Whole Grain Stamps quickly and easily identify real whole grain products.

Look for these Stamps on products from the world’s leading companies.

Learn how the Whole Grains Council can help you close your whole grains gap at www.WholeGrainsCouncil.org
FAQ on the Whole Grain Stamp

Here are answers to the questions food companies ask us most often about the Whole Grain Stamp.

Q. Why is the Whole Grain Stamp so essential?
A. Governments around the world are increasingly recommending that people eat three or more servings of whole grains per day. But these same governments usually offer no official way for consumers to easily find whole grains.

The eye-catching black and gold Whole Grain Stamp makes finding whole grains simple. Each “Stamped” product guarantees consumers at least half a serving of whole grains. The Stamp makes it easy to get the recommended three servings or more of whole grains each day: Eating three whole grain food products labeled "100% Whole Grain" does the trick – or six products bearing ANY Whole Grain Stamp.

Q. How does the Stamp help consumers better than current package labels?
A. Consumers are often skeptical of sales copy on packages and too rushed to read the fine print of the nutrition facts panel and ingredients list — which in any event do not give clear guidance on whole grain content. The distinctive gold and black Whole Grain Stamp is identifiable at a glance and offers a consistent, trustworthy beacon to consumers across brands.

Q. What types of products can use the Stamp?
A. All sorts of products can use the Stamp — bread, cereal, cake, cookies, crackers, granola, stuffing, pie crusts, tortillas, chips, energy bars, pretzels, popcorn, pasta, flour, bagles, veggie burgers, mixes, wraps and more — as long as they contain at least half a serving — 8 grams — of whole grain per labeled serving.

The Stamp is even found on soups, yoghurt and beverages made with whole grains!

Q. What kinds of grains qualify as WHOLE grains?
A. All grains start out as whole grains. If, after processing, they retain all three parts of the original grain — the germ, the bran and the endosperm — in their original proportions, they still qualify as whole grains.

All of the following qualify as whole grains, when all of their bran, germ and endosperm are used: Amaranth, Barley, Brown and Colored Rice, Buckwheat, Bulgur, Corn and Whole Cornmeal, Emmer, Farro, Kamut® grain, Millet, Oatmeal and Whole Oats, Popcorn, Quinoa, Sorghum, Spelt, Teff, Triticale, Whole Rye, Whole or Cracked Wheat, Wheatberries, and Wild Rice.

Q. What about flax and soy? Do they count as whole grain?
A. No. From a regulatory, nutritional and botanical point of view seeds (like flax, sesame, sunflower and poppy), nuts and legumes – while healthy foods in their own right – are not considered by either the Whole Grains Council or the FDA to be whole grains.

Q. How do companies qualify to use the Whole Grain Stamp?
A. Companies follow these steps:
1. They check their formulations to see which products are eligible to use the Stamp. Products must contain at least 8g of whole grain per labeled serving to use the basic Whole Grain Stamp. Products containing at least 16g of whole grain, and where ALL the grains are whole grains, may use the 100% Whole Grain Stamp. (In Canada, the 100% Stamp is limited to products where all the ingredients are whole grains – so
only a sack of brown rice, a bag of whole grain flour or other similar products would qualify for the 100% Stamp.)

2. They join the Whole Grains Council. Annual dues and a member application are on our website at http://wholegrainscouncil.org/get-involved/join-the-whole-grains-council.

3. They file information about their products, which we review and (usually) approve. Then they receive high-resolution EPS graphic files and guidance from the Council to help them quickly add the Whole Grain Stamp to the packaging of their qualifying products.

Q. What do you mean by “check your formulation?” Be more specific.
A. Here’s an example. Let’s say you’re making muffins. The formulation includes

- 1000g of whole wheat flour
- 800g of whole sorghum flour
- 200g of whole quinoa
- 500g of flaxseed
- 300g of enriched wheat flour

First, check our definition of whole grains on the WGC website. The whole wheat, sorghum and quinoa count as whole grains, but the flaxseed and enriched flour do not. So the formulation has 2000g of whole grain ingredients (1000+800+200). The formulation produces 200 muffins, so each muffin contains 10g of whole grain ingredients (2000 ÷ 200).

The muffins would qualify for the basic Whole Grain Stamp, since they contain at least 8g of whole grain ingredients. They would NOT qualify for the 100% Whole Grain Stamp, because the enriched flour is not a whole grain.

Details for Stamp usage can be found in our Stamp Usage Guides, which you can download on our website at http://wholegrainscouncil.org/for-members/how-to-use-the-stamp.

Q. How long does it take from the time we join to the time we can use the Whole Grain Stamp?
A. The process is relatively quick and depends largely on you. The steps are:

1. Visit the Join the Whole Grains Council page of our website and fill in the membership application.

2. We will review your application and send you an invoice by return email, usually within 1-2 business days. Once we have received your first year’s dues, your membership will be complete.

3. Then you can request the EPS files for the Stamp, and we will provide them to you along with a one-time Stamp Agreement form for you to sign, and a copy of our Stamp Usage Guide.

4. A Product Registration Form must be filed for each product on which you’re requesting to use the Stamp. This brief online form includes the nutrition facts panel and ingredients list for your product, along with other information.

Email cynthia@oldwayspt.org if you’d like to see copies of any of these documents before you decide about joining the Whole Grains Council.
Q. What does it cost to use the Stamp on our packages?
A. There is no cost beyond your membership dues. The Council does not charge a per-package royalty or licensing fee.

Q. Why did you pick 8 grams and 16 grams for the minimums for your two Stamps?
A. These levels are not arbitrary; they are based on the latest research on whole grains and health. Both government and academic scientists agree that people should aim for three servings a day of whole grains.

A serving is defined as at least 16 grams of whole grain content. So the basic Whole Grain Stamp identifies products containing at least 8g of whole grain – products that provide a half-serving of whole grains. We've set the minimum at 16g for the 100% Stamp: products must provide a full serving (or more) of whole grains.

Q. Can I use numbers other than 8g or 16g on the Stamp?
A. Yes! Every Stamp has a different number that reflects the number of grams of whole grain content in a labeled serving of that specific product. If you have a line of products with varying whole grain content, you have the option to standardize by putting the LOWEST number on all products, for consistency.

Q. I can’t easily picture things in grams. Can you help me visualize this?
A. Sixteen grams is just over half an ounce – about one and a half tablespoons of flour. So a small amount of whole grain can really make a big difference in health.

Q. Do some types of foods qualify more easily for the Stamp than others?
A. No. Our Stamp program is a level playing field, as witnessed by the diverse range of products that already qualify to use the Stamp. (You may be thinking of the US FDA's Whole Grain Health Claim, which is difficult for moist foods like bread to qualify for, and which disallows low-fiber whole grains like brown rice and cornmeal.)

Q. Can any company join the Whole Grains Council?
A. Membership in the Council is open to all companies big and small, worldwide, who would like to support increased consumption of whole grains, and who demonstrate their support by joining the Council and participating in Council activities. There are many membership benefits besides the Whole Grain Stamp. Our work to promote whole grains in the media, for instance, benefits both consumers and companies making whole grain products.

Q. Can I use the Whole Grain Stamp on products sold outside the U.S.?
Yes. As of 2012, the Whole Grain Stamp is being used in three dozen countries. Tell us what countries you’re selling your products to, and we can advise you.

Q. Is the stamp part of a government program?
A. No. It’s a voluntary consumer-advocacy program created by the non-profit Whole Grains Council and its parent organization, Oldways, and supported by a unique coalition of small and large companies who manufacture and support whole grain products. The Whole Grains Council is constantly working with government agencies, including the US FDA and USDA, to encourage government rules that promote whole grain consumption, but the WG Stamp program is not a government program. Click here to learn more about FDA/USDA guidance on whole grain labeling.
Q. When did the Whole Grain Stamp first appear on grocery shelves?

A. Some products appeared as early as February 2005, but consumers started to notice the Stamp on a wide variety of foods in mid-2005. Many Whole Grains Council member companies are phasing in the Stamp as they print new packaging and launch new marketing campaigns around whole grains and health. Our website has a list of products using the Stamps, and details on current Stamp usage.

Q. How do consumers understand what the Whole Grain Stamp means?

A. The Whole Grains Council carries out an ongoing PR campaign to familiarize consumers with the Stamp. Since its inception, the Stamp has appeared on the Today Show and on Oprah, and in thousands of newspaper and magazine articles across the USA and outside the country, including major-circulation U.S. publications such as Parade, Cooking Light, Prevention, Vogue and Newsweek magazine.

We will continue to publicize this helpful symbol as more and more products bearing the Stamp continue to appear on grocery shelves. Part of our multi-pronged campaign is pegged to working with grocery chains to educate consumers at the point of sale. Our goal is to make sure the Whole Grain Stamp is universally recognized by consumers everywhere.

For more information, contact
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