



AIRLINE CATERING
ASSOCIATION

ACA WEBINAR — SPECIAL MEALS (SPML)

8 February 2022

History of SPMLs

IATA SPML codes

IATA defined SPMLs to ensure passengers can order SPMLs independently from airlines they booked

19XX

2007

IATA SPML Task Force

Legal advise was given to review the definitions of GFML and NLML and was published 2009

IATA SPML Task Force

Task Force proposed to overhaul the SPML codes names and definition – rejected by Reservations and 2009 version was not up-dated

2011

2014

IATA withdraws from SPML governance

Airlines agreed to IATA proposal that airlines would manage SPMLs themselves

Medina took over governance to manage SPMLs from IATA

Medina launched QSAI SPML guidelines in 2016 and releases in 2019 a survey suggesting to give input to health claims

2015 - today

SPML Quick Survey

How many SPMLs are described as IATA SPMLs currently?

The Guideline accounts for 20 SPMLs

What categories of IATA SPMLs are Caterers asked to provide?

1. Medical
2. Religious
3. Child
4. Vegetarian
5. Culinary



**Airline
SPMLs**

What is a health claim?

A statement on a product, or in its advertising, that claims it is good for one's health or improve one's health

What SPML code fall under a quantitative rule?

1. LCML
2. LSML
3. LFML
4. DBML
5. GFML
6. NLML

ACA's mission on SPMLs: Don't Reinvent the Wheel !

Find out Facts

- Review development of SPMLs in the past
- Analysis of 27 airlines on their SPML offers
- Understand distribution of SPMLs by volume

1

Identify Risks

- Which SPML pose a legal risk
- Which SPML pose a health risk
- What are the options to mitigate the risks

2

Involve Stakeholders

- Share with stakeholders outcome 1 and 2
- Develop joint risk mitigation opportunities

3

Jointly Agreed Improvements

- Implement improvements jointly
- Make use and build on what exists
- Do few changes with big effect

4



Facts & Figures from ACA Analysis

A

Managed IATA codes

QSAI / Medina manages **20** SPML types on behalf of IATA

B

Coding Diversity

Airlines use **53** different SPML names for **39** SPML codes

C

Variance in SPML offer within the airlines:

Airlines typically offer between **8** and **24** SPMLs

Fact: 25 airlines offer GFML with 4 different names

Gluten Intolerant Meal

15 airlines offer “Gluten Intolerant Meal” on their website as per IATA definition

Gluten Free Meal

7 airlines offer “Gluten Free Meal” as per outdated IATA definition and against IATA legal advice



Gluten Friendly Meal

2 Airlines offer «Gluten Friendly Meal»

Low Gluten Meal

1 airline offers a «Low Gluten Meal» on its website

2 airlines don't offer GFML

Risks for Airlines and Caterers

Consumer protection has sharpened up in different countries and status quo brings new risks for the industry:

- Health claims triggered by inappropriate (antiquated) definitions
 - Health claims define adherence to quantitative ingredients but not harmonized globally
 - Unclear which legislation applies for which passenger on which aircraft
 - Use of “-free” terminology may expose
 - Caterers during authority audits
 - Airlines in case of passenger health reaction.
- A joint communication campaign would help
- To avoid health claims, more appropriate definition could help mitigate risks

Qualitative Guidelines vs. Quantitative Requirements

SPMLs under “Qualitative” Requirements

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. AVML | 7. SFML |
| 2. BBML | 8. VJML |
| 3. CHML | 9. VOML |
| 4. BLML* | 10. RVML |
| 5. FPML | 11. VLML |
| 6. HNML | 12. VGML |
- 13. GFML (if called Gluten-intolerant/friendly)
 - 14. KSML (relig. process)
 - 15. MOML (relig. process)

SPMLs under “Quantitative” Requirements

- 1. DBML*
- 2. LCML*
- 3. LFML*
- 4. LSML*
- 5. GFML* (if called Gluten-free, low gluten)
- 6. NLML* (when called low/non lactose)

Those are legally defined by different country regulation

* Health claim

Scope: QSAI SPMLs and in-house production

A „low calorie meal“ may not have more than 40 kcal/100g:

LCML
40 kcal
96 g



Reference Regulation:

- **US:** 21 CFR – Part 101; defining calorie free and low calorie claims
- **EU:** EC 1924/2006; defining Low energy and energy reduced claims

SPML Code Changes from Other Stakeholders

IATA SPML Task Force meeting Expert Meeting 2011			Medina Questionnaire 2019	
DBML			DBML	code change offer, caterer to suggest
LCML	DRML	Dietary restrictive Meal	LCML	offered 6 codes weight reduction meal meals replacement for weight control weight control meals weight loss meal diet meal
LFML			LFML	code change offer, caterer to suggest
LSML			LSML	code change offer, caterer to suggest
GFML	GRML	Gluten Restricted Meal	GFML	code change offer, caterer to suggest
NLML	LRML	Lactose Restricted Meal	NLML	code change offer, caterer to suggest

SPML Ordered per Volume Distribution at Hubs (2019)

no "Free-text" SPML considered

Airline A			Airline B		
AVML	81,063	23,07%	AVML	3,022,437	34,94%
VGML	70,149	19,96%	VGML	580,442	6,71%
VLML	48,967	13,93%	VLML	28,271	0,33%
CHML	40,177	11,43%	CHML	3,007,139	34,77%
GFML	27,372	7,79%	GFML	236,704	2,74%
MOML	17,514	4,98%			
HNML	16,065	4,57%	HNML	871,130	10,07%
KSML	13,571	3,86%	KSML	24,093	0,28%
NLML	12,658	3,60%	NLML	73,785	0,85%
LFML	9,305	2,65%	LFML	164,015	1,90%
DBML	9,116	2,59%	DBML	88,017	1,02%
LSML	5,465	1,56%	LSML	31,193	0,36%
			BLML	48,628	0,56%
			FPML	181,111	2,09%
			LCML	14,727	0,17%
			RVML	30,549	0,35%
			VJML	186,211	2,15%
			SFML	51,002	0,59%
			VOML	9,892	0,11%
351,422			8,649,346		

Proposed Topics of Discussion

- ❖ Restrict list of SPMLs to the 20 IATA/Medina ones
- ❖ Keep the current 4-letter codes of SPMLs, but...
- ❖ ... redefine and rename quantitative SPMLs as they are at risk of health claims
- ❖ Abolish questionable SPMLs (e.g. DBML) due to outdated scientific status or very low ordering ?