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**Report Highlights:**

France, as a member of the European Union (EU), generally follows EU directives, regulations, and obligations. This report focuses on food laws in force in France that cover areas which are not EU harmonized. EU regulations are explained in the Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards (FAIRS) EU GAIN Report E42021-0072 authored by the U.S. Mission to the EU in Brussels, Belgium

DISCLAIMER: This report was carefully prepared by the USDA/Foreign Agricultural Service Office of Agricultural Affairs in Paris. While every effort is taken to provide accurate information at the time of publication, the reader is ultimately responsible for verifying accuracy. Regulations are always subject to change and interpretation. Exporters are highly encouraged to verify information with their foreign customers **prior to shipment**. Importers are generally in the best position to ensure compliance with local regulations.

*FINAL IMPORT APPROVAL OF ANY PRODUCT IS SUBJECT TO THE RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE IMPORTING COUNTRY, AS INTERPRETED BY BORDER INSPECTION OFFICIALS AT THE TIME OF ENTRY.*

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## **Section I. Food Laws:**

1. Food legislation not regulated in detail at the EU level can apply differently at the EU individual Member State level. There can be variation in the way EU harmonized legislation is applied, due to transitional periods needed to adjust to the new rules. There can also be wide variation in inspection fees, registration fees, and the time required to evaluate products used in the food production process (see [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards \(FAIRS\) EU GAIN Report E42021-0072](#)), due to the transitional period needed to adjust to the new rules. There is also wide variation in inspection fees, registration fees, and the time required to evaluate products used in the food production process.

2. Certain EU and French regulations limit market access for specific U.S. agricultural exports. Please refer to [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards \(FAIRS\) EU GAIN Report E42021-0072](#) for more information on hormone-treated beef, poultry treated with anti-microbial treatments, genetically modified products, and other restricted products. The ongoing effort to harmonize of EU import regulations, as well as the implementation of the World Trade Organization (WTO) agreements, may result in the elimination of French regulations that are inconsistent with WTO obligations, as well as in the conversion of quotas, variable levies, and restrictive licensing to tariffs that are scheduled to be reduced over time. Additional products that are subject to restrictive regulations include: enriched flour, animal genetics, exotic meats such as alligator and buffalo, crayfish, pet food, in addition to certain fruits and vegetables. These products are subject to EU quality standards. and must be inspected at the point of entry. More details concerning these regulations can be found in Section VI "Other Regulations and Requirements" of this report.

## **Section II. Labeling Requirements:**

For EU labeling requirements, please see [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards \(FAIRS\) EU GAIN Report E42021-0072](#).

[EU Directive 2000/13/EC](#) dated 20 March 2000, as modified, applies to the labeling of food products. France transcribed this Directive into the "[Code de la Consommation - Partie Réglementaire - Livre Premier : Information des Consommateurs et formation des Contrats.](#)"

The "Code de la Consommation" stipulates that all products destined for France must have labels in French, regardless of the origin of the product. Multilingual labels are acceptable. The use of the French language is mandatory for all labels, documents and packaging. The use of foreign names is forbidden where there are existing equivalent French terms; however, foreign names are authorized when no French equivalent name exists.

[French label and product ingredient regulations](#) are among the strictest in the EU. The General Directorate for Competition, Consumption, and Fraud (DGCCRF) is responsible for enforcing these regulations and can be contacted at the following address:

Direction Générale de la Concurrence de la Consommation et de la Répression des Fraudes (DGCCRF)  
Ministere de l'Economie, des Finances et de l'Industrie  
Teledoc 07159, boulevard Vincent Auriol

75703 Paris Cedex 13

Tel: (+33) 1 44 87 1717 Fax: (+33) 1 44 97 3030

Internet: <http://www.economie.gouv.fr/dgccrf>

French regulations severely limit the use superlatives in food labeling. Product nomenclature may describe a product, but not promote it. For example, terms such as “great” cannot be used to describe a food product. The use of the word “natural” may depend upon its location on the label and the product, and this is [strictly regulated](#) by the Code de la Consommation. Labels may not imply that a food has certain properties when similar products possess the same properties.

Labels must not confuse the consumer. For example, “peanut butter” should be denominated as “pâte d’arachide” (paste of peanuts) and not “beurre d’arachide” (butter of peanuts) since it does not contain any butter from dairy as defined by French regulations.

Generic terms such as beer, yogurt, and candy can be used only if the product is certified as produced in accordance with specific processing procedures. Products that do not conform to these procedures can be imported but may not carry generic labeling terms and may be subject to special taxes.

On 10 June 2020, France adopted a bill on the “[Transparency of Information for Food Products.](#)” The bill sets stricter rules on origin labeling for honey and chocolate products. Craft beer labels prohibit the use of a regional/local name that is different from the location of the brewing facility. Most importantly, the bill mandates that words traditionally used for products of animal origin, such as milk, cheese, sausage, filet, ham, bacon and steak, and cannot be used for food products made from vegetable-sourced proteins.

France has formally [notified the European Commission \(on 10/01/202\)](#) on the “use of certain denominations used to describe foods containing vegetable protein.” This decree will enter into force on April 1, 2022. The percentage of vegetable-derived proteins threshold for this bill will be set by another decree yet to be published the French government. While these provisions will affect all French food products, as well as imports from outside the EU, the impact on products manufactured within the EU is still unclear. Since some EU countries have a more liberal position on terms like almond *milk*, soy*milk* and soy *steak*, France could be instituting a de facto ban on these products. The bill also prohibits the sale of wine that appears to be of French origin, but in reality, is made from grapes grown outside of France. This could affect sales of bulk wine. Previously, bulk wine sellers had some flexibility as long as labels included a disclaimer noting the details of origin and production.

## 1. Country of Origin Labeling

In early 2017, France implemented an [experimental Country of Origin Labeling](#) (COOL) scheme to inform consumers about the origin of dairy and meat ingredients in processed food products. This scheme had been approved by the EU and its implementation is [extended until December 31 2021](#). COOL labeling for dairy and meat is applicable if the product contains more than 50 percent dairy ingredients and/or 8 percent meat ingredients. The scheme is only applicable to products manufactured and/or processed in France. However, the COOL scheme for dairy ingredients was suspended in March 2021 after the French dairy company LACTALIS [won](#) a legal judgement in the European Court of

Justice. The French Council of State (Conseil d'Etat) has suspended the French scheme for dairy ingredients, but the scheme still applies to meat and meat ingredients.

For meat ingredients, the label must mention the country of birth, the country of rearing and the country of slaughter. If only one country is applicable, the label can simply mention "Origine: Pays" (Origin: Country). The label can also note "Origine: UE" (EU Origin) or "Origine: Hors UE" (non-EU Origin), as long as it is accurate and consistent. If the origin is mixed, consisting of both an EU and a non-EU country, or when the origin cannot be determined, the label can note "Origine UE et non-UE" (EU and non-EU origin).

The COOL label must immediately follow the name of the ingredient in the list of ingredients or in a footnote. Font size and foot color must be the same as for the ingredient.

Processed food products manufactured or legally marketed in another EU countries or in a third country are exempt from this French COOL requirement.

The full text of the French decree and the following implementation notice can be found at:

<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/eli/decret/2016/8/19/AGRT1607764D/jo/texte>

<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/eli/arrete/2016/9/28/AGRT1625035A/jo/texte>

The bill on the [Transparency of Information for Food Products](#) also applies to the labeling of meat products sold in restaurants and by institutional caterers.

## **2. Other labeling requirements:**

- The product name, net quantity (in metric units), date of minimum shelf life (DLC) for perishable products or the date of Minimal Durability (DDM) for non-perishable products, and the name and address or EU identification number of the importer must be visibly displayed on the label.
- For non-perishable products, the DDM must appear on the label using the words, "A consommer de préférence avant fin" (best consumed before) (day, month, year). For perishable products, the DLC must appear on the label using the words, "A consommer avant" (to be consumed before) (day, month, year). However, for extremely perishable products, the DLC must appear on the label as "A consommer jusqu'au," (to be consumed until) (day, month, year) or "A consommer jusqu'à la date figurant" (to be consumed no later than) (day, month, year).
- Products that are exempt from indicating the DLC or DDM include: fresh fruits and vegetables, wines and spirits, alcoholic beverages with an alcoholic content equal to or greater than 10.5 percent by volume, vinegars, sugar, confectionery items, and live shellfish intended for raw consumption.
- The name and address of the manufacturer, packer or vendor within the EU must be provided. If packed by a third party in France, the code of the packing establishment must be listed, preceded by the name "emb" for "emballeur" (packager).

- Ingredients, including herbs and spices, must be listed in descending order of their quantity in the product at the time of manufacturing or processing. The list of ingredients should be preceded by the word, “ingredients.” When ingredients are included in the name of the product, their weight, as a percentage of total net products, must be included in the ingredients list (see QUID section below).
- Additives and preservatives must be included on the label of all food products, either by specific group name or by “E” number. Certain substances, such as herbs, spices, and aromatics, must be listed on the ingredients list; if their names are used in the name of the product, and the percentage must be stated. Flavorings are considered additives and should be noted as “arôme de” followed by the name of the flavor.
- The country of origin must be indicated in letters not less than 4 millimeters in height on all product cases (packing labels, etc.). The abbreviation “USA” is acceptable.
- The alcoholic content must be indicated on the label of all beverages with an alcoholic content greater than 1.2 percent, by volume.
- For prepackaged food products, the manufacturer’s lot number must be listed on the packaging or on the commercial documents accompanying the product and should be preceded by the letter “L” or “Lot.” This is required for purposes of traceability.
- Maximum storage temperature should be specified for frozen foods. If appropriate, the word “SURGELE” (quick frozen) should be in a highly visible place in capital letters on the label.
- For canned foods packed in liquid, in addition to the net product weight, the drained weight in metric units must also be included on the label. The net weight of the product must be given along with the drained weight if the liquid in the package is used in the preparation of the product. These weights must appear in grams.
- The net weight, product weight or the drained weight in metric units must be provided on the label. Few French buyers are familiar with U.S. weights and measures, thus metric weights and measures should always be used in commercial transactions.
- The word, “butter” or “cream” may not be used on the label of certain foodstuffs, unless the only fat used is butter fat. Concentrated butter may be used instead of butter and the word “butter” may be used on the label provided the fatty acid composition of the concentrated butter has not been altered by any treatment, in particular, by hydrogenation. Hydrogenated butter is considered to be a food fat and not butter. If concentrated butter is used in the product, the words “pure”, “fine”, “extra”, “fresh”, etc., in combination with the word “butter” cannot be used.
- In certain foodstuffs, the word “milk” or “milk products” may only be used if certain minimum quantities of milk solids are present in the product.
- A veterinary stamp or sanitary certificate is mandatory on products of animal origin (meat and meat products, milk and milk products, eggs and egg product, fish and seafood and products) with the EU approval number of the processing plant.
- Instruction for use or conservation (or advice on preparation of a food product) is mandatory only when necessary and should be clearly indicated and visible on the label to allow the

appropriate use of the product, such as “a conserver dans un endroit sec”: “to be kept in a dry place.”

### Section III. Packaging and Container Regulations:

For products requiring special packaging or container sizes, such as wines and alcohol, please refer to [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards \(FAIRS\) EU GAIN Report E42021-0072](#). France has its own packaging/container size requirements for a large variety of food products, including beers, fermented beverages, breakfast cereals, pre-packed fruits and vegetable, non-alcoholic beverages, coffee, milk, oil and vinegar, ice creams, frozen fish, frozen fruits and vegetables, dried fruits and vegetables, and pet foods.

A wide variety of prepackaged foods requires a declaration of unit price, per kilogram, 100 grams, deciliter, or liter. This requirement is already in force in all retail sales outlets. Although not mandatory, bar codes for products are commonly used in supermarkets.

By [Council Directive 94/62/EC](#), Member States were required to adopt measures to reduce packaging waste. This Directive has been amended several times, most recently in 2018 by EU Directive 2018/852. France transposed the 2018 Directive by a series of amendments to the French Environmental Code [notified to the EU in 2020](#). (In the EU, **transposition** is a process by which an [European Union](#)'s member states give force to a EU [directive](#) by passing appropriate implementation measures). France also adopted a decree, in force since January 1993, stipulating that entities responsible for the initial placement of a packaged product on the market used by households must contribute to, or provide for, the disposal of the used packaging. [CITEO](#) had developed a green dot logo for packaging indicating that the packaging manufacturer participates in a municipal waste disposal system for recycling. Under the same conditions, and in agreement with the French ministries, the wine and spirit industry created in 1993 its own packaging recycling system called [Adelphé](#) which now oversees the recycling of all packaging materials.



Previously mandatory, the use of the Green Dot logo (left) has been replaced by another logo called Triman (right). Use of the Triman Logo is compulsory on the package of any product marketed on French market since 1 January 2021, as mandated by the [French bill on circular economy](#). This logo indicates to the consumer that the product follows recycling rules and must provide information on how to dispose and/or recycle the packaging.



French regulations implementing EU regulations [1935/2004 \(EC\)](#), [2023/2006 \(EC\)](#) and [450/2009 \(EC\)](#) for packaging materials in contact with food products for material not regulated at the EU level (notably rubber, stainless steel, and aluminum packaging) are summarized on this [information sheet](#). More details can be found in brochure No. 1227 published by the French Official Journal and includes previous modifications. This brochure can be obtained from the French Official Journal.

The [French Law on Circular Economy](#) also states that plastic packaging of fruits and vegetables are to be phased out. For more details, see [GAIN report FR2021-0004](#). This law also prohibits the use of PLU stickers on fresh fruits and vegetables unless the stickers are home compostable. The new law also sets increasing thresholds for the re-use of all packaging including Alcohol bottles, starting with 1.5 percent in 2022 to 10 percent in 2027. A decree to be published in 2022 [has already been notified to the EU Commission through the TRIS system](#). Details of implementation and enforcements are currently unclear. For more details, see [GAIN report FR2022-0001](#) dated 01/25/2022.

Following the implementation of [French Law No 2012-1442](#) of 24 December 2012 seeking the suspension of the manufacture, import, export and marketing of any food packaging containing Bisphenol A (BPA), the use of food containers containing BPA in direct contact with the food have been banned since January 1, 2015, for all foods products. The law is applicable to all products which are manufactured using BPA or where BPA is “intentionally” used to manufacture part or the entire final product or where BPA comes from an environmental or adventitious source (such as water pipes or metal containers during processing). The law specifically bans the production and import of these products to be marketed in the French Territory. However, if the product is customs cleared in a French port, it must comply with French regulations and must be BPA free. If the product is customs cleared in another EU Member State (MS) port and transits through France for distribution in another MS, it does not have to comply. The same applies if the shipment is split in France for further distribution to another EU MS. A food product coming from a third country being customs cleared in a French port would have to comply with French regulations, even if it is not being marketed in France. The only way to avoid this issue would be to customs clear the product at its final destination in another MS. In case of inspection of products showing noncompliance, the fine will be a maximum of € 450 per non-compliant product (third-class fine): as example, in a non-compliant shipment of cans, each can will be counted as non-compliant product. The court has the possibility to modulate the fine depending on the case (first case infringement vs multiple offender). For more information, see [GAIN report FR9090](#).

**Note:** The use of the following materials in direct contact with foods is strictly forbidden in France: copper, zinc, and galvanized iron, except for use in the process of distilling, confectionary, and chocolate manufacturing.

#### **Section IV. Food Additives Regulations:**

Legislation on food additive ([EU regulation 1233/2008 \(EC\)](#)) is now harmonized in the European Union. Please refer to [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards \(FAIRS\) EU GAIN Report E42021-0072](#) for information and general guidelines. Please see [here](#) for additional information on France’s implementation.

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

Legislation on pesticides and contaminants is partially harmonized in the European Union. Please see [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards \(FAIRS\) EU GAIN Report](#) for information and general guidelines for information and general guidelines.

## 1. Pesticide Authorization Procedure

The list of phytosanitary products authorized in France is available at the French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety (ANSES) website: <https://ephy.anses.fr/>; This website lists authorized phytosanitary products, those that are no longer authorized, authorized active substances, maximum residue levels (“limites maximales de residus” or LMR) by substance and by plant, companies involved, fertilizers, blends, and toxicology information. Product authorizations are based on reviews of standardized scientific files prepared by companies and presented to ANSES accompanied by complete toxicology and biological studies.

## 2. Monitoring of Pesticide and Contaminant Content in Food Products, Pesticide Phytosanitary Tests

The [Crop Protection Service](#) (SPV) of DGAL of MinAg is responsible for preventing phytosanitary risks in crop production. SPV/DGAL tests imported products for phytosanitary compliance at points of entry. The Fraud Control Office (DGCCRF) of the French Ministry of Economy, Finance and Industry tests for pesticides and other contaminants on vegetable products.

## Section VI. Other Regulations and Requirements:

Products must meet inspection requirements upon entry

**As a reminder: EU imports of red meat, meat products, pet food, farm and wild game meat, ratites, milk and milk products, seafood, bovine embryos and semen, porcine and equine semen, gelatin and animal casings from the U.S. must originate from EU approved U.S. establishments.**

Agricultural and food products subject to additional inspection requirements and/or subject to French trade restrictions include:

### 1. Enriched flour

While import and sales of enriched flour is still prohibited under [French regulations](#), the importation of processed bakery products made using enriched flour is now legal in France, as prescribed by EU regulation [1925/2006](#), as long as the vitamin added in the product provides at least 15 percent of the Dietary Reference Values (DRVs) (<https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/topics/topic/dietary-reference-values>).

### 2. Bovine genetics

The general animal health requirements governing intra-EU trade and imports into the EU of deep-frozen semen of domestic animals of the bovine species are specified in [Council Directive 88/407/EEC](#). Distribution and placement of semen in the country of destination is not covered by the Directive but regulated by Member States. French marketing controls and regulations require that bovine semen imports from third countries must obtain an import license from French Customs prior to importation. The license must also be approved by the following entity:

French Ministry of Agriculture  
Direction générale des politiques agricole, agroalimentaire et des territoires,  
Sous-direction des produits et marchés,  
Bureau du lait, des produits laitiers et de la sélection animale,  
3, rue Barbet de Jouy - 75349 Paris 07  
Tel: (+33) 1 49 55 4611 Fax: (+33) 1 49 55 4590

### **3. Exotic meat**

French regulations prohibit the importation of exotic meats, including the importation of alligator meat.

### **4. Dried fruits and nuts**

French standards, based on the [United Nations Economic Commission for Europe \(UNECE\)](#), are established for the following dried fruits and nuts: Almonds; apples; apricots; cashew nuts; date; fig; raisins; pears; pine kernels; pistachios and prunes.

**Note:** Only walnuts and hazelnuts apply EU standards.

### **5. Pet food**

EU Legislation on pet-food is only partially harmonized. Please refer to [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards \(FAIRS\) EU GAIN Report E42021-0072](#) for information and general guidelines.

### **6. Laboratory testing**

To ensure that quality, sanitary, and ingredient criteria conform with EU and French import standards, some products could be subjected to laboratory testing. This is often done for canned fruits and vegetables, beer, and dairy products, including yogurt.

Laboratory tests are generally requested by retail buyers to ensure compliance with French regulations of the products they intend to sell. While very few manufacturers or U.S. exporters contact a laboratory directly, the Office of Agricultural Affairs at the U.S. Embassy in Paris maintains a list of approved French laboratories.

### **7. Policy for Sample Food Product Shipments**

Food product samples shipped via express mail or parcel post are subject to the same import regulations as a commercial shipment with regard to sanitary or phytosanitary requirements. (Please see the additional requirements for meat, poultry, dairy, and fish products for food shows below.)

For customs, the sample shipment must be accompanied by a proforma invoice indicating the value of the sample product. In order for samples of commercial value to enter France duty and tax free, a bond

or deposit of the potential duties and taxes must be paid. Samples re-exported within one year receive a refund of the deposit. Samples of no commercial value enter France free of duties and taxes. “No commercial value” should be written on the appropriate shipping documents.

As an alternative, traders can also apply for an “Admission Temporaire / Temporary Admission” (ATA) carnet, which is a special international customs document designed to simplify and streamline customs entry procedures of merchandise for up to one year. Customs authorities in the United States and France accept carnets as a guarantee that all customs duties and excise taxes will be paid if any of the items covered by the carnet are not re-exported within the time period allowed. Carnets may be used for commercial samples, professional equipment, and goods destined for exhibitions and fairs.

## **8. Meat, Poultry, Dairy and Fish Products for Food Shows**

Meat, poultry, dairy, and fish products for food shows are governed by [French decree of 27 July 2004](#), and should be accompanied by relevant sanitary and animal health certificates. These products may be used for display purposes only and should not be sold or consumed and should be destroyed at the end of the food show. For inquiries or to apply for an ATA Carnet, please contact the U.S. Council for International Business:

USCIB  
1212 avenue of the Americas  
New York, NY 10036  
Tel: (212) 354 4480  
Fax: (212) 575 0327  
Email: [info@uscib.org](mailto:info@uscib.org)  
Internet: <http://www.uscib.org/ata-carnet-export-service-ud-718/>

## **9. Certification and Documentation Requirements**

### **Import documentation**

Import and export transactions exceeding 12,500 Euros (around \$14,000-15,000 depending on the USD-EUR currency exchange rate) in value must be conducted through an approved banking intermediary. Goods must be imported no later than six months after all financial and customs arrangements have been completed.

For products originating in countries other than EU Member States or participants in the World Trade Organization (WTO), and for a limited number of products considered to be sensitive, a specific import/export license may be required by product or by category of products. Otherwise, the following shipping documents are required for import into France:

- Commercial invoice;
- Bill of lading or air waybill;
- Certificate of origin;
- Sanitary/health certificate if need be (depending on the products)

U.S. exporters must ensure that their products comply with French regulations and verify customs clearance requirements with local authorities through their contacts **before shipping products to France**. The Office of Agricultural Affairs at the U.S. Embassy in Paris can provide some assistance and information on these matters.

Additional information can be obtained from:

Service d'inspection vétérinaire et phytosanitaire aux frontières (SIVEP)  
Direction Générale de l'Alimentation  
Ministère de l'Agriculture, de l'Agroalimentaire et de la Forêt  
251 rue de Vaugirard  
75732 Paris Cedex 15  
Tel (+33) 1 49 55 58 35 Fax : (+33) 1 49 55 83 14  
E-mail: [sivep.sdasei.dgal@agriculture.gouv.fr](mailto:sivep.sdasei.dgal@agriculture.gouv.fr)

## **Section VII. Other Specific Standards:**

### **1. Genetically Engineered /Biotech Products**

For more information on biotech products in France, please see the report [Agricultural Biotechnology Annual-France-FR2020-0030](#).

#### **GE regulations and approvals**

All the biotech events approved for feed and food use in the EU under Regulation EC 1829/2003 are authorized in France. The full list of these products, including events for which an authorization procedure is pending, is available on the European Commission's [website](#).

MON810 corn is the only GE plant approved for cultivation in the EU. Its cultivation is banned in France under [a national law \(in French\)](#) and under Directive [\(EU\) 2015/412](#).

#### **Testing**

The French Ministry of Agriculture and Food and the Ministry for Economy and Finance through the Fraud Control Office (DGCCRF) carry out controls to verify proper enforcement of commercialization and cultivation of GMOs. These controls include:

- crops: verification of compliance with the ban on the cultivation of GMOs (Ministry of Agriculture);
- seeds: search for the presence of GMOs and verification of compliance with labelling rules (Ministry of Agriculture and the Fraud Control Office);
- foodstuffs and animal feed: search for the presence of unauthorized GMOs and verification of compliance with labelling rules (Fraud Control Office).

## **Mandatory Labeling of GE Products**

Labeling in France complies with EU regulations that require food and feed produced from or containing GE products to be labeled as such. For more information, please see the following report [Agricultural Biotechnology Annual-European Union-E42020-0101](#).

## **Voluntary “GMO-free” Labeling Systems**

In addition to EU regulations, France has implemented a national voluntary “GMO-free” labeling system. It only applies to food produced in France. Imported products are not concerned. It states that:

- Plant products can be labeled as “GMO Free” if they contain less than 0.1 percent GE plants. However, some companies could try to differentiate their products by putting “GMO Free” labels on products that cannot be GE. Therefore, if no GE variety of a given plant species is allowed for use in the EU, the products derived from this species cannot be labeled as “GMO Free.”
- For animal products, two thresholds are set and must be indicated on the label: 1) under 0.1 percent is labeled as “fed without GMOs (0.1 percent),” and 2) under 0.9 percent as “fed without GMOs (0.9 percent).”
- Processed animal products, milk and eggs can be labeled as “sourced from animals fed without GMOs (0.1 or 0.9 percent).”
- For apiculture products, biotech plants should be no closer than three kilometers to an apiary.

For processed products that contain several ingredients, the rules above apply to the ingredients themselves. “GMO Free” can be written in the list of ingredients, after the name of the ingredient concerned. It can also be placed on the front of the product but only if this ingredient accounts for at least 95 percent of the dry weight of the product.

It is forbidden to state that the products have a better nutritional, health or environmental value because they are GMO free. Moreover, some food manufacturers and retailers voluntarily label their products as “GMO Free.” Such labels are mainly found on animal products (meat, dairy products, and eggs), canned sweet corn, and soybean products.

## **Low level presence policy**

In 2011, the European Commission put in place a tolerance of 0.1 percent, “technical zero,” for unauthorized GE products in feed. This tolerance applies to GE products authorized for commercialization in a non-EU country and for which an EU authorization request has been lodged with EFSA. It does not apply to food and seeds.

## **2. Dietetic/Health Foods**

[EU Regulation 609/2013 of 12 June 2013](#) provides the definition of a health/dietetic food product. It lists nutritional substances that can be used for dietetic/health products. To date, EU harmonization of dietetic/health food products is in force for the labeling and ingredient regulation of infant and toddler foods (0 to 12 months old, and 1 to 3 years old, respectively), low calorie products for diets, high calorie products for sports, and foods intended for special medical purposes such as diabetes.

In addition to the general French labeling requirements (per Section II-A), all dietetic/health food products must indicate the following information on the label:

- Brand name of the product, immediately followed by its properties and nutritional characteristics;
- Quantity of each nutritional ingredient, expressed in grams (g), or milligrams (mg), per 100 grams of finished product;
- Calorie content expressed in KJ and Kcal per 100 grams of finished product.
- The product should be packed in a manner whereby the packaging covers the product entirely. For bulk dietetic/health products, all nutritional characteristics should be clearly brought to the attention of the consumer on the outside packaging.
- The expiration date of the product must be clearly indicated for perishable products.
- The list of additives contained in the product. Some additives are not authorized in health/dietetic food products in France. The list of authorized additives and substances is contained in [French decree of 2 October 1997](#).

**Note:** Dietetic/health foods are not medicines. Thus, the label may not indicate any curative or preventive properties.

### 3. Food Supplements

[French Decree 2006-352](#) of 20 March 2006 amended, transposed, without any changes, [EU Directive 2002/46/EC](#) of 10 June 2002, establishing harmonized rules for food supplements in labeling, vitamins and minerals, as well as [EU Directive 2006/37/EC](#) amending Annex II of [Directive 2002/46/EC](#) establishing a list of permitted vitamin and mineral preparations that may be added for specific nutritional purposes in food supplements.

### 4. Organic Foods



France like any other EU countries applies the same [Regulation \(EC\) 834/2007](#) which regulates the production, processing, distribution, importation, and labeling of organic food and agricultural products. This regulation is completed with additional rules, specifically [Regulation \(EC\) 889/2008](#). Additional information is available on the Agence Bio (official French organic association) [website](#).

[Commission Regulation \(EC\) 1235/2008](#) lays out rules for the implementation of [Regulation \(EC\) 834/2007](#) regarding the arrangements for imports of organic products from third countries. In order to export organic products to the EU, third countries must prove that their production standards are equivalent to the EU standards.

U.S.-EU Equivalence Arrangement: The U.S.-EU Organic Equivalence Arrangement took effect on June 1, 2012. The U.S. and EU have recognized each other's organic production rules and control systems as equivalent under their respective rules. Organic products certified to USDA organic standards may be sold and labeled as organic in the EU. Both the USDA organic seal and the EU organic logo may be used on products traded under this arrangement. When using the EU organic logo, exporters must meet all the EU labeling requirements.

To facilitate identification of organic products for French consumers, the words "Agriculture Biologique" (organic agriculture) and the "AB" logo are applied on the product label. This logo represents the French Ministry of Agriculture certification that the product was organically grown or processed according to both specific EU and French criteria. The "AB" logo is awarded by three certifying agencies: Ecocert, Qualite France and Ascert International. Also, the "AB" logo signifies that the producer, the importer or the distributor has been duly registered with the EU Member State's organic food trade association. Ecocert, Qualite France and Ascert International conduct regular inspections of producers, who are subject to strict controls.

For more information on EU organic regulations, please see [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards \(FAIRS\) EU GAIN Report E42021-0072](#). Additional information is also available on the FAS website to the European Union [Organic Production - United States Mission to the European Union \(usda-eu.org\)](#)

## **5. Alcoholic Beverages, Wine, and Beer**

Wine imports from non-EU countries are subject to EU import duties, which vary depending on the percentage of alcohol contained in the wine and the type of container. Other taxes, such as a transportation tax, which is the equivalent of an excise duty, and value added tax (VAT), apply to both domestically and foreign-produced wines. For any import above 30 hectoliters, an import certificate is required and can be obtained from the wine department of FranceAgrimer:

<https://www.franceagrimer.fr/Accompagner/International/Certificats-Export-Import>

Also, a VI.1 document is necessary, as well as an invoice. The document certifies that the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) has approved the U.S. wine exporter. This document is issued in the U.S. by the producer. For additional information, please visit the TTB website at: [https://www.ttb.gov/itd/exporting\\_alcohol.shtml](https://www.ttb.gov/itd/exporting_alcohol.shtml).

For information on labeling regulations for wine, wine and spirit drinks, as well as alcoholic regulations, please refer to FAS/USEU website [section on wine labeling](#).

Beer imports to France are also subject to custom duties and tax laws. To be called "beer" the product should correspond to criteria as defined in [French decree 92-307](#) of 31 March 1992.

## **6. Animal Products**

### **Beef Labeling**

France follows the EU requirement that all beef sold in France must be labeled with the country(ies) where the animal was born, raised, and slaughtered. Since 1 January 2003, France has required that

restaurants be able to provide the origin of the beef meat served to its customers. The bill on the “[Transparency of Information for Food Products](#)” expanded this requirement to all meat served in restaurants and cafeterias.

## 7. Environmental Labeling

For more detailed information, please refer to [GAIN report FR9121 dated 11 November 2012](#).

A voluntary pilot program for environmental labeling for all goods, not only food products, was initiated on 1 July 2011. Details are described in a report published in January 2012 by the Ministry of Ecology and Sustainable Development titled, “Towards an environmental labeling for food products.” Environmental labeling aims to “test how information is passed on throughout the entire production and distribution chain, all the way to the consumer.”

The legislative grounds for environmental labeling are in the Grenelle laws indicating “consumers must have access to sincere, objective and comprehensive environmental information on the overall characteristics of the product/package pair.” The technical grounds of environmental labeling include a methodology of good practices for environmental labeling of consumption products (BPX30-323:2009), which sets carbon dioxide emissions as the main but not unique criteria for environmental labeling, and life cycle as the basis for calculation. This methodology resulted from the work of the Environment and Energy Management Agency and of the Food Standards Agency (ADEME-AFNOR).

Overall, 36 food organizations (including 29 private companies) volunteered to participate in the program, covering a total of 326 food products. Three indicators are commonly labeled on the products: greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, water consumption, and impact on biodiversity. Consumers are informed mainly via internet, labeling at the retail outlet, or through mobile applications. The results indicate that 75 percent of the food companies want to continue environmental labeling, and that 60 percent would like to expand it. The coexistence of this environmental labeling scheme on food products with other distinctions (such as organic agriculture, sustainable agriculture, geographical and quality indications, ‘product grown on a farm with high environmental value’ and the European Ecolabel) has yet to be studied.

Below is an example of an environmental label taken from an organic breakfast cereal (oats):



## 8. Sustainable Agriculture Labeling

The French Fair Trade food sector was valued at \$2 billion in 2020, an increase of 12 percent from 2019. Sixty-five percent of Fair Trade products are imported and 35 percent are domestically produced. About 80 percent of Fair Trade food products are also certified as organic products. [La Plate-Forme pour le Commerce Equitable \(PFCE\)](#) represents more than 30 different associations and companies in France, with the role of promoting more Fair Trade.

## 9. Food Score Labeling

[European regulation EU No. 1169/2011](#), known as the INCO regulation, establishes the rules for informing consumers of basic food information, including nutritional values and the list of ingredients. It permits other forms of nutritional information to be added to the label in accordance with Articles 35 to 37 of the INCO Regulation to help consumers better understand of the product.

The [French Ministry of Health](#) created a system of nutritional labeling on the front of packaging called Nutri-Score, which can be used by food processors and manufacturers voluntarily. The French government says Nutri-Score was developed to facilitate the understanding of nutritional information by consumers. The Nutri-Score was implemented for the first time in France in 2017.

Nutri-Score is a logo affixed to the front of the packaging that provides information on the nutritional quality of the products in a simplified form. This compliments the mandatory nutritional declaration set by European regulations. It is based on a five-color scale: from dark green to dark orange/red, and is also associated with letters from A to E.



The Nutri-Score logo is assigned on the basis of a score that takes into account nutritional information per 100 grams or per 0.1 liter of product:

- nutrients and foods to promote consumption of fibers, proteins, fruits, vegetables, legumes, nuts, rapeseed, walnut and olive oil, while limiting consumption of saturated fatty acids, sugars, salt.

The right to use the Nutri-Score logo is voluntary and free. Companies wishing to use the Nutri-Score must register their product on one of the following platforms:

For products marketed in France: any applicant wishing to use the Nutri-Score logo must notify the French public health agency of its intention by registering on the site: [https://www.demarches-simplifiees.fr/commencer/nutri-score\\_enregistrement\\_france](https://www.demarches-simplifiees.fr/commencer/nutri-score_enregistrement_france).

For products marketed exclusively outside France: any applicant wishing to use the Nutri-Score must notify the French public health agency of their intention by registering on the site:  
[https://www.demarches-simplifiees.fr/commencer/ns\\_international\\_registration\\_procedure](https://www.demarches-simplifiees.fr/commencer/ns_international_registration_procedure).

This registration includes:

- the identification of the applicant and a description of activity;
- details by brand, of the product segment concerned by the use of the brand;
- the commitment to use the logo for all the Products that it markets under the brand (s) registered; and
- the applicant's commitment to respect the usage regulations.

Electronic files allowing the use of the mark will be transmitted to the company by the French public health agency and can be used immediately.

## **Section VIII. Copyright and/or Trademark Laws:**

### **1. Trademarks**

Trademarks and brand names are protected under French law, with no limitations on number. In a general sense, trademarks recognize and protect indicators which distinguish one product or service from similar products or services. A trademark has a ten-year life span and is renewable every ten years.

To register a trademark, applications must be filed with the following organization:

- Institut National de la Propriété Industrielle (INPI)  
Division des Marques  
26bis, rue de Saint Pétersbourg  
75800 Paris Cedex 08  
Tel: (+33) 1 53 04 5304 Fax: (+33) 1 49 01 0737  
<http://www.inpi.fr>

The registration of a trademark, as is the case for patents, requires a French address, which may be obtained through a legal representative in France or elsewhere in Europe.

### **2. Protected Geographical Indications**

France was among the first countries in the world, dating as far back as 1919, to establish a system protecting the use of geographic indications (appellations) for food products. In 1992, this system was generally adopted at the European level (see [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards \(FAIRS\) EU GAIN Report E42021-0072](#)). EU regulations establish three systems/labels: Traditional Specialty Guaranteed (TSG), Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) and Protected Geographical Indication (PGI). In France, the Institut National des Appellations d'Origine (INAO: <http://www.inao.gouv.fr>) oversees the PGI system.

Note that in France, only one product is protected under the TSG system (fresh mussels: [moules de bouchot](#)), however more products are in the process of registration, including beer and shallots. For products with a geographic name not protected under the PDO/PGI system, including products from third countries, the DGCCRF at the Ministry of the Industry and Finance, ensures the accuracy of the label. For example, if a product is labeled as coming from Florida, the seller must prove, with proper documentation, that the product is truly from Florida. When a registered brand includes a geographic name (such as California Cola), and the product does not come from the region named in the brand, the label must indicate clearly the origin of the product since the implementation of the bill on the [Transparency of Information for Food Products](#). In our example, if the product is made in France, the label should bear “California Cola”, with a subtitle “made in France”. This does not apply to wine.

Third countries can have their geographic names recognized and protected at the EU level through bilateral agreements with the EU, which are also valid in France.

### **Section IX. Import Procedures:**

For general EU import procedures, please refer to [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards \(FAIRS\) EU GAIN Report E42021-0072](#).

For France specific requirements:

Considering the variety of distribution channels available in France, it is important for new-to-market exporters to carefully select the method that is best suited for their specific product and objectives. French buyers generally prefer to purchase through an intermediary (a distributor, an agent, or a salaried representative). Thus, direct sales to an end-user are generally rare.

Food imports into France generally require the following:

1. Customs clearance: This must be done by a person or a company that can be present with customs authorities at the port of entry the moment the imported goods arrive at the port of entry. The imported goods must have the necessary accompanying documents to clear customs (i.e., commercial invoice, bill of lading, the certificate of origin, the import and sanitary/phytosanitary certificate etc...). The U.S. exporter should have the customs clearance procedure done by a well-established forwarding agent, an importer/distributor, or other reputable agent in the country of destination.
2. Customs clearance is done in a customs office at the port of entry. For more information regarding proper customs clearance documentation and addresses of various customs offices, please contact:

Centre de Renseignements Douaniers  
11, rue des Deux Communes 93558 Montreuil Cedex  
Tel: (+33) 1 0811 20 4444  
Email: [crs@douane.finances.gouv.fr](mailto:crs@douane.finances.gouv.fr)  
Internet: <http://www.douane.gouv.fr>

All shipping documents must be in French. Also, some products, as noted earlier, are subject to veterinary or health inspection upon arrival in France. Representatives of both Ministries of Economy and Agriculture are present at each port/airport of entry.

The French customs clearance procedure is very efficient, provided that the U.S. exporter has completed all the necessary documentation for the shipment. Exporters are highly encouraged to give meticulous attention to the required documentation. **Exporters should work closely with their importer to make sure all the necessary documentation is in order prior to shipment.** This will minimize the risk of customs delays and expensive demurrage fees.

3. When foodstuffs enter France, customs duties, ad valorem, must be paid. The amount of these duties differs according to product. In addition, a value added tax (VAT), is applied (5.5 percent for all food products, except for alcoholic beverages, and chocolate and candies where the VAT tax is 20 percent).

## **Section X: Trade Facilitation**

### **1. Advance Rulings**

France fully implements E-27 advance ruling rules. More information can be found in the [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards \(FAIRS\) EU GAIN Report E42021-0072](#).

### **2. Pre-Clearance Program**

The Official Controls Regulation (OCR - Regulation (EU) 2017/625) provides the legal basis for the recognition of official controls in the country of origin of the goods. More information can be found in the [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards \(FAIRS\) EU GAIN Report E42021-0072](#).

### **3. Electronic Certificates**

The Official Controls Regulation (OCR - [Regulation \(EU\) 2017/625](#)) provides the legal basis for the general EU acceptance of electronic certificates using the EU's Integrated Management System for Official Controls (IMSOC). For plant products, France, as with all EU Member States, is able to receive U.S. e-Phyto certificates sent via the Hub created by the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC). For other commodities, no connection exists between IMSOC and the respective systems the USG uses to issue electronic certificates. In absence of such a connection, paper certificates are required by French authorities to satisfy the EU requirement for an original certificate with an ink signature and an official stamp. The color of the ink signature and the stamp must be different from the ink of the certificate.

For organic products, an electronic certificate of organic inspection (COI mandated by [\(EU\) Regulation n° 1235/2008](#)) is mandatory as of October 10, 2017. [Regulation \(EU\) 2016/1842](#) establishes the COI electronic certificate which has to be completed and endorsed via the [TRACES NT application](#). In France, this certificate will be checked and endorsed by the DGAL (see appendix 1) for products of animal origin, and the DGCCRF (seen Appendix I) for products of plant origin, at the point of entry.

French operators importing organic products from the United States must be certified and validated on the TRACES NT site by the competent authorities ([INAO](#) for France), to be able to import organic products from third countries.

### **3. Import Control Fees**

The Official Controls Regulation (OCR - [Regulation \(EU\) 2017/625](#)) provides the legal basis for the financing of import controls. Mandatory fees are charged by the French customs to operators (importer and/or freight forwarder) for certain official controls, including on import controls of animals, products of animal origin, germinal products, animal byproducts, composite products, hay and straw, plants and plant products. Operators also have to pay for the border control for food and feed of non-animal origin as listed in Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/1793. In addition, fees are also charged to operators for additional work on products that are found to be non-compliant.

### **4. Average Release Time for Products –Common Delays**

The average release time for products depends on the Point of Entry in France and the product load at the time of entry. All French ports are efficient and generally well organized to perform customs formalities as well as the necessary veterinary and/or plant inspections. Delays are usually due to incomplete or incorrect documentation, or product non-compliance.

### **5. Duplicative Inspections**

Inspections on imported foods are concentrated at the external borders of the European Union. Once goods have passed inspection and customs duties are paid, they can move freely throughout the EU. However, official controls remain possible at any stage of distribution in France. Inspectors from the [French Directorate for Consumption and Trade](#) (DGCCRF) (see Appendix 1) are generally in charge of post-import inspections.

## Appendix I. Government Regulatory Agency Contacts:

For European Community contacts and how to obtain legislation, see [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards \(FAIRS\) EU Gain Report](#).

### 1. The General Direction for Food of the French Ministry of Agriculture (DGAL/MINAG)

participates in the preparation of food laws and the definition of norms. It also administers sanitary and phytosanitary policy. DGAL headquarters are located at the following address:

Direction Générale de l'Alimentation  
Ministère de l'Agriculture, de l'Agroalimentaire et de la Forêt  
251 rue de Vaugirard  
75015 Paris  
Tel: (+33) 1 49 55 49 55 - Fax: (+33) 1 49 55 48 50  
Internet: <http://www.agriculture.gouv.fr>

The DGAL office providing French import requirements is:

Service d'inspection vétérinaire et phytosanitaire aux frontières (SIVEP)  
Direction Générale de l'Alimentation  
Ministère de l'Agriculture, de l'Agroalimentaire et de la Forêt  
251 rue de Vaugirard 75732 Paris Cedex 15  
Tel (+33) 1 49 55 58 35 Fax : (+33) 1 49 55 83 14  
E-mail: [sivep.sdasei.dgal@agriculture.gouv.fr](mailto:sivep.sdasei.dgal@agriculture.gouv.fr)

Database for sanitary and phytosanitary import requirements (in French):

<https://teleprocedures.franceagrimer.fr/impadon/>

### 2. The General Direction for Competition, Consumption and Frauds (DGCCRF) is the

French regulatory agency responsible for the safety of all foods. DGCCRF's activities are directed against impure, unsafe, and fraudulently labeled foods. DGCCRF is also responsible for enforcing French laws in manufacturing and marketing, and also at the import level. DGCCRF maintains offices at each point of entry. The headquarters is at the following address:

Direction Générale de la Concurrence  
de la Consommation et de la Répression des Fraudes (DGCCRF)  
Ministère de l'Économie, des Finances et de l'Industrie  
59, boulevard Vincent Auriol 75703 Paris Cedex 13  
Tel: (+33) 1 44 87 1717 Fax: (+33) 1 44 97 3031  
Internet: <https://www.economie.gouv.fr/dgccrf>

**3. The Association Française de Normalisation (AFNOR)** is the French authority in charge of coordinating work and research relating to establishing standards. AFNOR prepares new and revised standards, presents them for public comment, and then submits them to the relevant ministry for approval. It is the French branch of the European Standardization System (CEN) and a member of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). AFNOR can be reached at the following address:

AFNOR

11, avenue Francis de Pressense

93571 St Denis la Plaine Cedex

Tel: (33-1) 41 62 8000 Fax: (33-1) 49 17 9000

Internet: <http://www.afnor.fr>

## **Appendix II. Other Import Specialist Contacts:**

### **For additional information about a particular product:**

Office of Agricultural Affairs  
U.S. Embassy Paris, France  
2, avenue Gabriel  
75382 Paris Cedex 08  
Tel: (+33) 1 43 12 2245  
Fax: (+33) 1 43 12 2662  
Internet: <http://www.usda-france.fr>  
Email: [agparis@fas.usda.gov](mailto:agparis@fas.usda.gov)

### **For information on duties, taxes and documentation:**

Centre de Renseignements Douaniers  
11, rue des Deux Communes  
93558 Montreuil Cedex  
Tel: (+33) 1 0811 20 4444  
Email: [crs@douane.finances.gouv.fr](mailto:crs@douane.finances.gouv.fr)  
Internet: <https://www.douane.gouv.fr>  
<https://www.douane.gouv.fr>

### **French Statistical Institute:**

INSEE Infos Service  
18, Bld Adolphe Pinard  
75014 Paris  
Tel: (+33) 1 41 17 5050  
Fax: (+33) 1 41 17 6666  
Internet : <http://www.insee.fr>

### **To obtain EU/French Customs tariffs:**

Journal Officiel  
26, rue Desaix  
65015 Paris  
Tel: (+33) 1 40 58 7979  
Fax: (+33) 1 45 79 1784  
Email: [info@journal-officiel.gouv.fr](mailto:info@journal-officiel.gouv.fr)  
Internet: <http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr>

**Attachments:**

No Attachments