



DEFINITION OF A WHOLE-GRAIN FOOD

DEFINITION - INCLUDING REQUIREMENTS FOR DESIGNATING WHOLE GRAIN FRONT-OF-PACK

I. Definition of a whole-grain food

A whole-grain food shall contain at least 50% whole-grain ingredients based on dry weight

II. Requirements for designating the presence of 'whole grain' front-of-pack

Foods containing a minimum of 25% whole-grain ingredients based on dry weight, may make a front-of-pack claim on the presence of whole grain but cannot be designated 'whole grain' in the product name.*

*The decision to include "and at least 8 grams / serving" in addition to "a minimum of 25% whole-grain ingredients based on dry weight" should be left to national authorities.

The following remarks will apply for I. and II.

1. Whole-grain ingredients used to make whole-grain foods defined in I. and II. must conform to the Definition of Whole Grain as Food Ingredient issued by the Whole Grain Initiative¹
2. The dry weight of a food or ingredient is the weight of the food after its moisture content has been subtracted from its total weight. The content of whole grain is the dry weight provided by all whole-grain ingredients expressed as a percentage of the total dry weight of the food product.
3. Reporting the percentage of whole grain in a product in any front-of-pack labelling is strongly recommended, for ensuring fair practices in the food trade and ease of consumer comparison among and between products.
4. National regulations and definitions, if requiring a greater proportion of whole grains in a product, will prevail. In countries with existing definitions for whole-grain foods that permit less than 50% for labelling a product as a 'whole-grain food', the adoption of the proposed definition is strongly encouraged to promote consumption of whole grains, to provide consistent messaging, and improve public health.
5. Criteria involving permitted levels of other nutrients, ingredients or healthy eating criteria are the responsibility of national authorities. Linking of whole grain labelling only to foods that are considered part of a healthy diet is recommended.
6. A standardised global definition for whole-grain foods will help consumers make informed choices, give food manufacturers clear guidelines for formulation and labelling, and provide a uniform basis for nutrition and health research.

¹<http://www.wholegraininitiative.org>



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ANNEX – Explanatory Notes

General remarks

- The definition is generic and does not include quantitative criteria for specific types of products.
- The terms ‘whole grain’ and ‘whole-grain food’ are generic and actual information that would appear on package will most often be product specific, for example: ‘whole-grain bread’, ‘whole-grain pasta’, ‘whole-grain cereal’.
- The use of the term wholemeal may be legally protected in some jurisdictions and may be equivalent to whole grain. The use of this term should be checked within local contexts.
- The definition requires whole-grain foods to contain on a dry-weight basis more total whole-grain ingredients than any other food ingredient and aims to contribute to credibility for consumers.
- As a result of the inclusion of ‘based on dry weight’, whole-grain products with a high-water content (such as a ready-to-eat porridge or fresh pasta) can be labelled as a whole-grain food.
- 8 grams whole grain per serving – for common serving sizes equivalent to 25-30% whole grain on a dry-weight basis - is widely considered as the minimum contribution of a dietarily meaningful amount of whole grain.
- Serving sizes have different definitions in different countries. Therefore, in order to avoid confusion, the minimum amount of whole grain is expressed in II. as a percentage. Use of serving sizes in labelling and communication is optional and seen to be a mechanism for consumer facing communication rather than a basis for a global regulation.
- National authorities may choose to add “and at least 8 grams / serving” to the text of II.
- Dietary intake of whole grains is associated with improved health and the purpose of this definition is to help consumers identify and choose healthier foods based on their whole-grain content.

Calculation of percentage of whole-grain ingredients based on dry weight

The percentage of whole grain based on dry weight to be used for the definition may be based on either an analysis or a calculation from known or factual average values for the ingredients in the product. The calculation may also be based on commonly determined and accepted data for the ingredients, such as data in food composition databases.

Labelling

The percentage of whole grain to be designated on the pack should be based on local regulations, such as the widely used Quantitative Ingredient Declaration system, also included in the Codex Standard 1 – 1985, section 5.1: Quantitative ingredients declaration. In particular for high-moisture products the percentage of whole grain based on dry weight will be higher than the percentage based on QUID.

In whole-grain foods as defined in I. the percentage of whole grain may vary considerably: a whole-grain food may contain at least 50% up to 100% whole-grain ingredients. For this reason, it is recommended to have front-of-pack labelling that assists consumers choose based on whole-grain content and encourages industry to increase the proportion of whole-grain ingredients in their product.



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NOTE: Further explanations and background information is provided in the document [Whole-grain food definition. Additional Information and guidance](#) available at the Whole Grain Initiative website (<http://www.wholegraininitiative.org>)

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