



CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE COMPOSITION AND LABELLING OF YOGURT

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 In 1983, the Dairy Industry and LACOTS recognised the need to ensure that consumers, manufacturers and retailers had a common understanding of the nature of yogurt and its labelling.

This was because yogurt, unlike other well established dairy products such as milk, cream, butter, cheese, milk powders, etc., was not covered by specific legislation related to product composition and labelling.

- 1.2 As a result, the Dairy Industry, in conjunction with LACOTS, developed a Code of Practice for the composition and labelling of yogurt.
- 1.3 In the 31 years since the issue of that Code of Practice there have been many changes in the yogurt manufacturing process and major developments in food legislation generally, and the code has been amended to reflect this. There have also been organisational changes, with LACOTS not existing anymore.
- 1.4 This revised Code of Practice has therefore been developed to reflect current manufacturing and regulatory practice. Unless otherwise stated, its provisions are above those required by the food legislative system and do not in any way alter the law.
- 1.5 This revised Code of Practice has been produced by Dairy UK and the Provision Trade Federation. Defra and the Department of Health were consulted during the writing of this Code and the FSA Food Allergy Branch was consulted on section 5.2. These governmental departments advise on policy and interpretation of legislation, but ultimately it is for the courts to decide on legal interpretation and, as such, their consultation on this Code of Practice should not be viewed as an endorsement.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 Yogurt is the acidified coagulated milk product made from milk or any combination of milk and/or products obtained from milk, in which, after pasteurisation, lactic acid has been produced within the product by the bacterial cultures *Lactobacillus bulgaricus* and/or *Streptococcus thermophilus* with which other suitable bacteria may be used. The appropriate live organisms should be viable, and abundant. Alternatively, yogurt may be subject to heat treatment after fermentation if appropriately labelled (see section 5.1.4).
- 2.2 A yogurt drink is defined as a composite milk product obtained by mixing yogurt with a liquid (milk, fruit juice or water), with or without the addition of other ingredients, to create a drink. The yogurt base/part must meet the definition for yogurt contained in this code prior to the addition of other ingredients. Yogurt drinks should contain a minimum of 40% (m/m) yogurt.
- 2.3 A drinking yogurt is defined as a drinkable product that meets the definition for yogurt contained in this code prior to the addition of other ingredients, with no additional liquids (e.g. milk, fruit juice or water).

3. Composition and Description

- 3.1 Yogurt should have a minimum milk protein content of 2.9% (w/w) before the addition of other ingredients.
- 3.2 Natural yogurt is a plain unsweetened product containing no added colour or other additives.
- 3.3 In line with Regulation (EC) 1924/2006, yogurt described as “low-fat” should contain no more than 3g of fat per 100g of product or 1.5g of fat per 100ml of product. Yogurt described as “fat free” or “virtually fat free” should contain no more than 0.5g fat per 100g or 100ml of product.

4. Added Ingredients

- 4.1 Foodstuffs, including but not limited to, fruit, cereals, vegetables, nuts, chocolate, sugars and flavourings may be added. These can be added prior to or after fermentation, provided they do not replace dairy ingredients or affect the fermentation process.
- 4.2 Permitted stabilisers and thickeners may be used according to good manufacturing practice and current legislation.
- 4.3 Other additives permitted by regulations may be used.
- 4.4 Vitamins and minerals may be added in line with Regulation (EC) 1925/2006.

5. Labelling

5.1 General Labelling

- 5.1.1 The labelling of yogurt shall comply with all the statutory requirements, in particular Regulation (EC) 1169/2011 on the provision of Food Information to Consumers (FIC) and the Food Information Regulations 2014 (FIR) and any amendments thereof. The following provisions are additional to statutory requirements.
- 5.1.2 The spelling YOGURT is preferred.

- 5.1.3 The description “Natural” may only be used to describe yogurt as specified in 3.2.
- 5.1.4 All yogurt subjected to heat treatment after fermentation should bear the description “pasteurised”, “heat treated” or “UHT”, as appropriate, as part of the name of the product.
- 5.1.5 The species of animal from which the milk originated shall be indicated if failure to do this would mislead consumers.
- 5.1.6 If the term “Bio” is applied, this indicates that the cultures are used to create a mild flavour and are still live. It does not mean that the product has been produced using organic production methods.
- 5.1.7 The statements "Contains [name of a strain]" and "Contains live ferments / live cultures" are permitted provided they are presented as statements of fact in relation to the presence of ingredients, and not health claims. Care should be taken where the statement is given special emphasis and could be considered a nutrition claim (a ‘contains’ claim). In this instance, businesses should refer to Article 5 of Regulation (EC) 1924/2006.

5.2 Allergen Labelling

- 5.2.1 Allergen labelling shall be provided in line with the FIC, as set out below.
- 5.2.2 Yogurt produced with no other ingredient other than lactic products, food enzymes and microbiological cultures essential for manufacture – and which consequently does not require a list of ingredients - does not require a ‘Contains milk’ allergen statement because the term ‘yogurt’ is a protected dairy designation and can legally only be made from mammalian milk.
- 5.2.3 When the word “yogurt” is used within an ingredients list, this must be emphasised through a typeset that clearly distinguishes it from the rest of the list of ingredients, for example by means of the font, style or background colour. No further reference to milk is required. Alternatively, the presence of milk may be similarly emphasised in brackets after the term “yogurt” in the ingredients list.

5.3 Date marking

The choice of date marking shall be the responsibility of the individual Food Business Operator. Guidance has been produced by Dairy UK and Defra.

5.4 Nutrition and Health Claims

Any nutrition or health claim must be made in line with Regulation (EC) 1924/2006.

6. List of ingredients

- 6.1 The FIC exempts yogurt to which no ingredient has been added other than lactic products, food enzymes and micro-organism cultures from the requirement to bear a full list of ingredients.

- 6.2 When any ingredient other than lactic products, food enzymes and micro-organism cultures essential to the manufacture of yogurt has been added, and an ingredients list is therefore required, it is permitted to use the compound name 'yogurt' in the ingredients list, followed by the list of ingredients that have been added. Manufacturers may provide a full list of all ingredients including the lactic products, food enzymes and micro-organism cultures, if they wish.

7 General

- 7.1 Yogurts used as ingredients in other foods should comply with the requirements of this Code of Practice.
- 7.2 This Code shall be reviewed from time to time, at the request of Dairy UK or PTF.

8 **References**

- Regulation (EC) No 1924/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 December 2006 on nutrition and health claims made on foods: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:02006R1924-20121129&from=EN>
- Regulation (EC) No 1925/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 December 2006 on the addition of vitamins and minerals and of certain other substances to foods: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:404:0026:0038:EN:PDF>
- Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2011 on the provision of food information to consumers: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32011R1169&from=en>
- Food Information Regulations 2014: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2014/1855/pdfs/ukxi_20141855_en.pdf
- Dairy UK (2012) Guidance on the application of date marks and storage instructions for the dairy industry: [available upon request]
- Defra (2011) Guidance on the application of date labels to food: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69316/pb132629-food-date-labelling-110915.pdf