RESPONSE FORM

Codex Committee on Food Labelling

Electronic Working Group on Allergen Labelling

Second Consultation Paper October 2022

Request for comments on Part 1 – Revision of the GSLPF

The EWG are asked to provide comments on the proposed draft revisions to the GSLPF as discussed in Part 1 of the consultation paper. This includes providing comments on the proposed definitions at Section 2 of Part 1.

Comments on Part 1:

Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia (A&AA) agree with the amendments made to the draft revisions to the GSLPF. The amendments are consistent with the feedback that we have previously provided.
We have one comment to make with regard to the definition of food allergy below.

Food allergy is defined as an adverse health effect arising from a specific immune-mediated response that occurs reproducibly on oral exposure to a given food, which may or may not be mediated by food-specific immunoglobulin class E (IgE) antibodies.

It's almost always oral exposure, however cooking of fish can aerolise protein, which can trigger anaphylaxis. People can also have mild to moderate allergic reactions to touch.

Request for comments on Part 2 – Proposed draft PAL guidelines

Please provide responses to the following questions about the PAL guidelines.

Question 1:
Do you support the Chair's proposal for the title, purpose, and scope?

Yes ☒	No ☐

Please provide reasons for your answer:
A&AA agree that the title should be 'Guidelines for the use of Precautionary Allergen Labelling' and it is not necessary to include "Advisory" in the title. As outlined, consumers and industry understand the term, Precautionary Allergen Labelling (PAL). However, we believe that to ensure PAL is valuable to consumers, it should be mandated and therefore be titled, "**Requirements** for the use of Precautionary Allergen Labelling."

A&AA generally agree that the purpose is "To facilitate consistent and harmonised approaches to the effective use of PAL for communicating to consumers with food allergy about the risk from the unintentional presence of allergens in food due to cross-contact during the production of food," however we believe that cross contact/cross contamination should replace just "cross contact". This uses language that is better understood by the community. In addition, our understanding is that "production of food" means from 'paddock to plate', which would encompass growing, manufacturing as well as the storage and transporting of raw ingredients.

A&AA agree with the scope, "These guidelines apply to PAL when used to indicate the unintended presence of allergens caused by cross-contact in pre-packaged food." However, as we believe PAL should be mandatory, the scope should refer to 'requirements' rather than 'guidelines.'

Question 2:
Do you support the Chair's proposal for the definitions of 'allergen' and 'precautionary allergen labelling'?

Yes ☒	No ☐

Please provide reasons for your answer:
A&AA agree that the definition of allergen should be, "food and ingredients listed in sections 4.1.2.4 and where applicable 4.1.2.5 of the General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged foods.

A&AA generally agree with the definition, "Precautionary Allergen Labelling is a statement made in the labelling of prepackaged foods to indicate a risk from the unintended presence of an allergen(s) due to cross-contact," but believe that cross-contact/cross contamination should replace just "cross contact" as this uses language that is better understood by the community.

Question 3: Do you support the inclusion of the new revised principle 4.1?	
Yes ☒	No ☐
Please provide reasons for your answer: A&AA support that the use PAL be restricted to those situations in which the unintended presence of an allergen(s) cannot be controlled. It should not be used as a blanket statement to absolve food business operators from using good manufacturing practices.	

Question 4: Do you support the revised wording of principle 4.2?	
Yes ☒	No ☐
Please provide reasons for your answer: A&AA agree with principle 4.2 that the decision to use PAL should be based on the findings of a risk assessment which shall include, but is not limited to, quantitative risk assessment. We believe that risk assessment should be evidence/science based, otherwise it is subjective if it is not done quantitatively and therefore does not accurately convey information required for consumers to make an informed choice.	

Question 5: Do you support the including in section 4.3.1 of the draft guideline the established reference doses (RfD) based on ED05 as recommended by the Expert Committee?	
Yes ☒	No ☐
Please provide reasons for your answer: Yes, A&AA agree that PAL should only be used if exposure to an allergen is above the established reference dose for that allergen (ED05). We accept that they are based on levels agreed by expert committee but suggest that they do need review at points in time when more data may become available. This is likely to occur with the high number of oral food challenges that are being undertaken in controlled settings. In addition, we are moving to the National Allergy Council creating an anaphylaxis register, so it is likely that we will have more information on people that are having anaphylaxis. This will allow us to so monitor this space once we move to ED05.	

Question 6:
Do you support principle 4.4 which allows national authorities to determine reference doses for the regional list of allergens in section 4.2.1.5 of the proposed revised GSLPF?

Yes ☒	No ☐

Please provide reasons for your answer:
A&AA agree that where a reference dose is not established for a particular allergen, national authorities can establish a reference dose. This data should be accepted as reflective of local influences and should be reviewed on a regular basis as more information on allergic reactions come to hand. National authorities must include clinical immunology/allergy specialists and people with scientific expertise in food allergy.

Question 7:
Do you support including location and format aspects in the principles for the presentation of PAL?

Yes ☒	No ☐

Please provide reasons for your answer:
The presentation of PAL needs to be simple, consistent and clear for consumers. PAL statements should be clearly distinguishable on packet and need to be able to easily be visualised near the list of ingredients and any related allergen statements.

Question 8:
Which option for a single statement for PAL do you prefer and why?
Option 1 – 'Not suitable for people with a x allergy' or 'Not suitable for x allergy'
Option 2 – 'May contain x'
Option 3 – 'May be present: x'

Option 1 X☐	Option 2 ☐	Option 3	Other ☐

Please provide reasons for your answer. If answering 'Other', please describe your proposed option and explain why you support this.
A&AA prefer option 1 as we believe "not suitable for people with a X allergy" it is the simplest message for all and communicates our desire for people with food allergy to avoid those products which have been assessed as being 'higher risk". If we move to ED05 we need to move to a statement that people need to easily recognise. We believe that Option 1 could become the 'new' trusted PAL single statement used as we transition to EDO5.

Question 9:
Do you support the inclusion of a principle on the need to indicate on the label (e.g. through the use of a symbol) that a risk assessment has been undertaken?

Yes ☒	No ☐

Please provide reasons for your answer:
A&AA believe that a symbol should be included on the label if a risk assessment has been done as otherwise there is no way to communicate to consumers that the product has undergone a risk assessment. We believe that this would instil some confidence in consumers, knowing that the product has undergone risk assessment. Currently packaged food without a PAL may be more of a risk than a product with a PAL and consumers have no way of knowing this.

Question 10:
Do you agree with the proposed principle on education to ensure understanding about PAL by consumers, health care providers and food business operators?

Yes ☒	No ☐

Please provide reasons for your answer:
A&AA strongly believe that there is a lack of understanding in the community about PAL statements and that education/information programs are essential to assist consumers, health care providers and food business operators. This is important if PAL is going to be meaningful, accurate and effective. It is important that the education messaging is consistent.

Question 11:
Do you support the Chairs' proposal to incorporate the draft PAL guideline as an annex to the GSLPF?

Yes ☒	No ☐
Please provide reasons for your answer: A&AA support PAL as an annex rather than as a stand-alone guidance as PAL needs to be consistent with GSLPF and as they both relate to allergen labelling.	