



Food Manufacture

# Packing and Labelling Department

## Lesson 1

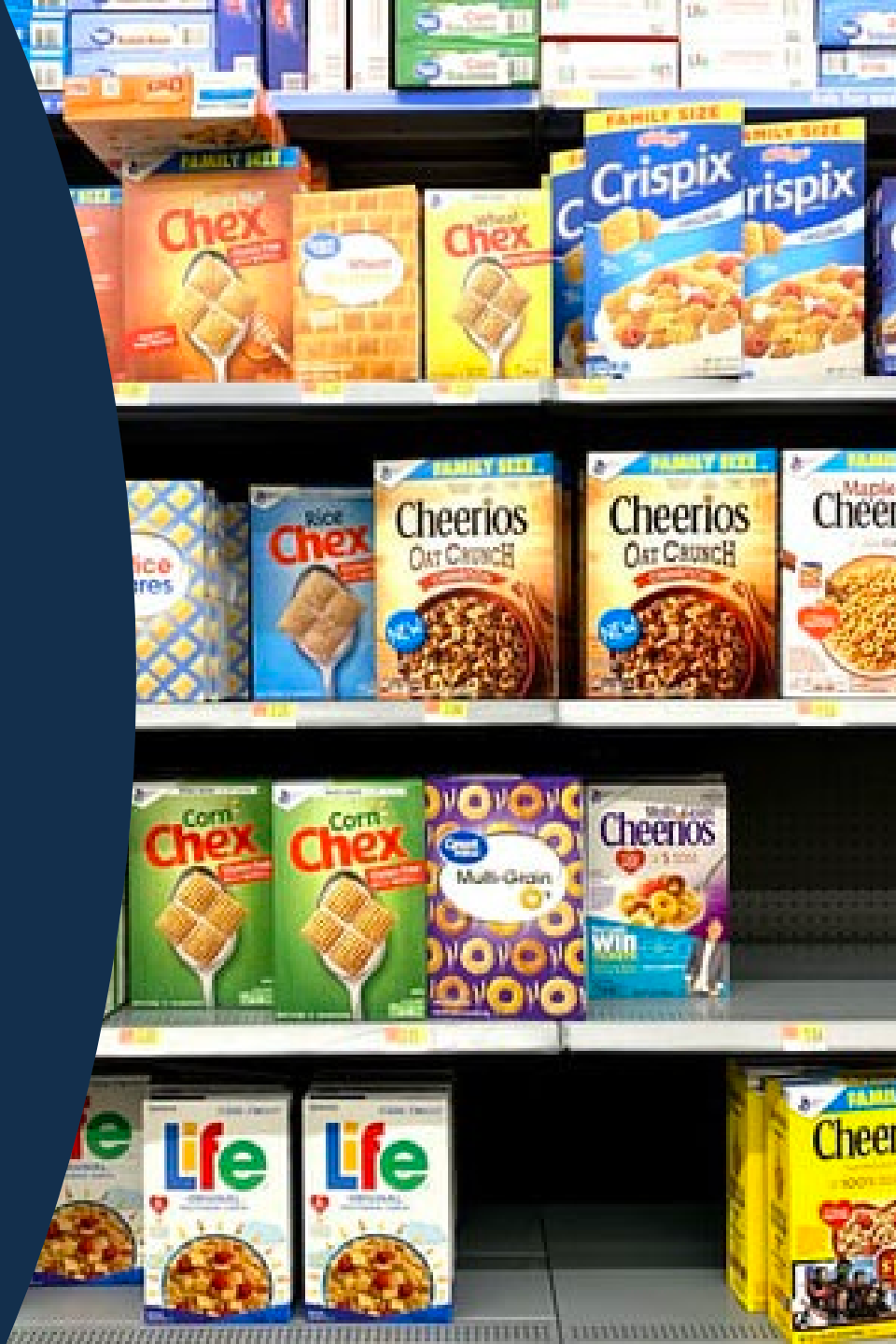
Become proficient in the packing and labelling department in a food manufacturing environment by completing this course.





# Learning Objectives

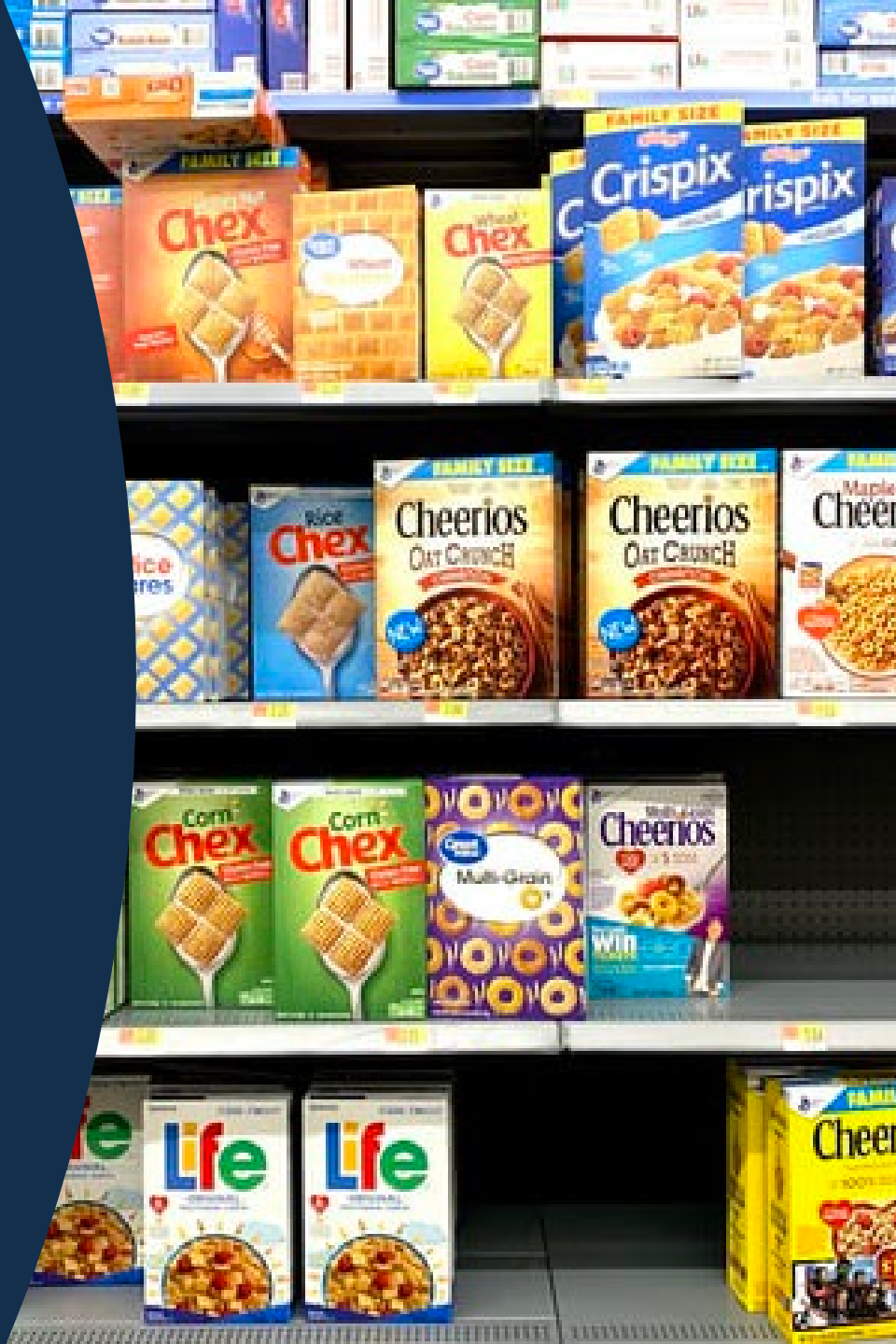
- Define the function of a packing specification
- List the specific requirements recorded for the product packaging specification
- Summarise how to prepare, carryout and complete packing and labelling products





# Learning Objectives

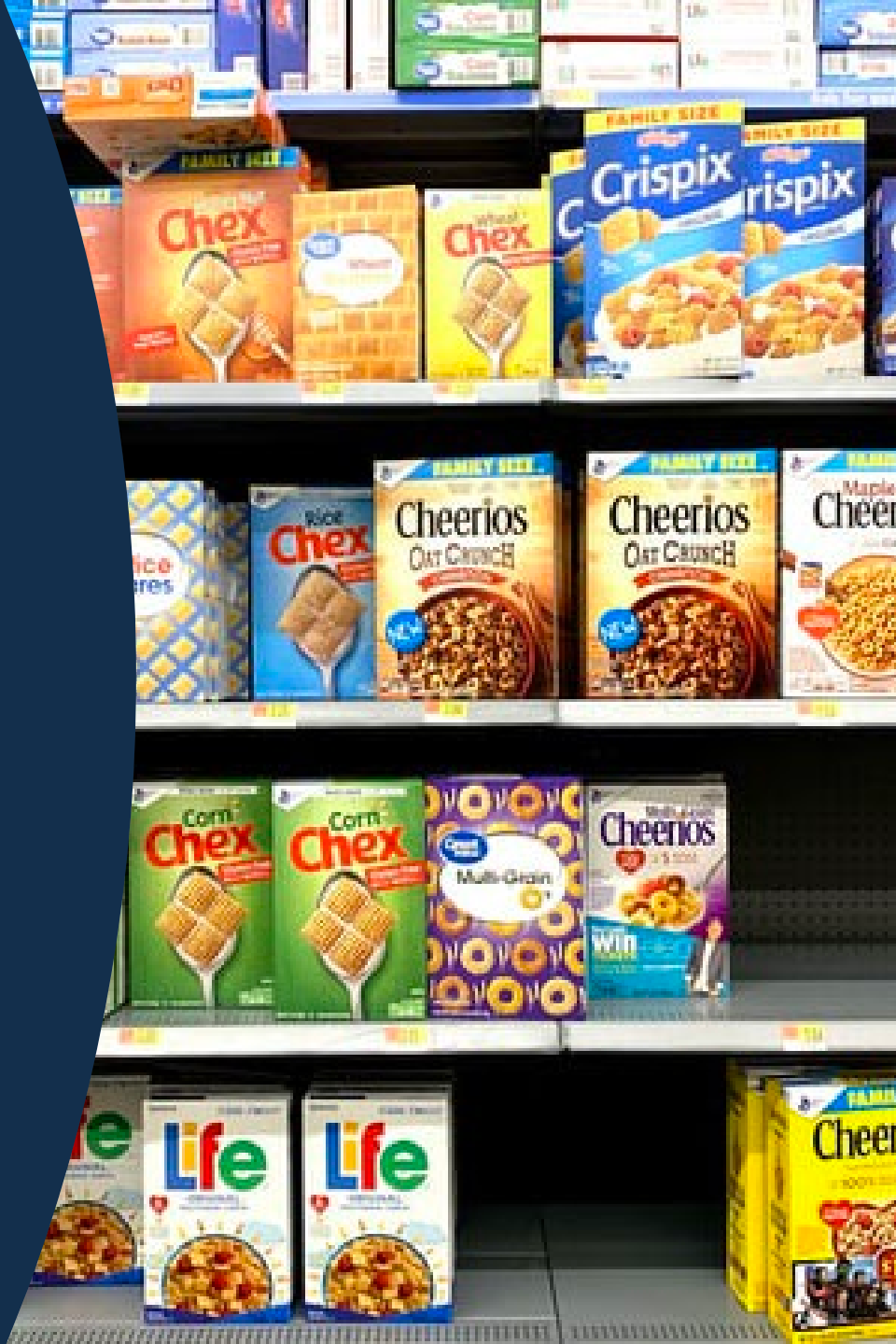
- State the quality attributes to monitor when packing and labelling product
- Identify information recorded in the packing department
- Understand how shelf life of a product is determined and recorded





# Learning Objectives

- Describe different types of packaging and functional requirements
- Summarise how to handle obsolete packaging and labels
- Recognise labelling requirements
- State what labelling and pack control checks are performed





Most food factories have a packing department where the product is packed and labelled ready to move to its next location.





## Products can be packed in three ways:

1. Manually by hand
2. Automated by a packing machine
3. Semi automated which is a combination of by hand and packing machine. This usually involves staff packing products by hand and passing the product down a conveyor to the packing machine to weigh and seal the packs



**A specification  
is used to  
determine the  
way in which  
the product is  
packed and  
labelled**



**A packing specification will contain specific requirements for the product pack such as:**

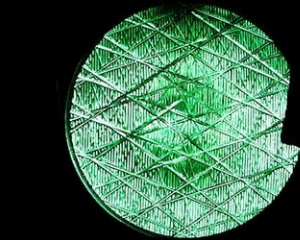
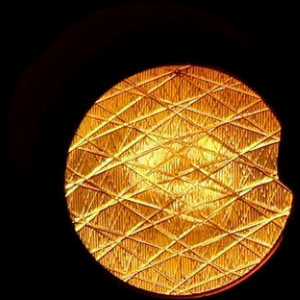
- Name of product and customer
- Number and weight of products
- Type of products and acceptable quality attributes
- Type of packaging, labelling, sleeve, code information and materials
- Method of packing, machinery and equipment
- Shelf life of products to determine used by or best before date





Quality attributes on a packing specification may rate attributes in a defined acceptable or not acceptable manner.

Or it can have a red, amber and green system. Red is unacceptable, amber is within tolerance but not ideal and green is ideal.





**There are several quality attributes to monitor when packing and labelling product, here are some:**

- Size and shape of products
- Weight of products
- Colour of the product are there any burnouts present
- Alignment, positioning and orientation of product
- Amount of product
- Condition of pack seal and tray
- General appearance
- Label or sleeve used correctly in the right position and orientation
- Date code and bar code is correct, legible and in the correct place



## **Stages of preparing to pack and label products:**

- Check order documentation
- Prepare machinery and equipment required
- Check product stock and release product to the packing line
- Release packing and labelling materials to the line
- Check packing specifications match the product, packing and labelling materials



Packaging materials should only be allocated to the line for immediate use, this can prevent date code or product mix up





If offline coding or printing takes place then:

- The setting and amendments to the printer should only be changed by the authorised personnel.
- Only correctly printed material is then available to the packing machines.





## Stages of packing and labelling products:

- Manually pack products in the required order into the correct packaging
- Label product packs with the correct label and codes
- Monitor all quality against the packing specification and report any problem to the appropriate person
- Try to minimise any wastage
- Meet any quality and time targets
- Make sure the product packs are transferred to the next stage



Product packs can be labelled in a high care or low care environment however if the label can be a potential foreign body risk e.g. cardboard sleeves then this must be done in a low care environment





## Stages of finishing packing and labelling products:

- Check that the output requirements have been achieved
- Make sure any unused product is stored appropriately
- Deal with recycled and reworked items
- Shut down machinery and equipment correctly
- Make sure all materials and consumables are returned
- Dispose of any waste, clean and clear the area
- Complete documentation





There is lots of information which need to be recorded in the packing department. Some of the most common information documented is:

- Staffing information
- Down time
- Orders completed/number of packs produced
- Wastage
- Product and material stock information





Shelf life is how long the product will be safe to eat without compromise of sensory, chemical, physical, microbiological and functional characteristics.

Microbial tests will be performed on the products to determine their ideal shelf life. An extension may be given to products life in extreme cases but must be controlled and authorised by the appropriate person and verified with extra shelf life microbial and quality testing.





The two ways of recording shelf life in the UK are used by date and best before date.

A used by date is given to short shelf life products, where the product must be used by that date for it to be safe.

A best before date is given to long shelf life products such as dried and frozen foods. A product can be eaten past its best before date but its quality may be affected.





# Revision Activity 1

**What is the difference between used by date and best before date?**