

Legislative Proposal Relating to Formula Products and Foods Intended for Infants and Young Children under the Age of 36 Months in Hong Kong

Technical Meeting with Trade
15 November 2012

Overview

- Codex-based approach

- Legislative proposals
 - Nutritional composition requirement
 - Nutrition labelling requirement
 - Timeframe of implementation

- Other issues
 - Labelling of sodium content in non-cereal-based foods for infants and young children
 - Regulation of claims

Codex-based approach

- **Codex principles + international practices**
 - To ensure that our legislative proposals are on par with the international standards
 - To strike a balance between the protection of health of infants and young children and the need to maintain stable supply of formula products and foods for infants and young children

Legislative proposals

- Codex requirement on **nutritional composition** (i.e. energy and 33 nutrients as specified by Codex) for **infant formula** for infants before complementary feeding is introduced;
- **Nutrition labelling** requirement for
 - **Infant formula** for infants before complementary feeding is introduced
 - by listing the energy and 33 nutrients which are required to be present in infant formula by Codex
 - **Follow-up formula** for infants and young children under the age of 36 months
 - by listing the energy and 25 nutrients as specified by Codex
 - **Foods** intended for infants and young children under the age of 36 months
 - by listing the nutrients specified by Codex

Nutritional composition – Infant formula

- Propose to stipulate in the law that the Codex requirement on energy and 33 nutrients for infant formula must be followed
 - In particular, the level of energy and each nutrient must fall within the range specified by Codex
 - Before the introduction of complementary feeding, infants will need to rely solely on breast-milk and/or infant formula for normal development and growth
 - To protect health of infants

Nutritional composition – Follow-up formula and other foods

- Not proposed to impose this on follow-up formula and foods and infants and young children because
 - Infants and young children who have begun complementary feeding are no longer solely dependent on milk formulae for nutrients;
 - Conventional child statistics has indicated satisfactory child growth and there is no data to reflect specific nutritional deficiencies;
 - Codex composition standard for follow-up formula was set over 20 years ago and follow-up formula has undergone significant development over the years. Codex has just started the process of reviewing this set of standard; and
 - A balanced nutrition for children growth should be achieved by parental and caregiver education on the appropriate food intake.

Nutrition labelling – Formula products

- For infant formula products
 - To require labelling of energy and 33 nutrients (“1+33”) i.e. those nutrients on which Codex has set the compositional requirements

- For follow-up formula
 - To require labelling of energy and 25 nutrients (“1+25”) as required by Codex

Nutrition labelling – processed cereal-based foods

	Expression	Energy	Protein, Fat, Carbohydrates	Vitamins & Minerals
Cereal to be prepared with milk or nutritious liquid	per 100g or per 100ml as sold; <u>where appropriate</u> , also per serving as consumed	in kcal <u>and</u> kJ	in g	1 vitamin (B1) and 1 mineral (sodium) (vitamin A and D if added)
Cereal with an added high protein food	per 100g or per 100ml as sold; <u>where appropriate</u> , also per serving as consumed	in kcal <u>and</u> kJ	in g	3 vitamins (A, B1 and D) and 2 minerals (sodium and calcium)
Pasta	per 100g or per 100ml as sold; <u>where appropriate</u> , also per serving as consumed	in kcal <u>and</u> kJ	in g	1 vitamin (B1) and 1 mineral (sodium) (vitamin A and D if added)
Rusk and biscuit	per 100g or per 100ml as sold; <u>where appropriate</u> , also per serving as consumed	in kcal <u>and</u> kJ	in g	1 vitamin (B1) and 1 mineral (sodium) (calcium if milk is added) (vitamin A and D if added)

Nutrition labelling – other foods

	Expression	Energy	Protein, Fat, Carbohydrates	Vitamins & Minerals
Canned baby foods	per 100g as sold <u>as well as</u> per serving as consumed	in kcal <u>and/or</u> kJ	in g	If added
Prepackaged food for special dietary uses	Per 100g or 100ml as sold; where appropriate, also per serving as consumed	in kcal and kJ	in g	(specific nutrients or other components which provide the characterizing essential feature of the food)

* If the above product is a **food for special medical purposes** which is for the dietary management of patients and to be used only under medical supervision, requirements in Codex Standard for the Labelling of and Claims for Foods for Special Medical Purposes (CODEX STAN 180-1991) should be followed. For these foods, the amounts of vitamins and essential minerals should also be labelled.

Rationale for nutrition labelling requirements

- For **infant formula**
 - To ensure that infant formula for sale in Hong Kong is safe and nutritionally adequate
 - Consumers are correctly informed about this in respect of each product through the label

- For **follow-up formula** and **foods intended for infants and young children under the age of 36 months**
 - To help parents and caretakers make informed choice
 - in line with the existing Nutrition Labelling Scheme

Timeframe of implementation

- Grace period:
 - To allow sufficient time for the trade to prepare for the changes and the necessary laboratory equipment and techniques on the testing of the relevant nutrients to be in place
 - To take into account the views received during the consultation before finalising its duration

Other issues – labelling of sodium content in non-cereal-based food

- Additional requirement on labelling of sodium content in non-cereal based food for infants and young children?
 - Sodium is necessary for proper function of the body, but prolonged excessive intake of sodium may increase the risk of developing high blood pressure
 - Codex does not have mandatory labelling requirement of sodium content in all non-cereal based food
 - Be challenged at WTO for setting up trade barrier?
 - Labelling of sodium content is quite common in overseas countries, e.g. US, Australia/NZ, EU countries
 - We welcome views on this issue

Other issues – regulation of claims

- At present, there is still lack of international consensus on the regulation of claims.
- In view of the complexity and controversies concerning the regulation of claims, more time would be needed for consultation among stakeholders and public before a consensus can be reached.
- To avoid delay in the more urgent task of regulating nutritional composition and nutrition labelling of formula products and foods intended for infants and young children under the age of 36 months, we propose to tackle the issue of regulating claims at a later stage in the coming year.
- We have already started to examine various regulatory options for claims and will take into account international practices as well as the current situation in Hong Kong in mapping out the way forward.

Thank You!
