

MAIF Complaint Committee's interpretation of Clauses 5(a) & 9(b) of the MAIF Agreement relating to information on appropriate age range on infant formula labels

Overall Principles

1. The purpose of these guidelines is to support the interpretation of the MAIF Agreement.
2. These guidelines are to be read with the aim of the MAIF Agreement in mind and as an overarching principle: that is, to contribute to the safe and adequate nutrition for infants, by the protection and promotion of breastfeeding and by ensuring the proper use of breast milk substitutes, when they are necessary, on the basis of adequate information and through appropriate distribution.

Label information

3. The purpose of these guidelines is to assist in interpreting the MAIF Agreement.
4. This interpretation takes into account two key elements of the Aim of the MAIF Agreement – on the one hand the necessity for the 'protection and promotion of breast feeding' and on the other the importance of the provision of 'adequate information' around 'the proper use of breast milk substitutes'.
5. Labels are an important means of providing information about the safe and appropriate use of the infant formula to parents and carers. This includes information about the range of age appropriate for the infant formula product.
6. On infant formula product labels, manufacturers and importers:
 - (a) must include information relating to the range of age appropriate for that infant formula product (i.e. suitable from birth or from 6 months – Food Standards Code 2.9.1);
 - (b) may include additional information relating to the range of age appropriate for the infant formula product. This information should be factual and not promotional; and
 - (c) The use of symbols and/or infographics showing all numbers and/or stages of the product range, including highlighting where the product being purchased is in the range, and the use of arrows, triangles or flow chart-like symbols, is not appropriate.

Front of pack/label

7. The use of text, numbers on the label (additional to that required in Standard 2.9.1) to further assist consumers in the identification of age appropriateness of the infant formula product, such as Stage 1 or Stage 2 or the number 1 or 2, is acceptable.

Back of pack/label

8. Information about the range of infant formula products suitable for infants of different ages is acceptable, noting the following:

- (a) Inclusion of the brand name (in text) and the age-appropriateness (text and/or numbers) of other infant formula products in the same range is acceptable.
- (b) Images and/or pack shots of other infant formula products in the brand range are not appropriate.

Definitions

- 'infant formula' – any food described as or sold as an alternative for human milk for the feeding of infants up to the age of twelve months and formulated in accordance with all relevant clauses of the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code, including infant Formula Products Standard 2.9.1
- 'Label' - any tag, brand, mark, pictorial or other descriptive matter written, printed, stencilled, marked, embossed or impressed on, or attached to, a container of infant formulas.