



New whole grain iso standard supports national adoption and policy alignment

[*ISO 20810:2026, Whole grain — Definition and technical criteria*](#), has just been published. It is the first international standard to provide a globally harmonized definition of whole grain as a food ingredient together with clear front-of-pack labelling criteria. The standard responds to long-standing regulatory and market fragmentation, where inconsistent national definitions and labelling approaches have created confusion for regulators, industry and consumers alike.

According to ISO/TC 34/SC 4, which developed the standard, ISO 20810:2026 is designed to be used flexibly by ISO members depending on national context.

The TC expects strong interest in national adoption particularly in countries that are revising dietary guidelines or implementing public-health strategies aimed at increasing whole grain intake and reducing diet-related disease. By providing a single, science-based definition and consistent labelling criteria, ISO 20810:2026 can support concrete national plans to raise whole grain consumption and improve consumer trust.

A key consideration for ISO members assessing adoption is alignment with existing national definitions and regulations. While many current definitions of whole grain as an ingredient are broadly similar, definitions and criteria for whole-grain foods vary significantly across countries. The TC advises national standards bodies to assess what adoption of ISO 20810:2026 would mean for current labelling rules, processing practices and regulatory frameworks. Some members have noted that national adoption may also depend on developments at [*Codex Alimentarius*](#) level.

Beyond formal standardization pathways, members of ISO/TC 34/SC 4 and its Whole Grain Working Group are actively contributing to initiatives that raise awareness of the standard and its benefits. This includes leveraging the global networks of large international organizations such as the [*International Association for Cereal Science and Technology \(ICC\)*](#) and the [*ICC Whole Grain Initiative \(ICC/WGI\)*](#) whose memberships include globally operating companies and experts engaged in promoting whole grain consumption worldwide. These efforts are driven by individual experts and stakeholders involved in the TC and are aimed at supporting national uptake and practical implementation.

From the TC's perspective, the most important message for national assessment is that ISO 20810:2026 fills a critical gap. Whole grain consumption is associated with better health outcomes and more sustainable food systems, yet intake remains below recommendations in most countries. A major barrier has been the absence of a single, credible and internationally agreed definition. The new standard provides that common foundation, supporting regulatory clarity, trade alignment and evidence-based national policy-making.

Call to action for ISO members

ISO members considering national adoption or use of ISO 20810:2026 are encouraged to contact ISO/TC 34/SC 4 with any questions related to implementation, alignment with existing national frameworks, or appropriate adoption pathways (identical adoption, endorsement or referencing). The TC and its Whole Grain Working Group remain available to provide technical insight and advice to support informed national decision-making.

For more information, please contact TC34/SC4 Committee Manager, Xiaozhe Qi (isotc34sc4@163.com)

Note: this article will be shared with ISO members in the ISO Newsletter of June 17th 2026. ICC and ICC/WGI may share this information with their networks. Recipients may also use this information and adapt it, for example for communication at national level.