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FOOD LABELLING CHECKLIST

If you are designing a label, it may be useful to have a checklist of items to consider. This page gives a listing set out to assist in the design of a label to meet legal requirements.

Where a link is given, click on the link to have the relevant page appear on the left of the screen.

- **Name of Food:** You must have a legal name (not the brand name).
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- **List of Ingredients:** Most foods need an ingredients' list (although some are exempt).
- **Quantitative Declaration of Ingredients:** Does your product name or the product information given on the label trigger a requirement to provide a % declaration on the amount used?
- **Date Marking:** Most foods will need to have either a 'best before' date or a 'use by' date. Some foods are exempt.
- **Name and Address:** The label must have the name and address of the manufacturer or packer, and/or, a seller established within the EC.
- **Information which can be left out:** In a limited number of cases some information can be omitted from a label. Check Omissions to see if this is possible for your product.
- **Extra Information:** It is also possible that your food will need extra details!
- **Claims:** There are tight controls on the language used to describe some aspects of your food (e.g. energy value, protein value).
- **Nutrition Labelling:** Where nutrition labelling is given, it must meet prescribed design requirements.
- **Allergen Labelling:** The law requires that the presence of certain specified allergens is clearly declared on the label.
- **Misleading Descriptions:** Certain words or phrases on a label can only be used where certain conditions are met. If you fail to meet the requirements, the label can be regarded as 'misleading'.
- **Genetically Modified Foods and Ingredients:** Special rules have been introduced to provide consumer information when a food or its ingredients have been genetically modified.
- **Lot Marking:** There is a legal requirement for producers to mark their foods with an indication enabling them to withdraw a 'lot' in the event of a problem. Some foods are exempt.
- **Other Legal Requirements:** These pages describe the general food labelling controls. Some foods have special regulations which control their composition and provide additional or different labelling requirements.
- **Food Safety Act:** When you think you have the perfect label, don't forget the over-riding requirement of the Food Safety Act.
- **Weight Requirements:** Although not part of food labelling law, most foods are required to have an indication of the weight of the food contained within the package.

General requirements

As a general rule, all prepacked food to be delivered to the ultimate consumer or caterer, has to be marked with the following items:

1. the name of the food
2. a list of ingredients
3. the quantity of certain ingredients or categories of ingredients
4. the appropriate durability indication
5. any special storage conditions or conditions of use
6. the name and address of the manufacturer or packer, or a seller established with the EC;

and, where necessary,

7. particulars of the place of origin **if necessary** to avoid misleading the purchaser to a material degree
8. additional requirements
9. instructions for use **if necessary**.

There are certain exemptions from this general rule. In some cases, because of the nature of the marketing situation, some of the details may be omitted (details are given later. In other cases there are more general exemptions although, even in these cases the foods must carry statements relating to packaging gases and sweeteners:

- a) The following foods are not subject to the controls of this section: coffee and coffee products (including designated chicory products) for delivery to a catering establishment.
- b) The following foods are not subject to the controls of this section in so far as their labelling is regulated by other Regulations: hen eggs, spreadable fats, wines or grape musts, sparkling wines and aerated sparkling wines, liqueur wines, semi-sparkling wines and aerated semi-sparkling wines, spirit drinks, fresh fruit and vegetables, preserved sardines, preserved tuna and bonito, additives.