

Annexe 14



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The use of dairy terms for labelling and promotional information

Dairy terms means names, designations, symbols, pictorial or other devices which refer to or are suggestive, directly or indirectly, of milk or milk products. This includes names and designations of milk or milk products and pictures of milking animals such as cows, churns, milk cans, etc.

The General Principles of Food Labelling

According to Codex Alimentarius, food products shall not be labelled in a manner that is false, misleading or deceptive or is likely to create an erroneous impression regarding their character in any respect. This includes making direct or indirect reference to other products with which the food might be confused and could lead consumers to be misled as to the true nature of the food concerned.

The Unique Perceptual and Regulatory Position of Milk and Milk Products

Their natural origin, nutritional value, functional properties and sensory characteristics have created a uniquely positive consumer perception and strong market position of milk and milk products all over the world. The production and placement on the market of cheaper imitations can be a lucrative business. Codex Alimentarius adopted the Codex General Standard on the Use of Dairy Terms (GSUDT) in 1999 in order to protect consumers from being confused or misled by the use of dairy terms on non-dairy products, to ensure the correct use of dairy terms intended for milk and milk products, and to ensure fair practices in the food trade. The Codex GSUDT is globally recognized and has been implemented in the regulations or policies of many countries all over the world.

Scope, Definitions and Application of the GSUDT

- The GSUDT covers both labelling and promotional information about for further processing as well as foods for direct consumption. It defines "milk", "milk product", "composite milk product", "reconstituted milk product", "recombined milk product" and "dairy terms" and provides clear rules for application of terms. The GSUDT also lays out rules for modifying the composition of milk and milk products (e.g. skimmed milk, calcium enriched milk), and states that there are limitations to the extent such modification can take place without altering the basic product identity (e.g. fat-free butter or protein-free cheese would not be permitted as product names for marketing these products).
- The GSUDT does provide exceptional permissions for the use of dairy terms on non-dairy foods whose nature is clear from traditional usage or when the term is clearly used to describe a characteristic quality of the non-milk product (e.g. peanut butter, coconut milk, cow peas, cocoa butter). Such use is dependent on avoiding any erroneous impression that the non-milk product is milk, a milk product or a composite milk product.

Importance of the Codex GSUDT for the Global Dairy Sector

The clear rules as laid down in the Codex General Standard on the Use of Dairy Terms (GSUDT) provide an internationally accepted framework to protect the integrity of milk and milk products against cheaper or nutritionally inferior imitation products that attempt to take advantage of the natural and healthy image of milk and milk products. Its application assists consumers all over the

world in making their own purchasing decisions with regard to milk products versus non-milk products and it ensures fair practices in the food trade.

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