

Food & Nutrition

FALL 2012

ask | YOUR QUESTIONS



How can a product make a “100 percent whole grain” claim on the package if it contains cornstarch, which is not a whole grain? —Rachel, *New York*

In a product labeled as 100 percent whole grain, all the grain ingredients will be whole grain. However, you may occasionally see products with very tiny amounts of cornstarch if it has been used as a release agent. For the home cook, this would be like greasing and flouring your bread pan with all-purpose flour, then using it to bake 100 percent whole-wheat bread. Or making a pizza crust entirely from whole-grain flour, then dusting the pan with degerminated cornmeal before you bake the pizza. In either case, your finished product will have traces of the “release agent”



on it, but the product will still be fully created with whole grains. FDA regulations, in describing the Standard of Identity for whole-wheat bread, set a precedent for this by allowing small amounts of other grain products including

non-wheat starches (up to 3 parts per 100 parts of flour) to be present.

Cynthia Harriman is director of Food & Nutrition Strategies for Oldways and the Whole Grains Council.