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### Definitions and technical criteria for foods and food ingredients suitable for vegetarians or vegans and for labelling and claims

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# Contents

	Page
Foreword .....	iv
Introduction .....	v
1 Scope .....	1
2 Normative references .....	1
3 Terms and definitions .....	1
4 Technical criteria for foods and food ingredients suitable for vegetarians and vegans .....	3
4.1 General .....	3
4.2 Foods and food ingredients suitable for ovo-lacto-vegetarians .....	3
4.3 Foods and food ingredients suitable for ovo-vegetarians .....	4
4.4 Foods and food ingredients suitable for lacto-vegetarians .....	4
4.5 Foods and food ingredients suitable for vegans .....	5
5 Labelling and claims .....	5
Bibliography .....	6

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## Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see [www.iso.org/directives](http://www.iso.org/directives)).

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Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), see [www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html](http://www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html).

This document is being prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 34, *Food products*.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at [www.iso.org/members.html](http://www.iso.org/members.html).

## Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide the technical criteria for foods and food ingredients suitable for vegetarians (including ovo-lacto-, ovo- and lacto-vegetarians) or vegans for use by the food and beverage industry at a global level, as well as technical criteria for food labelling and claims.

The document specifies technical criteria to all food and beverage companies, applicable to all organizations, regardless of size or complexity. This document is intended for use in business-to-business communications and relationships in the global food supply chain, in international trade of food products and food labelling and claims.

Conformity to this document helps to assure a level-playing field and fair practices in business-to-business relationships, international trade and food labelling and claims.

NOTE Legally required information, food labelling or claims, or other applicable legal requirements can apply.

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# Definitions and technical criteria for foods and food ingredients suitable for vegetarians or vegans and for labelling and claims

## 1 Scope

The document specifies definitions and technical criteria to be fulfilled for foods and food ingredients to be suitable for vegetarians (including ovo-lacto-, ovo- and lacto-vegetarians) or vegans as well as for food labelling and claims.

The document is applicable in business-to-business communication (B2B), in food trade and food labelling and claims. The definitions and technical criteria apply only post-harvest.

It does not apply to human safety, environmental safety, socio-economic considerations (e.g. fair trade, animal welfare), religious beliefs and the characteristics of packaging materials.

## 2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

## 3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <http://www.electropedia.org/>

### 3.1

#### **animal**

any being belonging to the taxonomic classification Kingdom Animalia, that is all vertebrates and all multi-cellular invertebrates

### 3.2

#### **carrier**

substances used to dissolve, dilute, disperse or otherwise physically modify a food additive or a flavouring, food enzyme, nutrient and/or other substance added for nutritional or physiological purposes to a food without altering its function (and without exerting any technological effect themselves) in order to facilitate its handling, application or use

[SOURCE: EU Regulation 1333/2008 on food additives (in the absence of a Codex Alimentarius definition)]

### 3.3

#### **claim**

any representation which states, suggests or implies that a food (3.4) has particular characteristics relating to its origin, nutritional properties, nature, production, processing, composition or any other quality

[SOURCE: Codex Alimentarius — General Guidelines on Claims (CAC/GL 1-1979)]

### 3.4

#### **food**

any substance, whether processed, semi-processed or raw, which is intended for human consumption, and includes drinks, chewing gum and any substance which has been used in the manufacture, preparation or treatment of "food" but does not include cosmetics or tobacco or substances used only as drugs

[SOURCE: Codex Alimentarius — 26th Edition Procedural Manual of the Codex Alimentarius Commission]

### 3.5

#### **food additive**

any substance not normally consumed as a food (3.4) by itself and not normally used as a typical ingredient (3.7) of the food, whether or not it has nutritive value, the intentional addition of which to food for a technological (including organoleptic) purpose in the manufacture, processing, preparation, treatment, packing, packaging, transport or holding of such food results, may be reasonably expected to result (directly or indirectly) in it or its by-products becoming a component of or otherwise affecting the characteristics of such foods

The term does not include "contaminants" or substances added to food for maintaining or improving nutritional qualities.

[SOURCE: Codex Alimentarius — 26th Edition Procedural Manual of the Codex Alimentarius Commission]

### 3.6

#### **food business operator (FBO)**

the natural or legal persons responsible for ensuring that the requirements of food law are met within the food business under their control

[SOURCE: EU Regulation 178/2002 laying down the general principles and requirements of food law, ... (in the absence of a Codex Alimentarius definition)]

### 3.7

#### **ingredient**

any substance, including a food additive (3.5), used in the manufacture or preparation of a food (3.4) and present in the final product although possibly in a modified form

[SOURCE: Codex Alimentarius — General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Food (CODEX STAN 1-1985)]

### 3.8

#### **label**

any tag, brand, mark, pictorial or other descriptive matter, written, printed, stencilled, marked, embossed or impressed on, or attached to, a container of food

[SOURCE: Codex Alimentarius — General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods (CXS 1-1985)]

### 3.9

#### **labelling**

any written, printed or graphic matter that is present on the label (3.8), accompanies the food, or is displayed near the food, including that for the purpose of promoting its sale or disposal

[SOURCE: Codex Alimentarius — General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods (CXS 1-1985)]



**3.10****processing aid**

any substance or material, not including apparatus or utensils, and not consumed as a food ingredient by itself, intentionally used in the processing of raw materials, foods (3.4) or its ingredients (3.7), to fulfil a certain technological purpose during treatment or processing and which may result in the non-intentional but technically unavoidable presence of residues or derivatives in the final product

[SOURCE: Codex Alimentarius — 26th Edition Procedural Manual of the Codex Alimentarius Commission]

## **4 Technical criteria for foods and food ingredients suitable for vegetarians and vegans**

### **4.1 General**

Foods and food ingredients shall be considered suitable for vegetarians (including ovo-lacto-, ovo- and lacto-vegetarians) or vegans provided the following technical criteria are fulfilled.

### **4.2 Foods and food ingredients suitable for ovo-lacto-vegetarians**

Foods and food ingredients (including additives, flavourings, enzymes and carriers) or processing aids that are not products of animal origin and, in which at no stage of production and processing use has been made of ingredients (including additives, flavourings, enzymes and carriers) or processing aids that are of animal origin, except

- milk, or colostrum;
- eggs or egg products obtained from living animals;
- honey or bee products (e.g. beeswax, propolis);
- wool grease including lanolin derived from the wool of living sheep;

and/or their components or derivatives.

In the case of compound food ingredients, each food ingredient shall meet the technical criteria of this document to be suitable for ovo-lacto-vegetarians.

To avoid unintended presence of non-ovo-lacto-vegetarian substances all stages of production, processing and distribution shall be designed to take appropriate precautions in compliance with Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP).

If the same production line is shared with non-ovo-lacto-vegetarian products/ingredients, thorough cleaning shall be carried out before production of ovo-lacto-vegetarian products commences. This extends to all associated machinery, equipment, utensils and surfaces. Appropriate precautions in compliance with Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) shall be taken before ovo-lacto-vegetarian products are prepared, produced or packaged.

Food Business Operators (FBO), companies working on their behalf or companies over whom the FBO has effective control shall not have carried out tests of any kind on animals for the final product available to the consumer bearing an ovo-lacto-vegetarian claim.

For individual ingredients including processing aids, Food Business Operators (FBO), companies working on their behalf or companies over whom the FBO has effective control shall not have carried out tests of any kind on animals except when there is a mandatory regulatory requirement.