



Required Report - public distribution

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**China, People's Republic of**  
**Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and**  
**Standards**  
**Food Labeling Standard**  
**2001**

Approved by:

**Larry M. Senger**

**U.S. Embassy**

Prepared by:

Ralph Gifford, Xiang Qing, Adam Branson

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**Report Highlights:**

**This is an UNOFFICIAL translation of the People's Republic of China *Food Labeling Standard* and should be used as a guide only. Exporters should carefully discuss regulations and their application with Chinese importers to ensure that their interpretation of the regulations is accurate.**

This report was prepared by the Office of Agricultural Affairs of the USDA/Foreign Agricultural Service in Beijing, People's Republic of China for U.S. exporters of domestic food and agricultural products. While every possible care was taken in the preparation of this report, information provided may not be completely accurate either because policies have changed since its preparation, or because clear and consistent information about these policies was not available. It is highly recommended that U.S. exporters verify the full set of import requirements with their foreign customers, who are normally best equipped to research such matters with local authorities, before any goods are shipped. FINAL IMPORT APPROVAL OF ANY PRODUCT IS SUBJECT TO THE IMPORTING COUNTRY'S RULES AND REGULATIONS AS INTERPRETED BY BORDER OFFICIALS AT THE TIME OF PRODUCT ENTRY.

### Summary

This Standard governs food labeling for all food related items for sale in China's domestic market. Labels must be in Chinese and indicate the name brand of the food, ingredients and other contents, shelf life, manufacturer or distributor, quality, and industry standards. Articles 5.4 and 6.3 relate specifically to the marking or labeling contents for imported foods. These articles specify that labels for imported foods must indicate the country of origin and the name and address of the Chinese distributor. This standard adopts 1991 CODEX STAN 1.

### Food Labeling Standard (GB7718-94)

UDC 664.004.24 X 04

National Standard of the People's Republic of China GB 7718-94

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#### Chapter One: Main Contents and Application

This standard stipulates the basic principles, content markings and requirements in relation to food labeling. This standard applies to the labels on pre-packaged foods for domestic sale.

#### Chapter Two: Referenced Standards

GB 2760 Hygiene Standard for the Use of Food Additives (Note: See Section III of this report)

GB 13432 Labeling Standard of Special Nutritional Food (Note: See Section II.E of this report)

#### Chapter Three: Terminology

##### 3.1 Food Labels

Characters, graphics, designs and all descriptive materials on the containers of pre-packaged foods.

##### 3.2 Pre-packaged Foods

Foods pre-packaged in containers to be delivered to consumers.

##### 3.3 Container

Any form of packaging that packages foods completely or partially so as to be in deliverable units; including wrapping paper.

3.4 Food Additives

Synthetic chemicals and organic materials added to foods for enhancing the food quality as well as color, smell, and taste or to meet sanitary needs and processing requirements.

3.5 Ingredients

Any materials including water and food additives that are used to manufacture or process food and eventually exist (including existing in a modified form) in a final product.

3.6 Quality Guaranteed Period (Optimal Serving Period)

The time period that food quality can be maintained subject to conditions as stipulated on the label. Also, within the period of time foods are completely suitable for sale that conforms with the quality standard as provided on the label or by other product standard; however, the food is still edible within a given length of time beyond this period.

3.7 Storage Period (Recommended Serving Period Deadline)

The time period that food remains edible subject to conditions provided on the label; exceeding the limit, the product quality may deteriorate and therefore may not be suitable for sale.

3.8 Solids

The solid part of food that is composed of both solids and liquids, not including soluble solids.

Chapter Four: Basic Principles

4.1 All food label contents shall not describe or introduce foods in an erroneous, misleading or deceptive manner.

4.2 All food label contents shall not use wording, graphics, and designs directly or implicitly to cause consumers confusion for one kind of food or certain features of the food with another kind of food.

4.3 All food label contents shall comply with the laws and regulations of the State and shall adhere with the appropriate product standard provisions.

4.4 All food label contents shall be easy to understand, accurate, and scientific.

Chapter Five: Required Content Markings

5.1 Name of the Food

5.1.1 A particular name shall be adopted to indicate the true nature of the food.

5.1.1.1 Whereas one or several names have been designated to a certain kind of food in the State Standard or Trade Standard, one name shall be selected.

5.1.1.2 Whereas the above mentioned designated name does not exist, a common name or popular name that does not mislead or confuse the consumers shall be adopted.

- 5.1.2 Where the “innovative name”, “fancy name”, “brand name” or “trademark name” are used, any one name as stipulated in Article 5.1.1 shall be used at the same time.
- 5.2 Ingredient Table
- 5.2.1 Except for single source ingredient food, food labels shall have a clearly marked ingredient table.
- 5.2.1.1 The title of the ingredient table is “Ingredients” or “Ingredient Table”.
- 5.2.1.2 Ingredients shall be arranged in retrogressive order according to the amount.
- 5.2.1.3 In cases where a certain ingredient is itself a mix of ingredients that is composed of two or more kinds of other ingredients, the name of the ingredient mix must be indicated in the Ingredient Table then be followed with parenthetical information of original ingredients enumerated in retrogressive order according to the amount. When the ingredient mix has a designated name in the State Standard or Trade Standard and the amount used is below 25% of the total amount of the food, it is not necessary to mark the original ingredients, but the food additives contained therein shall be marked.
- 5.2.2 Various ingredients shall use specific names per stipulations contained in Article 5.1. Food additives shall use the product names or variety names as provided in GB 2760. Sweeteners, preservatives, and food colors shall also use specific names.
- 5.2.3 When raw materials used in the course of processing have been changed into other compositions (e.g. fermented products, such as liquor, soy sauce, vinegar, etc.), in order to indicate the true nature of the product, it is suggested to use the marking “raw material” or “raw material and ingredients”, instead of “ingredients” according to the marking as provided in Article 5.2.1.2.
- 5.3 Net Contents And Contents of Solids
- 5.3.1 The net contents of food in containers shall be marked in the following manner:
- Liquid foods, in terms of volume;
  - Solid foods, in terms of weight;
  - Semi-solid foods, in terms of weight or volume.
- 5.3.2 When the container has foods composed of both solid and liquid materials, in addition to marking net contents, the solids contents of that food shall be marked in terms of weight or percentage.
- 5.3.3 If in the same container several separate foods of similar quality and similar shape are packed together, in addition to marking the net contents, the quantities of the foods shall also be marked.
- 5.4 Name and Address of the Manufacturer and Distributor

The name and address of any registered unit that is responsible for the food manufacturing, packaging, re-packaging or distribution shall be marked. Imported foods shall have clear markings that indicate the country of origin in addition to the name and address of the general distributor that is registered in the country.

## 5.5 Date Mark and Storage Directions

5.5.1 Production date, quality guarantee period and/or storage period of the food shall be marked.

5.5.1.1 The date shall be marked in a sequence of year, month, and date.

5.5.1.2 The quality guarantee period or storage period shall be marked in one of the following ways:

- a. "It is recommended to be consumed before..." or "It is recommended to drink before..." (in marking the quality guarantee period);
- b. "Quality guaranteed until..."; "Storage period until...";
- c. "Quality guarantee period is...months"; "Storage period is ...months".

5.5.2 Should the quality guarantee period or storage period of the food be dependant on any conditions of storage, the storing method shall be specified.

## 5.6 Quality Rating

Quality rating shall be marked clearly for foods whose quality rating has been defined in the product standard (State Standard, Trade Standard).

## 5.7 Product Standard Coding

The code and serial number specifying the products in the corresponding State Standard, Trade Standard or Enterprise Standard shall be marked.

## 5.8 Special Content Markings

5.8.1 Any food processed with ionized radioactivity or ionized energy shall mark near the food name "food processed with radioactivity".

5.8.2 Any ingredient subjected to ionized radioactivity or ionized energy during processing shall have a description in the Ingredient Table.

## Chapter Six: Exemption from Content Marking

6.1 Content marking, except for spices and food additives, specified in Articles 5.2 and 5.5-5.7 can be exempted when the maximum surface area of the container is less than 10 cm<sup>2</sup>.

6.2 Foods with a quality guarantee period or storage period stipulated in product standards (State Standard, Trade Standard) longer than 18 months can be exempted from the reference regarding quality guarantee period or storage period.

6.3 The name, address, and product standard number of the imported food original manufacturer can be exempted.

## Chapter Seven: Recommended Content Marking

7.1 Batch Number

Producers or repackaging operations can use their own methods to mark production or repackaging batch numbers of foods.

7.2 Serving Method

To ensure the proper food serving method, the label can have suggestions marking how to open the container, serving method, recommended daily intake, re-cooking method, etc. When necessary, separate descriptions can be added in addition to the label.

7.3 Calories and Nutrients

Contents of calories and nutrients can be marked per stipulations of GB 13432.

Chapter Eight: Requirements

8.1 Food labels shall not be separate from the packaging container.

8.2 Food label contents shall not be blurred or detached during distribution; contents must be noticeable, easily identifiable, and legible when purchased.

8.3 Food label contents shall be clear, simple, and conspicuous. Words, designs, and graphics shall be intuitive and understandable, contrasting color shades shall be chosen to portray background and base colors.

8.4 Food name shall be printed in an eye-catching position on the label. The food name and net contents shall be printed within the same field of vision.

8.5 Languages used on food labels shall be standard Chinese.

8.5.1 Chinese Pinyin (phonetic transcription) can be used, however, the spelling must be accurate, and shall not be in larger letters than the corresponding Chinese characters.

8.5.2 Ethnic or foreign languages can be used, but labels must maintain a close correlation with the Chinese characters, foreign languages shall not be in larger letters than the corresponding Chinese characters.

8.6 The measurement units used in the food labels must be subject to the State legal measurement units, for example:

Weight units: g or gram, kg or kilogram  
Volume units: mL, ml or milliliter, L or Liter

ADDITIONAL NOTES: This standard is proposed by the National Committee For the Standardization Technology of the Food Industry. This standard is drafted by the Drafting Working Group organized by the National Committee for the Standardization Technology of the Food Industry.

This standard refers to and adopts the (CAC) CODEX STAN 1 - 1991 “The General Standards For the Labeling of Pre-packaged Foods” promulgated by FAO/WHO Food Law Committee.