



Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agriculture Information Network

Voluntary Report - public distribution

Date: 8/25/1999

GAIN Report #CA9103

Canada

Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards:

Canada To Review Policy on Nutrient Fortification of Foods 1999

Prepared by:

Norval Francis

U.S. Embassy Ottawa

Drafted by:

George Myles

Report Highlights: In September 1999 Health Canada is scheduled to release its policy proposals for the development of a new framework for the nutrient fortification of foods. Currently, Canada's Food and Drugs Act restricts the kinds and amounts of nutrients that can be added to foods according to food categories. Certain U.S. foods, fortified with vitamins and minerals, cannot be sold in Canada because the amounts added are above current Canadian limits. A less restrictive policy is expected to emerge when the new Canadian policy proposals are released.

Includes PSD changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report

In late September 1999 Health Canada is scheduled to release its policy proposals for the development of a new framework for the nutrient fortification of foods. Currently, Canada's Food and Drugs Act restricts the kinds and amounts of nutrients that can be added to foods according to that food category. Because of these restrictions, certain U.S. foods, fortified with vitamins and minerals, can only be sold in Canada where the manufacturer complies with the strict Canadian requirements that may differ from U.S. requirements. A recent press article highlighted the issue of U.S. fortified breakfast cereals sold in Canada. Certain brand name fortified cereals commonly sold in the United States cannot be sold in Canada because their vitamin or mineral additive content exceeds the highest limits stipulated in the Canadian regulations. Most U.S. cereal manufacturers respond by producing a separate production run for the Canadian market for these special cereals. One major manufacturer has been able to market a highly fortified cereal food as a meal replacement in Canada, a category in the Canadian regulations that permits higher nutrient fortification.

Canadian imports of breakfast cereals (HS 1904) from the U.S. in 1998 reached \$116 million, an increase of more than 70% in the last five years. U.S. market share gains have occurred during a period of near zero market growth where per capita consumption has remained unchanged at 5.1 kg since 1995. Although the major U.S. cereal manufacturers have production facilities in Canada, an increasing number of product lines are imported from the United States as manufacturers' distribution strategies reflect the zero tariff provisions of the FTA/NAFTA. Less restrictive nutrient rules in Canada would likely enhance future U.S. export performance.

Health Canada's Food Directorate has been reviewing Canada's policies concerning the addition of vitamins and minerals to foods since January 1998 in an attempt to develop an appropriate policy for the future regulation of the addition of vitamins and minerals to foods taking into account the public health role of nutrient addition to foods, consumer needs and expectations, and industry concerns. According to Health Canada, the policy review has concluded and a number of policy proposals will be released in September 1999 which will set the framework for a consultative phase with industry and interested parties working toward the preparation for Food and Drug Act regulatory amendments. There appears to be a strong possibility that Health Canada will adopt a broader approach to nutrient fortification of foods as opposed to the current policy of handling all foods individually with regard to nutrient fortification.

Interested parties can watch for the release of the new Canadian proposals on the Health Canada web site at: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/food-aliment/english/index.html>

For further information, contact:

Dr. Mary R. L'Abbé - Project Manager
Head Micro Nutrients Section
Nutrition Research, Health Canada - P.L. 2203C
Banting Research Centre, Ross Ave
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0L2
Tel: (613) 957-0924; FAX (613) 941-6182
Email: mary_l'abbe@hc-sc.gc.ca

Find Us on The Web:

Visit our headquarter's home page at <http://www.fas.usda.gov> for a complete selection of FAS' worldwide agricultural reporting.

FAS/Ottawa e-mail: usagr@istar.ca