



Press Release

New ISO Standard Establishes Global Definition and Labelling Criteria for Whole Grain

A growing body of scientific evidence shows that increased consumption of whole grain is essential for improving public health and reducing the environmental impact of food systems. Achieving this requires a globally harmonized definition of whole grain and clear, consistent criteria for labelling whole-grain foods.

- The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) has now published the Standard [ISO 20810:2026, “Whole grain — Definition and technical criteria”](#) - the first international standard on whole grain, issued by a global standardization body, providing greater regulatory clarity, improved consumer transparency and a level playing field for industry. The [ICC Wholegrain Initiative](#) played a decisive role as a partner in achieving this milestone.

Key items of the Standard: definition and front-of-pack labelling criteria

Definition of wholegrain – as food ingredient

Grain consisting of the intact, ground, cracked, flaked, or otherwise processed kernel after the removal of inedible parts, such as the hull or husk, in which all anatomical components, including the endosperm, germ and bran are present in the same relative proportions as in the intact kernel

Front-of-pack labelling criteria- for foods with whole grain – based on dry mass

At least 50% whole grain ingredients for calling a food a whole-grain product

At least 25 % for any designation of whole grain front-of-pack

Supporting innovation and consumer trust

Detailed criteria of the ISO Standard provide a range of options for developing attractive products. All cereal grains of the *Poaceae* family used for human consumption can be used, and the pseudocereals amaranth, buckwheat, tartary buckwheat and quinoa. Processing – to be executed according to good manufacturing principles – also includes malting and fermentation.

The dry mass based labelling criteria provide additional flexibility for manufacturers to innovate, whereas consumers can trust that whole grain is the first ingredient in whole-grain foods and can rely on dietarily meaningful levels when whole grain is designated front-of-pack.

Addressing global regulatory inconsistency

Current definitions for whole grain as a food ingredient are similar around the globe, whereas definitions of whole-grain containing foods, existing in some countries, show major differences. Both the existence of two types of definitions – and the major differences in whole-grain food definitions, are causing confusion for regulators and stakeholders.

The Standard addresses this by following the ISO principle for ingredients and foods: a definition for the ingredient and labelling criteria for foods. This approach is also applied by Codex for dietary fibre: defined as food ingredients and with labelling criteria for foods; 3% and 6% of fibre for being a “source of fibre” and “high fibre” respectively.