

these channels having made particular headway in sectors such as multipacks and boxed chocolates, that is chocolate products not purchased for immediate consumption. One example of the importance of supermarkets as far as chocolate purchasing is concerned has been the decision by Tesco (the UK's largest supermarket) to remove confectionery from its checkouts, in a bid to encourage healthier eating. The company carried this move out within its larger stores in the 1990s and announced that its smaller stores would follow suit during the course of 2014.

Large food retailers such as supermarkets and hypermarkets also account for a growing share of chocolate purchases in other Western European countries such as France and Germany, as well as in the USA and Australia. In Europe, hard discount chains such as Aldi and Lidl represent an increasingly significant feature of the chocolate industry. In less well-developed countries, more informal retail channels still account for a sizeable percentage of sales – examples include vendors and street stalls.

Also worthy of mention is the possibility of the internet assuming an increasing share of global sales of chocolate. In the UK, for example, data from the Institute of Grocery Distribution valued the country's online grocery market at £ 6.5bn in 2013. Although this still accounts for less than 4% of the UK's total food and grocery market, the sector is projected to more than double by the year 2018. Online sales of chocolate and confectionery are reported to be rising in the UK, and it seems highly possible that the chocolate sector may contribute towards some of this growth at least.

## 27.7 The regulatory position

At the international level, cocoa and chocolate products are governed by the Codex Alimentarius series of standards (see also Chapter 28 for a discussion of standards). These aim to provide a high level of consumer protection and fair practice as far as the global trade of food and agricultural products is concerned. These standards are overseen by the Codex Alimentarius Commission, an inter-governmental body jointly sponsored by the Food and Agriculture Organisation and the World Health Organization.

The Codex standards for chocolate products were last revised in 2003 and are listed in Table 27.7. As can be seen, these cover constituent ingredients for products such as chocolate and white chocolate, and determine recommended levels of cocoa butter, cocoa solids and milk fat. It seems unlikely that the Codex committee will wish to revisit the standards in the near future since the path to obtaining the existing agreement was long and difficult.

As is the case with other foods, confectionery and chocolate products must comply with national labelling legislation. This varies according to country and region – in the UK, for example, the respective legislation is described in the

**Table 27.7** Extract from Codex standards for chocolate products (Codex Alimentarius, 2003).

Products	Constituents (%)				
	Cocoa butter	Fat-free cocoa solids	Total cocoa solids	Milk fat	Total milk solids
Chocolate	≥18	≥14	≥35		
Milk chocolate		≥2.5	≥25	≥2.5 or 3.5	≥12 or 14
Family milk chocolate		≥2.5	≥20	≥5	≥20
White chocolate	≥20			≥2.5 or 3.5	≥14

Notes:

1 “Milk solids” refers to the addition of milk ingredients in their natural proportions except that milk fat may be added or removed.

2 Where two figures are shown (e.g. ≥2.5 or 3.5 for milk fat in milk chocolate), this indicates that agreement could not be reached and that the authorities in the country where the product is marketed are free to determine which standard shall apply.

3 The table above is an extract from the Codex standards which are far more comprehensive, covering 14 types of chocolate other than those listed above. Readers with an interest in such matters are advised to consult the original document (see References for details).

Food Labelling Regulations. Although a full explanation of these is outside the scope of this chapter, they require pre-packed foods to carry a label showing the name of the food itself, as well as a list of its ingredients and their quantity, and other information such as the name and address of the manufacturer and any special conditions of use.

At the European level, the European Union (EU) Directive relating to cocoa and chocolate products for human consumption was passed at the turn of the millennium in 2000, and later amended slightly in 2008. Under the terms of the original piece of legislation, products which are labelled as chocolate – examples of which include milk chocolate, family milk chocolate, filled chocolate, white chocolate and powdered chocolate – are required to meet certain compositional standards. For certain types of chocolate, this Directive determines the minimum percentage of cocoa butter which can be used, while it also permits the use of vegetable fats, assuming this does not exceed 5% of the end product and is clearly stated on the label.

In most EU countries, the Directive states that “milk chocolate” must contain at least 25% cocoa solids and a minimum of 14% milk solids. In the UK and Ireland, however, “milk chocolate” can be made with a minimum 20% for both cocoa solids and milk solids. This is permitted to be sold in other EU member states, although it must be labelled as “family milk chocolate”. Elsewhere in the EU, some chocolate products sold in Belgium carry the AMBAO certification mark, which states that no non-cocoa vegetable fats or artificial additives have been used in the manufacturing process.