



USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agriculture Information Network

Template Version 2.09

Voluntary Report - public distribution

Date: 12/22/2003

GAIN Report Number: IS3014

Israel

Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards

Report Update

2003

Approved by:

Asif J. Chaudhry
Cairo

Prepared by:

Yossi Barak

Report Highlights:

The Israeli Ministry of Trade and Industry supports regulations concerning testing, registration and approval of Genetically Modified Organisms but will not adopt the "New Food" Committee's recommendations on labeling of these products. New Standard for plastic packages, which are in direct contact with food products was published by the Standard Institute of Israel (SII).

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Tel Aviv [IS1]
[IS]

A. Genetically Modified Organisms Labeling Regulations

The "New Foods" Committee, established by the Food Control Service of Israel (FCIS), under the Ministry of Health, has presented its recommendations to the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) and to the Ministry of Industry and Trade (MOIT) for review and comments. The proposal, which is similar to the European regulations, included the recommendations for the establishment of a system for testing, registration, approval and labeling of food products, which contain Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO). The proposal was opposed by the MOA, which pointed out the difficulties in implementing these requirements by the agricultural sector. The MOIT, while formulating its position, executed many investigations in which scientists, the concerned ministries, and the business sector were involved. The influence of the new requirement on public health and the food industry was examined carefully. In addition, their compliance with international (mainly other western countries) standards was also examined. At the end of the examination process, the MOIT concluded that since there is no evidenced danger for human health from the consumption of foods containing GMOs, testing, registration and approval systems should be established for the food products but labeling should not be required. MOIT's position is that "the public will gain no additional benefits from the information included in the labels". As a result of the new MOIT stand, the Ministry of Health, which prefers labeling of food products containing GMO, will likely find it difficult to convince other ministries of the need for such requirements.

B. New Standard – No. SI 5113: Plastic Materials in Contact with Food and Beverages

A new standard for plastic materials and plastic articles, which are in contact with food and beverages was published by the Standard Institute of Israel (SII). This standard is based on the requirements of the European Union (EU) Directives and the requirements of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in the United States. The standard number is SI 5113 and it is available in English. It can be purchased directly from the SSI's web site: <http://www.sii.org.il>