



Foreign Agricultural Service

**GAIN Report**

Global Agriculture Information Network

Required Report - public distribution

Date: 8/1/2000

GAIN Report #IN0050

## India

# Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and

## Standards

## Country Report

## 2000

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### Report Highlights:

**Update on: 08/01/2000. Sections Updated: II. Labeling Requirements & IX. Import Procedures.**

**On May 17, 2000, the Government of India established compulsory labeling of all packaged and branded non-vegetarian food products.**

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Includes PSD changes: No  
Includes Trade Matrix: No  
Unscheduled Report  
New Delhi [IN1], IN

## **Table of Contents**

<a href="#">I. Food Laws .....</a>	<a href="#">Page 2 of 7</a>
<a href="#">II. Labeling Requirements .....</a>	<a href="#">Page 2 of 7</a>
<a href="#">III. Packaging and Container Regulations .....</a>	<a href="#">Page 3 of 7</a>
<a href="#">IV. Food Additive Regulations .....</a>	<a href="#">Page 3 of 7</a>
<a href="#">V. Pesticides and Other Contaminants .....</a>	<a href="#">Page 3 of 7</a>
<a href="#">VI. Other Regulations and Requirements .....</a>	<a href="#">Page 3 of 7</a>
<a href="#">VII. Other Specific Standards .....</a>	<a href="#">Page 3 of 7</a>
<a href="#">VIII. Copyright and or Trademark Laws .....</a>	<a href="#">Page 3 of 7</a>
<a href="#">IX. Import Procedures .....</a>	<a href="#">Page 4 of 7</a>
<a href="#">Appendix I. Government Regulatory Agency Contacts .....</a>	<a href="#">Page 4 of 7</a>
<a href="#">Appendix II. PFA List of Permissible Coloring Additives .....</a>	<a href="#">Page 5 of 7</a>

**NOTE: This report was prepared by the Office of Agricultural Affairs, US Department of Agriculture, New Delhi, India for US exporters of food and agricultural products. While great care was taken in its preparation, this information may not be entirely accurate either because policies may have changed since the report was written, or because clear and consistent information is unavailable. It is highly recommended that US exporters verify import requirements with their foreign customers before goods are shipped. FINAL IMPORT APPROVAL IS ALWAYS SUBJECT TO THE IMPORTING COUNTRY'S RULES AND REGULATIONS AS INTERPRETED BY BORDER OFFICIALS AT THE TIME OF PRODUCT ENTRY.**

## **I. Food Laws**

India's food laws are found under the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act (PFA) of 1954 and PFA Rules of 1955, as amended. The Central Committee for Food Standards of the Directorate General of Health Services, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare is responsible for the implementation of the PFA. PFA standards and regulations apply equally to domestic and imported products.

Adulteration of basic food commodities such as milk, dal and vegetable oil remains a serious problem in India, all too often resulting in death. The PFA focuses primarily on the establishment of regulatory standards for primary food products, which constitute the bulk of the Indian diet. While continuously updated, the PFA is not always up to date with advances in the food processing sector. Moreover, PFA rules sometimes appear to be drafted in a manner which goes beyond the establishment of minimum product quality specifications, such as prescribing recipes for how food products are to be manufactured. Companies can request to have the PFA amended. However, this is a cumbersome and time consuming process.

## **II. Labeling Requirements**

All product labels must be printed in English, Hindi or Devnagri and provide the following information:

- Name and address of the manufacturer, importer, vendor or packer
- Name, trade name or description of the product
- List of ingredients in descending order of composition by weight or volume
- Net weight, number or volume of contents
- Distinctive batch, lot or code number
- Month and year the product was manufactured or packed
- Month and year by which the product is best consumed
- Maximum retail price

Where applicable the product label should also contain the following:

The date of expiration, in case of packages of aspartame

The purpose of irradiation and license number, in case of irradiated food

Products which claim to be enriched with nutrients such as minerals, proteins or vitamins shall give quantities of such added nutrients on the label.

Non-vegetarian food to have a symbol in prominent red color consisting of a circle with a single chord passing through its center from top left hand side to the right diagonally to be displayed just above the name/brand name of the product.

(Note: The responsibility for labeling lies with the importer.)

### **III. Packaging and Container Regulations**

All units of weight or measure are to be reported in metric.

### **IV. Food Additive Regulations**

The addition of coloring to any food, except as specifically permitted in the PFA, is prohibited. The PFA list of permissible coloring additives is provided in Appendix II.

### **V. Pesticides and Other Contaminants**

The PFA includes a positive list for the presence of pesticide residues, which is available upon request from the Agricultural Counselor's Office (address provided in Appendix I)..

### **VI. Other Regulations and Requirements**

There is no information available at this time. Specific questions should be directed to the Agriculture Counselor's Office in the US Embassy, New Delhi (address provided in Appendix I).

### **VII. Other Specific Standards**

There is no information available at this time. Questions on specific standards should be directed to the Agriculture Counselor's Office in the US Embassy, New Delhi (address provided in Appendix I).

### **VIII. Copyright and or Trademark Laws**

The issue of Indian copyright and trademark laws is currently being negotiated under the auspices of the WTO.

## **IX. Import Procedures**

The clearance of imported food products at the port of entry requires a certification from the port health authority that the product conform to the standards and regulation of PFA. However, certification is mostly based on visual inspection and record of past imports as most the ports have very limited food quality testing facilities. Consequently, importers of new products can face undue delay in clearance of the products.

Additional information on exporting food products to India is available in the report entitled "Exporter Guide"(GAIN Report #IN9054), which can be accessed via the FAS homepage.

### **Appendix I. Government Regulatory Agency Contacts**

Question regarding the Prevention of Food Alteration Act can be submitted to the Indian Ministry of Health at the following address:

Directorate General of Health Services  
Government of India, Ministry of Health  
Attn: Additional Director General  
Nirman Bhavan  
Maulana Azad Road  
New Delhi, 110 - 001

Phone: (91 11) 301-2290  
FAX: (91 11) 301-7924

Questions regarding Indian food and agricultural import regulations and standards may also be directed to the Agricultural Counselor's Office at the US Embassy, New Delhi.

Agricultural Counselor  
AmEmbassy New Delhi  
Department of State  
Washington, DC 20521-9000

Phone: (91 11) 419-8297  
FAX: (91 11) 419-8530  
EMAIL: AGNEWDELHI@FAS.USDA.GOV

## Appendix II. PFA List of Permissible Coloring Additives

Natural colorings which may be used:

Beta-carotene  
 Beta-apo-8'-carotenal,  
 Methyl ester of Beta-apo-8' carotenoic acid  
 Ethyl ester of Beta-apo-8'-carotenoic acid  
 Canthaxanthin  
 Chlorophyll  
 Riboflavin (Lactoflavin)  
 Caramel  
 Annatto  
 Saffron  
 Curcumin (or turmeric)

Synthetic colorings which may be used:

NO.	COLOR	COMMON NAME (1956)	COLOR INDEX	CHEMICAL CLASS
1.	Red	Ponceau 4R	16255	Azo
		Carmoisine	14720	Azo
		Erythrosine	45430	Xanthene
2.	Yellow	Tartrazine	19140	Pyrazolone
		Sunset Yellow FCF	15985	Azo
3.	Blue	Indigo Carmine	73015	Indigoid
		Brilliant Blue FCF	42090	Triarylmethane
4.	Green	Fast Green FCF	42053	Triarylmethane

Use of synthetic coloring in or upon any food other than those enumerated below is prohibited:

- (a) Ice-cream, milk lollies, frozen desserts, flavored milk, yoghurt, ice-cream mix powder;
- (b) Biscuits, wafers, pastries, cakes, confectionery, thread candies, sweets, and savorys;
- (c) Peas, strawberries and cherries in hermetically sealed containers, preserved or processed papaya, canned tomato juice, fruit syrup, fruit squash, fruit cordial, jellies, jams, marmalade, candied crystallized or glazed fruit;
- (d) Non-alcoholic carbonated and non-carbonated ready-to-serve synthetic beverages including

synthetic syrups, sherbets, fruit bars, fruit beverages, fruit drinks, synthetic soft drink concentrates;  
 (e) Custard powder;  
 (f) Jelly crystal and ice candy.

The addition of inorganic matters and pigments is prohibited.

The PFA contains a list of approved preservatives which are divided into the following classes:

Class I	Class II
Common salt	Benzoic acid including salts thereof.
Sugar	Sulphurous acid including salts thereof.
Dextrose	(Nitrates or) Nitrates of Sodium or Potassium in
Glucose (syrup)	respect of foods like ham or pickled meat.
Spices	Sorbic acid including its sodium, potassium and
Vinegar or acetic acid	calcium salts, (propionates of calcium or sodium,
Honey	lactic acid, and acid calcium phosphate).
	Sodium and calcium propionate.
	Methyl or propyl parahydroxy-benzoate.
	Propionic acid, including esters or salts thereof.
	Sodium diacetate, and
	Sodium, potassium and calcium salts of lactic acid.

Use of Class I preservatives in any food is not restricted, unless otherwise provided in the rules. No more than one Class II preservative may be used in or on any food product. In addition, the use of Class II preservatives is restricted to prescribed food groups in concentrations not exceeding proportions established in the PFA.

A positive list is also established for the use of anti-oxidants, emulsifying and stabilizing agents.

The use of the following flavoring agents is prohibited in any food item.

Coumarin and dihydrocoumarin  
 Tonkabean (Diptery odorat)  
 B-asarone and cinamyl anthracilate  
 Estragole  
 Ethyl methyl ketone

Ethyl-3-phenylglycidate  
Eugenyl methyl ether  
Methyl B naphthyl ketone  
P. propylanisole  
Saffrole and isosaffrole  
Thujone and isothujone

Diethylene glycol and Monoethylether shall not be used as solvent in flavors. Monosodium glutamate may be added to food products (under proper label declaration) provided the total glutamate content does not exceed one percent. It may not be added to food for use by infants below 1 year. The addition of flavoring agents is to be written on the label beneath the ingredients in the following manner: "CONTAINS ADDED FLAVOR."