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## Croatia

# Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and

## Standards

## Country Report

## 2003

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**Report Highlights:** In an effort to make itself a more competitive candidate for membership in the European Union (EU), the Government of Croatia is slowly adapting its laws with EU rules and regulations. Consequently, food import regulation mentioned in this report are in flux and are frequently revised. This report is an update of a June 2002 report (HR 2009) and adds an appendix on the draft food laws and regulations that will likely be enacted in 2003.

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Includes PSD changes: No  
Includes Trade Matrix: No  
Unscheduled Report  
Vienna [AU1], HR



Disclaimer: This report has been prepared by the Office of Agricultural Affairs of the USDA/FAS (in Vienna, Austria) for U.S. exporters of domestic food and agricultural products. While every possible care has been 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.

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I. FOOD LAWS DEALING WITH IMPORTS

Croatian food legislation consists of the following types of laws:

- the law on health standards, health control over food products and objects of general use, and derived regulations;
- the law on norms and regulations;
- the law on cattle-breeding and regulations;
- the veterinary law and regulations;

-- plus old regulations that Croatia adopted from former Yugoslavia.

The Croatian Government is working on new food law that should be in compliance with EU food and labeling legislation. This law was scheduled for 2002 but it is still not enacted and it is predicted to be enforced by the end of 2003. Current regulation of food import, labeling and quality standards is complex and confusing, but border inspections are regular and consistent.

Croatian food laws and regulations are valid both for domestic and imported products.

A. Scope of laws and regulations:

1. The law on health standards, health control over food products and objects of general use (Governmental Gazette #1 from 1997, NN 1/97) and derived regulation, (regulation on additives that can be found in food products NN 130/98, NN122/2000;

-- quantity of pesticides, toxins, mikotoxins, metals, histamines and similar substances which can be found in food products;

-- and other conditions connected to health standards of food products, and objects of general use NN 46/94, NN45/98;

-- conditions of preservation of food products and objects of general use with ionization radiation NN46/94;

-- microbiological standards for food products NN46/94, NN40/2001;

-- health standards for dietetic food products NN46/94, NN 50/95, NN 88/96, NN 1/2001, and NN 44/02;

-- health standards for objects of general use NN46/94, regulates health standards that food products and objects of general use, domestic or imported, should have before sales. It regulates health control (of food, substances for food production, objects of general use, condiments, additives, and substances for food enrichment) because of consumers' health and safety. This law covers under general objects: cosmetics, cleaning agents, kitchen appliances, wrapping and packaging materials for foods, toys, some objects and things that are in contact with skin or mucous membrane; tobacco and tobacco products.

This law and its regulations prescribe labeling for some product dietetic products, food additives and pesticide or chemical contaminants. It also describes import control procedures and cases when inspectors order the destruction or return of shipment.

2. The law on norms NN55/96 and derived regulations:

-- basic requirements for beverages and mineral water NN23/97;

-- basic requirements for coco products, chocolate products, creme products and bonbons NN90/96;

-- basic requirements for edible oil, margarines, and similar products, mayonnaise, dips, salads, and other products on basis of oil and fat NN 39/99;

-- basic requirements for beer and products similar to beer NN 6/98;

-- basic requirements for salt for human consumption NN 15/97;

-- basic requirements for natural mineral, spring and table waters NN58/98;

- basic requirements for olive oil NN35/99;
- basic requirements on snack products NN52/97
- basic requirements for the products, processes and services, system of congruence standards with HRN (Croatian Norms), documents that should accompany product in transit and transport and control of the requirements.

The function of this law is to protect consumers; develop the Croatian market; simplify international trade; protect the environment, human and animal health and harmonize products. The law gives general labeling rules and derived regulations proscribe specific labeling of food products. Regulations under this law proscribe quality standards that food products must have and analytical methods of quality product control.

3. The law on cattle-breeding NN 70/97 and derived regulations and ordinances:

- regulate quality of honey and other bee products NN 20/200,
- regulate feed NN 26/98 and
- bans use of certain veterinarian medicines on animals whose meat and products are used for food NN 4/2002

Among other things this law regulates trade with animals, the quality of animal feed and animal products, for example, honey and honey products quality standards and labeling.

4. The veterinary law NN 70/97 and derived regulations:

- shipment of products of animal origin for which there are no veterinarian or health issues when imported or transshipped thru Republic of Croatia NN 93/98, regulates import, export and transit of shipments with animals, animal products, animal semen, feed, veterinarian drugs and other products for animals;
- vet-health control for aforementioned products and required accompanying documents.

5. Regulations from former Yugoslavia that are still valid regulate quality standards of certain food products:

B quality of alcoholic and non alcoholic drinks, ice and vinegar Sl. List SFRJ 13/57, 53/78, 58/78, 2/82, 34/82,

52/83, 58/83, 16/88, 24/89;

--quality of coffee and coffee surrogates, tea, condiments, baking powder, concentrate for backing, concentrate for pudding, dietetic products and additives Sl. List SFRJ 20/80, 41/80, 45/81, 5/86, 33/89, 39/89,

-- quality of cookies and similar products and there are 21 more regulations and many more amendments.

B. Overview of legislation on specific product and issues:

1.Honey

-- (NN 20/2000) quality standards of honey and honey products (bee products), plus conditions under

which product must comply with labeling, and quality control.

## 2. Dietetic foods

- The law on health standards, food products and objects of general use (NN1/97) partially regulates labeling, promotion of products and defines dietetic foods.

-The regulation on health standards of dietetic foods (NN 46/94, NN50/95, NN88/96, NN1/01, and NN44/02) regulates health standards, labeling, consumers and types of dietetic foods (baby food, food without gluten, food with less lactose or without lactose.)

## 3. Wine legislation

- New wine legislation should go soon in the Sabor (Parliament) procedure. This new legislation should be in compliance with EU legislation. Until then wine laws (NN 34/95) and wine regulation (96/96) are enforce.

## 4. Hygiene Regulations

- Health standards, health control over food products and objects of general use (NN 1/97) and other regulations.

- Veterinary law (NN 70/97), that deals with animal breeding and slaughtering houses hygiene, cover this subject.

## 5. Pesticides, Heavy Metals and Mycotoxines

- Quantity of pesticides, toxins, mycotoxines, metals, histamines and similar substances which can be found in food products, and other conditions connected to health standards of food products and objects of general use (NN 46/94, NN45/98) deals with this issue.

## 6. Packaging Regulations

- The law of measures (NN 11/94) and regulation on measuring demands for packaging (NN23/97) regulates the volume indicated on the label, acceptable tolerances, and test procedures for packaging.

- The law on waste (NN 34/95) and regulation on managing container waste (NN 53/96) regulates disposal of container waste and packaging material.

## 7. Custom matters are regulated by:

custom law (NN 78/99, NN 117/99, NN 73/00);

one ordinance with amendments (NN144/99, NN 48/00, NN 49/00, NN 77/00) and 4

regulations (NN 147/99) dealing with custom documents and fees.

## II. LABELING REQUIREMENTS

(Nutritional Labeling, Biotechnology Labeling, Health Claims, Organic Labeling)

### A. General requirements

Norms Law (NN 55/96) gives general rules on product labeling and minimum requirements for the label. Regulations derived from that law give specific and detailed guidance on what data label must contain.

1. According to the law on norms the minimum data on the label is as follows:

- name of the product
- type of product
- name and address of producer and importer

In addition most of the following data are required:

- name of the product and name under which product is sold
- company, that is, name and address of the producer - for imported products
- address of importer
- net weight of the product in metric units
- basic compounds,
- additives (type, name and E number) listed in decreasing order
- date of production and expiry date  
(different regulations require different ways of writing this data, that is, everything in numbers, month with letters, year stated only with last two digits, etc.)
- storage instructions
- other information important to the consumer can be added

2. All labels must be in the Croatian using a Latin alphabet.

3. Products are not allowed entry with only a standard US label only; it must have Croatian label. In some special cases products may be imported without a Croatian label but the product can not be sold until trade inspection ensures that Croatian labels were attached to the products.

4. Stick-on labels, meeting local requirements, can be affixed in addition to the standard U.S. label.

5. Imports cannot enter the country with foreign labels.

6. Food samples do not have to be labeled.
7. We are not aware of products sold with U.S. standard labeling.
8. There are no special shelf - life or country - of - origin requirements.
9. Croatian authorities do not grant exception to their labeling regulations.

#### B. Nutritional Labeling Requirements

-- The law on health standards, health control over food products and objects of general use (NN 1/97) proscribes general rules on labeling, additives, vitamins, minerals, different dietetic products, etc.

-- Regulation of health standards of dietetic food products (NN46/94, NN 50/95, NN 88/96 and NN 1/2001) and nutritional labeling for baby food, food with smaller content of lactose or without it, food without gluten, food with added vitamins, food for medical purposes, food with lower or higher nutritional value, etc.

1. Nutritional labeling is mandatory. Dietetic foods must state: on the label: 'Adijetetski proizvod'

General information on nutritional labels are as follows:

name and use of product,

name and address of the producer,

expiry date

control number of the producer,

net weight (volume) of product,

content of product in decreasing order (including group of used additives),

chemical content (amino- acids, vitamins, minerals, carbohydrates) of product in 100g (100ml)

(vitamins and minerals must be in joint group and their content

in product - that can be use in one day - must be stated like percentage of RDA),

type and quantity of compounds that give to the product dietetic trait,

energy value of a product in 100g or kcal (kJ) except for products which have very low energy value or where not important.

For product impact, number of meals and amount of meals, instructions for usage and storage. Different types of dietetic food have some extra, compulsory data on the label.

2. Claims such as Alight, A reduced, etc. are permitted on the package (not on the label) as long it is truthfully proven. Products are checked in laboratories on chemical content.

3. Implied claims such as ‘you would not believe that something so light could taste so good’ are not forbidden by law but are not recommended.

4. Health claims are not regulated, but they are not desired.

### III. PACKAGING AND CONTAINER REGULATIONS

A. Package size for food products is determined by regulation on measuring requirements for packaging (NN23/97). This regulation prescribes for every package nominal fillings, marking of the quantities, etc.

B. Companies or persons that put food in packages are obligated to collect used packaging, according to the regulation on managing container waste (NN 53/96). The only collecting organization for that purposes, company ‘Sustav OHO,’ is operating in Zagreb and can be hired to do the same job in any part of Croatia. In other towns regulation is not followed and Ministry of Environment is trying to prosecute big companies because of bad waste management, but these cases still wait in the courts.

C. There are no restrictions on packaging material but limitations for each type of packaging material is prescribed by regulation on health standards for objects of general use (NN46/94). That regulation proscribes in details what certain packaging material can consist of. The main request is that packaging material is not influenced by season, chemical or physical characteristic of food.

If the product is in a bio-decomposable package Ministry of Health will give certain subsidy for that product.

### IV. FOOD ADDITIVE REGULATIONS

A. Additives are regulated by (NN 130/98, NN 122/00) this includes: use of colors, preservatives, antioxidants, emulators, stabilizers, gel makers, ph controllers, taste increasers, flower treatment, aromatizing, enzymes, and other.

Regulatory authorities do not accept the list of CODEX approved food additives for imported foodstuffs. Importers usually select products that comply with the Croatian list or ensure that the producer=s products are in compliance with Croatian additives list.

B. Regulatory authorities developed a positive additive list. The list can be obtained on governmental gazette web page: [www.nn.hr](http://www.nn.hr) but there is no English version of the list.

### V. PESTICIDE AND OTHER CONTAMINANTS

- A. The maximum content of certain pesticide or residues in foodstuffs is governed by regulation on quantity of pesticides, toxins, mikotoxins, metals, histamines and similar substances which can be found in food products and other conditions connected to health standards of food products and objects of general use (NN 46/94, NN45/98). Pesticides are listed alphabetically with corresponding maximum content for certain foods. This regulation is enforced by municipal and customs sanitary and veterinary inspection.
- B. The pesticide residue list is positive, i.e., stating what is permitted, versus, what is not permitted.
- C. According to plant protection law (NN 10/94), all pesticides must be registered. The registration office is as follows:

Zavod za zastitu bilja  
Svetisimunska c. 25  
10 000 Zagreb  
tell./fax 00385-1-2346040  
00385-1-2346043

## VI. OTHER REGULATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

- A. Food products do not have to be registrated for import in Croatia, but they have to comply with food-quality standards prescribed with Croatian laws and regulations.
- B. All shipments that contain food will go to sanitary inspection, that is, they will be randomly tested for quality and health standards.
- C. Product samples shipped via express mail and food for fairs are treated like any other import, so they will be tested for quality and health standards.
- D. At the retail and wholesale level food storage and foods are inspected on a basis of plan for that year or if an event requires it.
- E. Standard import documents are not proscribed, but sanitary inspector has right to ask for additional information from producer or certificates from competent institutions of country of export, for example, producers specification, certificate of origin, certificate of compliance with certain regulation, etc.

## VII. OTHER SPECIFIC STANDARDS

- A. Consumers Packaging or municipal waste disposal, see section III, item 2.
- B. Only metric weights and measures are accepted.

C. Fortification on foods with vitamins and minerals is permitted. In this case labeling should be carried out according to the regulation of health standards of dietetic food products (NN46/94, NN 50/95, NN 88/96 and NN 1/2001). Content of vitamins and minerals can be maximum 3 RDA and for vitamin A and D not more than RDA.

D. Genetically modified organisms (GMO) and food produced from them is not yet regulated with permanent law. Republic of Croatia has a temporary ban (interim law) for import of GMO food. It is applied only to bulk products (soybeans, etc.). Croatia is working on a biotechnology and food law, which should be in accordance with similar food laws in European Union. That legislation should be finished by the end of this calendar year.

E. Dietetic or special use foods go under regulation of health standards of dietetic food products (NN46/94, NN 50/95, NN 88/96, NN 1/2001, and NN 44/02), see section II B

F. Food sanitation: Allowed chemical preservatives are listed in regulation on additives that can be found in food products (NN 130/98, NN122/2000). Certain food can be preserved with ionizing radiation according to regulation from NN 46/94.

G. Marine products: regulation about quality of fish, crabs, sea-urchin, shells, frogs, snails, turtles, and their products, from ex Yugoslavia governmental gazette sl. List SFRJ, num. 46/91.

H. Animal quarantine: For live animals import, animals should pass quarantine. Municipal veterinarian inspector is approving barn/stable, on basis of regulation on quarantine (NN 52/91, NN 64/91). New regulation on quarantine (still not enforced) will prescribe catalogue of approved barns/stables for quarantine.  
(Do we have a list of quarantine diseases so APHIS can provide a certificate stating if the animals are free from the diseases?)

I. Wine is regulated by law on wine (NN 34/95), and regulation on wine (NN 96/96) - it will be changed this year; beer is regulated by regulation on basic requirements for beer and similar products (NN 6/98), and quality of alcoholic drinks with regulation on quality of alcoholic drinks from ex Yugoslavia governmental gazette sl. List SFRJ num.16/88 and 63/88.

J. Organic products:

Regulation on labeling organic products (NN 13/02)

Label must contain:

name of the product,

date of production,

name and address of producer or importer and number from the list of the producers of eco agricultural and food products,

country of origin,  
list of compounds in decreasing order,  
net weight,  
the word: 'Aeco' product (Aekoproizvod),  
name of inspection service,  
unique number of acknowledgment,  
other data in compliance with special regulations.

K. Product samples and mail order shipments are treated like any other import.

### VIII. COPYRIGHT AND/OR TRADE MARK LAWS

A. Trade marks and brand names are legally protected in Croatia with laws that are in compliance with EU legislative.

B. Companies interested in the registration of trademarks or brand names have to apply at the State Intellectual Property Office (open from 9:00 to 14:00 hours) where all information and application forms are available. If company wants to contact lawyer for assistance first, the State Intellectual Property Office has a list of legal representatives. The address and telephone numbers of State Intellectual Property Office follows:

Drzavni zavod za intelektualno vlasnistvo  
Ulica grada Vukovara 78  
10 000 Zagreb  
Croatia

Switchboard: tell. 00385-1-6106111  
For trademark and brand name: tell. 00385-1-6106404  
For copyright: tell. 00385-1-6106104

### IX. IMPORT PROCEDURES

A. Incoming goods go to the custom storage at transport terminals or airports. After goods arrive to the custom storage, importer in person or fright forwarder should start procedures for checking and clearing goods, which includes special documents that should be sent to the Inspection Departments and the Custom. Procedure starts with Sanitary Inspection Department from Ministry of Health which checks all products that are coming in contact with people except meat, which is checked by Veterinary Inspection Department from Ministry of Agriculture. Samples for quality checking are taken every time that import is conducted. If border inspector (sanitary or veterinary) trusts importer, on basis of regular import, than products are inspected only periodically (every three mounts). Product examination has to be paid by importer. If products are of

suspicious quality their sales will be banned until analyses is conducted and proven

otherwise. Custom clearance and removal from storage is carried out under the supervision of a custom officer who compares the documents with the commodities after they were checked by sanitary or veterinary inspector for ingredients and quality.

Documents needed for meat import can be found at:

[http:// www.veterinarstvo.hr/import/index.htm](http://www.veterinarstvo.hr/import/index.htm)

Custom rates and documents for imports can be found at:

<http://www.carina.hr>

(As this web site is in Croatian only for clarification, contact your Croatian partner or one of freight forwarding companies to determine the proper rates.)

B. Custom import documents should be in Croatian, but documents in English language are accepted.

C. Average length of custom clearance for food products, if all documents are in order, is one day.

D. If product is rejected on the custom there is a possibility of appeal. Possibility that product is rejected by importer should be controlled in contract between exporter and importer, and than if the case has a standing point in the contract certain issue can be brought to court, but Croatian legal system is slow and inefficient.

#### APPENDIX I. GOVERNMENT REGULATORY AGENCY CONTACTS

Control over the products that are regulated by the laws on cattle-breeding (NN 70/97) and veterinary law (NN 70/97) and regulations (see Ia), wine law and regulations (see Ib):

Government of Republic of Croatia  
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry  
Grada Vukovara 78  
10000 Zagreb  
tel. 00385(0)1 6106111  
fax. 00385 (0)1 6109201  
e-mail: [office@mps.hr](mailto:office@mps.hr)  
web page: [www.mps.hr](http://www.mps.hr)

Government of Republic of Croatia  
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry  
Grada Vukovara 78  
10000 Zagreb  
Animal Health Protection and Veterinary Practice Department

Vlatka Vrdoljak Muheljcic  
tel. 00385(0)1 6106  
fax. 00385 (0)1 6109207  
e-mail: office@mps.hr  
web page: www.mps.hr

Control over the products that are regulated by the law on health standards, health control over food products and objects of general use (NN 1/97) and regulations (see Ia):

Government of Republic of Croatia  
Ministry of Health  
Deputy Minister for Economy  
Ksaver 200a  
10 000 Zagreb  
tel. 00385(0)1 4607512  
tel./fax. 00385(0)1 4677076  
web page: www.tel.hr/mzrh

Control over the law on norms (NN55/96) and regulations (see Ia):

State Office for Standardization and Metrology  
Ulica grada Vukovara 78  
10 000 Zagreb  
PhD. Divjak  
tel. 00385 (0)1 6106215  
fax. 00385(0)1 6109324  
e-mail: pisarnica@dzm.hr  
web page: www.dzm.hr

General trade legislation:

Government of Republic of Croatia  
Ministry of Economy  
Grada Vukovara 78  
10000 Zagreb  
tel. 00385(0)1 6106111  
fax. 00385 (0)1 6109110  
e-mail: info@mingo.hr  
web page: www.mingo.hr

Control over laws dealing with waste disposal:

Government of Republic of Croatia  
Ministry of Environment  
Ulica Republike Austrije 20  
10 000 Zagreb  
tel. 00385(0)1 3782444  
web page: [www.vlada.hr/min-grad.html](http://www.vlada.hr/min-grad.html)

Useful contact for all general advice on food trade in Croatia:

Croatian Chamber of Economy (Commerce)  
Agriculture, Food Industry and Forestry Department  
Rooseveltova trg 2  
P.O. Box 630  
10000 Zagreb  
tel. 00385 (0)1 4826066  
00385 (0)1 4826068  
fax. 00385 (0)1 4561545  
e-mail: [poljoprivreda@hgk.hr](mailto:poljoprivreda@hgk.hr)  
web page: [www.hgk.hr](http://www.hgk.hr)

## APPENDIX II. OTHER IMPORT SPECIALIST CONTACTS

State inspection services that have control over food samples and their testing:

Government of Republic of Croatia  
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry  
Grada Vukovara 78  
10000 Zagreb  
Border Veterinary Inspection Department  
tel. 00385(0)1 6106663  
fax. 00385 (0)1 6109207  
e-mail: [ivan.susac@mps.hr](mailto:ivan.susac@mps.hr)  
web page: [www.mps.hr](http://www.mps.hr)

Government of Republic of Croatia  
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry  
Grada Vukovara 78  
10000 Zagreb

Veterinary Inspection Department  
tel. 00385(0)1 6106660  
fax. 00385 (0)1 6109207  
e-mail: [agaspar@mps.hr](mailto:agaspar@mps.hr)  
web page: [www.mps.hr](http://www.mps.hr)

Government of Republic of Croatia  
Ministry of Health  
Sanitary Inspection  
Ksaver 200a  
10 000 Zagreb  
tel. 00385(0)1 4607525  
tel./fax. 00385(0)1 4677076  
web page: [www.tel.hr/mzrh](http://www.tel.hr/mzrh)

Government of Republic of Croatia  
Ministry of Environment  
Ulica Republike Austrije 20  
10 000 Zagreb  
Environment Protection Department  
tel. 00385(0)1 6106556  
fax. 00385(0)1 6118388  
web page: [www.vlada.hr/min-grad.html](http://www.vlada.hr/min-grad.html)

Information source for reports on Croatia and other countries is found at:

<http://www.fas.usda.gov/scripts/attacherep/default.asp>

#### EMBASSY (FAS/USDA) POINT OF CONTACT

For questions regarding other issues not covered in this report, please contact:

Ms. Andreja Misir  
American Embassy  
Agricultural Section  
Thomas Jefferson St. #2  
10000 Zagreb  
tel. 00385 1 665 8951  
mob. 00385 (0)91 4552365  
e-mail: [amisir@inet.hr](mailto:amisir@inet.hr)

#### APPENDIX III. SUMMARY OF DRAFT FOOD-RELATED LEGISLATION

Draft Food Law (May 2003) (see GAIN Report HR 3010 for the full English text of this law)

The law regulates the following issues:

- general principles and requirements concerning the safety of food and cattle feed;
- the responsibilities of the relevant persons in the food business and cattle feed business with regard to the safety of food and cattle feed;
- general requirements concerning the quality of food and cattle feed;
- general requirements for the protection of the marks of geographical origin, the marks of originality of food, and the marks of the food's traditional repute;
- general requirements concerning labeling or marking food and cattle feed;
- general conditions for placing novel food on the market;
- general conditions for placing cattle feed that contains or consists of genetically modified organisms on the market;
- the official control system;
- the official research laboratories and reference laboratories;
- crisis management and emergencies management;
- the establishment of the Croatian Food Agency;
- the authority and responsibilities of the relevant bodies with regard to the food and cattle feed that is produced in the Republic of Croatia and imported into the Republic of Croatia and placed on its market;
- penalty clauses.

When the law will be enacted the regulations that specify certain issues should be issued in a period (depending on a regulation) of 1 to 3 years. For details see the Gain Report HR3010.

Draft Wine Law

This Law regulates following issues:

- production and trade of grapes for wine, fermentation of grapes for wine
- production and trade of wine and other products from grapes or wine
- distillations
- labeling, GI
- production and trade of fruit wines and other products on a base of fruit wines
- Purpose of Croatian Institute for Vineyards and Wine
- Wine cadastre
- and other matters connected to unified system of production and trade of grapes for wine, must, wine, other products from grapes and wine, fruit wine, and products that contain wine or fruit wine

Consumer Protection Law

- contains some guidelines for labeling of food products (including novel foods) but relies on other, product specific legislation

