percentage by weight if, it is less than 100 g or 100ml or by food serving specified by the manufacture.
- 5.3.4 The information shall be set out in international units (g. mg. µg- IU) and (kilocalories) for Energy values.
- 5.3.5 When written any nutrition or health claims on packaged food items must be this claim correct and misleading according to the item (12.2).
- 5.4 NET CONTENTS:**
- 5.4.1 The net contents at the time of packaging, shall be declared in metric system .
- 5.4.2 The net contents shall be declared by volume for liquid foods, by weight for solid foods and either by weight or volume for semi-solid or viscous foods.
- 5.4.3 In addition to the declaration of net contents, a food packed in a liquid medium shall carry a declaration in the metric system of the drained weight of the food. For the purposes of this requirement, liquid medium means water, aqueous solutions of sugar and salt, fruit and vegetable juices in canned fruits and vegetables only, or vinegar, either singly or in combination.
- 5.4.4 Require that the equivalent of the net weight of the contents of the package, size, 90% of the nominal capacity of the packaging used as a minimum in the following Cases:
- When required by the safety of the production.
 - Provides protection for the saved contents.
 - When the text of this in one of the specification standards.
- 5.4.5 The quantity of products in the containers shall be according to the GSO standards mention in item (2.14).
- 5.5 NAME AND ADDRESS:**
- 5.5.1 The name and address of the manufacturer or packer shall be declared in the case of the packer is not the manufacture.
- 5.5.2 The name of distributor, importer, exporter or vendor may be written.
- 5.6 COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:**
- 5.6.1 The country of origin or manufacture or producer of the food shall be declared.
- 5.6.2 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.
- 5.7 DATE MARKING AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR STORAGE AND USE:**
- 5.7.1 Without prejudice to what has been mentioned in Gulf standard stated in item (2.4) 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). Shelf life period calculated until the end of month recorded its expiration.
- 5.7.2 The use of any of the following statements for expressing the expiration date is permissible , it is mandatory the production date :-
- 5.7.2.1 The expiration date.
- 5.7.2.2 Consume until date.....
- 5.7.2.3 Best until.....from production date.
- 5.7.2.4 Best before date.....
- These phrases shall be accompanied by either the date itself , or a reference to where the date is given .
- 5.7.3 Dates shall be engraved or in relief, printed or stamped by irremovable ink directly on all packages or on their original label by the producer only. Statements intended to appear on the label shall be marked in a clearly visible and easily legible manner to the consumer, it shall not obscure any information required on the label.
- Adding stickers for production and expiry dates is not permissible. There shall be not more than one date of production or of expiry on the same package, both dates shall not be subject to deletion, change or deceit.
- 5.7.4 The expiration date is not require to mention and it's enough to mention the production or harvest year and production date according to product nature in the case of the following products :-
- Fresh fruits and vegetables, including potatoes which have not been peeled, cut or similarly treated .
 - Bakers' ware or pastry which are normally consumed within 24 hours from their manufacture .
 - Vinegar packed in glass containers.
 - Non- fortified edible salt.
 - Solid sugars.
 - Chewing gum.
 - Honey.
 - Dry and dried legumes, uncooked and un-canned such as peas, kidney bean, chick peas, broad beans, Egyptian beans, lentils, etc;
 - Dried vegetables; medical plants and herbs, anise, chamomile, clove, saffron, ... etc;
 - Loose tea.
 - Dry cereals (rice- barley- oats- corn...etc.)

- Liquid and dried glucose.

- 5.7.5 In addition to the expiration period, 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, as shown below, is mandatory ; however, whenever declared on the label it shall be placed in conjunction with the name of food.



- 5.8.2 When an irradiated product is used as an ingredient in another food, this shall be so declared 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:

May exempt small unit packages, if the largest surface area is less than 10 cm², may from the requirements ingredients and batch production number and expiry dates and instructions and nutritional information exempt must write all labels on the packaging container.

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 2.6).
- 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.
- 7.2.2.5** Its not permitted to put additional sticker of production and expiration date, and not be more than one date of production and expiration on the container. Dates must not be removed, changed or misplayed.
- 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** Each container shall be embossed or otherwise permanently marked in code or in clear to identify the producing factory and the lot.