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Packaging as a carrier of information on nutrition and health claims in cereal-based products: From the source of to the gluten-free claim

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Bread and bakery products play a pivotal role in the diet of worldwide consumers, despite considerable differences in country consumption patterns. The food market hence offers myriad cereal-based products meeting the taste, dietary habits and nutritional requirements of everyone. The main role of packaging in this food category is to prevent staling and spoilage and keep crunchiness. Packaging is also the carrier by which consumers make informed choices when buying cereal-products. It displays the content through images, appeals consumers, and claims nutrition and health properties thereof. This work presents the main nutrition and health claims which are mandatorily reported on packaging of cereal-based products, with a focus on understanding the nutritional recommendations by the World Health Organization they originate from, the technological challenges encountered by the food industry and the health benefits of the new formulations. The importance of formulating bread and bakery products which are whole-grain, with a low salt content, free from palm oil or high fructose corn syrup is discussed. A special attention is paid to packaging of gluten-free products. Packaging plays, in fact, a key role in gluten-free products, as labels contribute to better understand whether or not gluten-containing ingredients and additives have been used. The gluten-free claim and label thus give consumers a standardized tool for managing health and dietary intake. Clean labels are also discussed, since over the last two decades the number of health-conscious consumers has increased to search for foods which are minimally processed or formulated with bio-preservation techniques.

Biography

Francesca Melini has been working at the CREA Research Centre on Food and Nutrition since 2007. She acquired expertise on cereals and cereal products with a specific attention on food authenticity and labelling, protected designations of origin, sourdough and gluten-free bread. She has published scientific papers and some book chapters on food authenticity, protected designations of origin and gluten-free products.

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