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The Revised Draft of Gulf Standard " Labeling and Prepackaged Foodstuffs"

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Report Highlights:

This is a summary report on the updated draft of the Gulf Standard related to "Labeling Prepackaged Foodstuffs." This version includes a labeling requirement for certain biotechnology ingredients that may be derived from allergens. In addition, this draft indicates that production date labeling is "preferable." However, a separate draft version of expiration date standards would make labeling with production dates mandatory.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Dubai [TC1]
[TC]

Introduction: This report summarizes the revised draft Gulf Standard " Labeling of Prepackaged Foodstuffs" Ref. GS-9/2005 prepared by the State of Qatar on behalf of the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states on September 2005.

Disclaimer: This Summary is based on a *cursory* review of the subject announcement and therefore should not, under any circumstances, be viewed as a definitive reading of the regulation in question, or of its implications for U.S. agricultural export trade interests. In the event of a discrepancy or discrepancies between this summary and the complete regulation or announcement as published in Arabic, the latter shall prevail.

FAS/ATO Dubai Executive Summary: This draft is an update of the Gulf standard 9/1995 published under the same title " Labeling of Prepackaged Foodstuffs". After its approval, it will supersede and replace the aforementioned Gulf Standard. The standard is largely adopted from CODEX Standard No.1/2001. However, some provisions have been added.

FAS/ ATO Dubai Analysis: This report contains definitions and requirements pertaining to labeling procedures adopted by the GCC countries for the prepackaged foodstuffs. The draft Gulf labeling standard falls into the following categories: Mandatory labeling, Exemption from Mandatory labeling, Mandatory Labeling Method and Optional labeling.

The standard includes a provision for the labeling of any ingredients that are obtained "via biotechnology of an allergen probably transferable from it to any of the products listed in Clause 5/2/4 shall be declared." Products listed in section 5/2/4 include:

- 5/2/4/1 Cereals containing the gluten substance; i.e., wheat, barley, oats, rye (darnel), spelt as such or their hybridized strains and products of these;
- 5/2/4/2 Crustacea and products of these;
- 5/2/4/3 Eggs and egg products
- 5/2/4/4 Fish and fish products;
- 5/2/4/5 Peanuts, soybeans and products of these;
- 5/2/4/6 Walnuts and nut products;
- 5/2/4/7 Milk and milk products (lactose included);
- 5/2/4/8 Sulfide in concentration of 10mg /kg or more.

Labels and adjoining explanatory statements are required to be in Arabic. Where another language is used, it shall be alongside the Arabic and the information shall be identical with those written in Arabic. Also, the date marking on the GCC labels should be in the following order: day, month and year and shall be identified in a clear (uncoded) manner in the same numerical sequence. The prepackaged foodstuffs should carry the following on the label:

1. The Name of Product
2. List of Ingredients (shown in label in a descending sequence of ingoing weight proportions (m/m)
3. Nutritional Information
4. Net Contents
5. Name and address of Manufacturer/Packers
6. Country of Origin
7. Production date*
8. Expiry date
9. Lot of identification

*This version of the labeling requirements indicates that production dates are "preferable," but not mandatory. A draft Saudi Arabian (see TC6019) version of expiration date requirements indicates that production date labeling is mandatory.

Important Dates:

1. Draft Publication Date: September 2005
2. Implementation Date: To be determined. The Gulf Cooperation Council General Committee is expected to meet to adopt this standard in November of 2006.
3. Validity Period: Indefinite from date of adoption.

For More Information:

GCC officials are still reviewing these technical standards. Companies who wish to review this document in greater detail can receive a copy of the proposed standard by contacting the Agricultural Trade Office in Dubai by fax or e-mail.

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ATO Dubai Web Site: We are available at <http://www.usembabu.gov.ae/atodubai.htm> or visit USDA/FAS home page at <http://www.fas.usda.gov/> for a complete selection of FAS worldwide agricultural reporting.