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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-27 GAIN Report E42020-0069 authored by the U.S. Mission to the EU in Brussels, Belgium

DISCLAIMER: This report was prepared by the Office of Agricultural Affairs of the USDA/Foreign Agricultural Service in Paris, France for U.S. exporters of food and agricultural products. While every possible care was taken in the preparation of this report, information provided may not be completely accurate either because policies have changed since its preparation, or because clear and consistent information about these policies was not available. It is highly recommended that U.S. exporters verify the full set of import requirements with their foreign customers, who are normally best equipped to research such matters with local authorities, before any goods are shipped.

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

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-27 GAIN Report E42020-0069](#) authored by the U.S. Mission to the EU in Brussels, Belgium.

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## Section I. Food Laws:

1. Food legislation not regulated in detail at the EU level may be handled differently by Member States. There may be variation in application of the European Union's harmonized legislation (see [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards \(FAIRS\) EU-27 GAIN Report E42020-0069](#)), 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 regulations exist both in France and the EU which limit market access for specific U.S. agricultural exports. [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards \(FAIRS\) EU-27 GAIN Report E42020-0069](#) should be consulted regarding regulations for restrictions relative to hormone-treated beef, poultry treated with anti-microbial treatments, genetically modified products, in addition to other restricted products. The ongoing harmonization of EU import regulations, as well as the implementation of the World Trade Organization (WTO) agreements, may result in the elimination of French regulations inconsistent with the WTO, as well as in the conversion of quotas, variable levies, and restrictive licensing to tariffs that are to be reduced over time. Additional products that are subject to restrictive regulations include the following: 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 norms and must be inspected at the point of entry. More details concerning regulations for these products can be found in Section VI "Other Regulations and Requirements" of this report.

## Section II. Labeling Requirements:

(see [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards \(FAIRS\) EU-27 GAIN Report E42020-0069](#) for EU Labeling requirements)

EU Directive 2000/13/EC dated March 20, 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. As previously mentioned, the use of the French language is mandatory on labels, as well as in documents, packaging, and merchandise. The use of foreign names is forbidden in place of 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 European Union. 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)  
Ministère de l'Économie, 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 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 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 May 27, 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 will be prohibited from using a regional/local name different from the regional/local 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, cannot be used for food products made from vegetable-sourced proteins. The percentage of vegetable derived proteins threshold for this bill will be set by a decree yet to be published the French government. This proposal would impact all products domestic and imported and amounts to a de facto ban the marketing and sale in France of products labeled as almond *milk*, *soymilk* and soy *steak* which could have been imported from the United States. The bill also prohibits the sale of wine of grapes grown outside of France with a label that may lead the consumers to believe it is of French origin as it was bottled or further processed in France. Such labels were previously tolerated if they included a disclaimer noting the details of origin and production.

## **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 [had been extended until 12/31/2021](#). COOL 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.

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 may only mention “Origine : Pays” (Origin : Country)

For dairy ingredients, the label must mention of country where the milk was collected and the country where it was packaged and/or processed. If only one country is applicable, the label may only mention “Origine : Pays” (Origin : Country)

If all of those countries are EU members, the label can bear the mention “Origine : UE” (EU Origin). If all of those countries are non-EU members, the label can bear the mention “Origine : Hors UE” (non-EU Origin). If one or more of those countries are EU members and one or more are non-EU members or when the origin cannot be determined, the label can mention “Origine UE et non EU” (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 text of the French decree and the following implementation notice can be found here :

<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](#) mandate labeling on the country of origin for all meat products sold in restaurants and institutions and by caterers.

### **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 in the same area of 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, for traceability reasons, 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”.
- 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-27 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 to enter the EU, such as wines and alcohol, see [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards \(FAIRS\) EU-27 GAIN Report E42020-0069](#) for information and general guidelines. France has its own packaging/container size requirements for a large variety of food products, including beers, fermented beverage, 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 for all retail sales outlets. Although not mandatory, bar codes for products are used in supermarkets.

By Council Directive 94/62/EC, Member States were required to adopt measures to reduce packaging waste. France transposed this Directive by decree 96-1008 of 18 November 1996 (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. previously used in France has been rep [CITEO \(formerly Eco-Emballage\)](#) has 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 compulsory, the use of the Green Dot logo (left) was replaced by another logo called Triman (right). Use of the Triman Logo will be compulsory on the package of any product marketed on French market in 2021 (a date has not been set) as mandated by the [French bill on circular economy](#). This logo indicates to the consumer that the product follows recyclable rules and must be accompanied by an information about what to do with the packaging: i.e. throw away in common waste and/or recycle.



The French regulations implementing EU regulations 1935/2004 (EC), 2023/2006 (EC) and 450/2009 (EC) for packaging materials in contact with food products as well as France-only for material not regulated at the EU level (notably rubber, stainless steel, and aluminum packaging) have been summarized in this [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 (Please see address listed in Appendix II of this report.).

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 is 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 custom-cleared in a French port, it must comply with French regulations and must be BPA free. If the product is custom-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 in another MS. A food product coming from a third country being custom-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 custom-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-27 GAIN Report E42020-0069 http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent GAIN Publications/Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards - Narrative Brussels USEU EU-28 12-7-2017.pdf](#) 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-27 GAIN Report E42020-0069](#) 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 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:**

#### **1. Products that 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:

Enriched flour

Since adding vitamins to food products is prohibited under [French regulations](#), the importation of any product made with flour enriched with vitamins is also prohibited, with the exception of approved health/diet food products.

Bovine genetic

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

Exotic meat

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

Dried fruits and nuts

French standards based on the [United Nations Economic Commission for Europe \(UNECE\)](#) are now 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.

Animal by-products for human consumption

See Paragraph 4 for French regulations on transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSE) and specified risk materials (SRMs).

Animal feed for ruminants and for non-ruminants

See paragraph 4 for French regulations on transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSE) and specified risk materials (SRMs).

Pet food

Legislation on pet-food is partially harmonized in the EU. Please refer to [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards \(FAIRS\) EU-27 GAIN Report E42020-0069](#) for information and general guidelines.

Laboratory testing

To ensure that quality, sanitary, and ingredient criteria conform with EU-27 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 buyers for supermarkets to assure 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 U.S. Embassy Paris has a list of French approved laboratories.

## **2. 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 get the deposit back. Samples of no commercial value enter France free of duties and taxes. "No commercial value" should be written on the appropriate shipping documents.

An alternative is applying 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.

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

Meat, poultry, dairy, and fish products for food shows are governed by [French decree of July 27, 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. To inquire about or apply for an ATA Carnet, 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/>

### **3. 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 should make sure 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 Paris can provide 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 [FR2019-036 GAIN report](#).

#### **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 [EU-27 GAIN Report E42019-0053](#).

#### **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 GE 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.

National Ban on the only GE Corn Trait Commercially Grown in the EU

The only GE plant approved for cultivation in the EU is MON810 Bt corn, an insect-resistant corn. In France, the cultivation of this corn is banned under [Directive \(EU\) 2015/412](#).

## 2. Dietetic/Health Foods

[EU Regulation 609/2013 of 12 June 2013](#), gives the definition of a health/dietetic food product. It lists nutritional substances that can be used in 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.
- 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 October 2, 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 March 20, 2006 amended, transposed, without any changes, EU Directive 2002/46/EC of June 10, 2002, establishing harmonized rules for food supplements on 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](#). You may also find additional information on the Agence Bio (official French organic association) [website](#).

[Commission Regulation \(EC\) 1235/2008](#) lays down 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.

US-EU Equivalency Arrangement: The US-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 the 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 Ascet 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 Ascet International conduct regular inspections of producers, who are subject to strict controls.

For EU regulations, please see [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards \(FAIRS\) EU-27 GAIN Report E42020-0069](#) more information.

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

French 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 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 March 31, 1992.

## **6. Animal Products**

### Beef Labeling

France follows the EU requirement that all beef meat sold in France must be labeled with the country(ies) where the animal was born, raised, and slaughtered. Since January 1<sup>st</sup> 2003, France has required that restaurants be able to provide the origin of the meat served to its customers.

## **7. Environmental Labeling**

For more detailed information, see [GAIN report FR9121 dated November 11, 2012](#)

A voluntary pilot program for environmental labeling for all goods, not only food products, was initiated on July 1, 2011. It is 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 the in 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, thirty-six food organizations (including 29 private companies) volunteered to participate in the program, on a total of 326 food products. Three indicators were labeled on the products, on average: greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, water consumption, and impact on biodiversity. Consumers were informed mainly via internet, labeling at the retail outlet, or through a mobile application. The results indicated that 75 percent of the food companies want to continue environmental labeling, and 60 percent want it to expand. 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.

Here is an example of environmental labeling taken from organic breakfast cereals (oats):



## 8. Sustainable Agriculture Labeling

France fair trade market was valued at \$700 million in 2015, with a strong growth of 72 percent in comparison with 2012. More than 91 percent of the fair trade products are food products and 71 percent of them are also certified as organic products. [La Plate-Forme pour le Commerce Equitable \(PFCE\)](#) represents more than 30 different associations and companies acting in France, which role is to promote fair trade in the country.

## 9. Food Score Labeling

[European regulation EU No. 1169/2011](#), known as the INCO regulation, establishes the rules for informing consumers of basic information of a food product such as nutritional values or the list of ingredients. It permits other forms of labeling to be provided in addition to the mandatory nutritional declaration in accordance with Articles 35 to 37 of the INCO Regulation if this labeling helps consumers understanding 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 and complementary to the mandatory nutritional declaration set by European regulations. It is based on a five color scale: from dark green to dark orange/red and associated with letters going from A to E.



The logo is given on the basis of a score taking into account for 100 grams or 0.1 liter of product, the content:

- in nutrients and foods to promote (fibers, proteins, fruits, vegetables, legumes, nuts, rapeseed, walnut and olive oil),
- and in nutrients to limit (energy, saturated fatty acids, sugars, salt).

After calculation, the score obtained by a product allows it to be assigned a letter and a color.

The right to use the Nutri-Score logo is free. Companies wishing to use the Nutri-Score must register 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/enregistrement\\_nutri-score](https://www.demarches-simplifiees.fr/commencer/enregistrement_nutri-score).

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/registration-for-brands-distributed-abroad-only>.

This registration includes:

- the identification of the applicant and his 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 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, it was later extended at the European level (see [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards \(FAIRS\) EU-27 GAIN Report E42020-0069](#)). The EU Regulations set up 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](#) ) but more products are in the process including beer and shallots. For products with a geographic name not protected under the PGO/PGI system, including products from third countries, the DGCCRF at the Ministry of the Industry and Finance, insures 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](#), this allowance is prohibited for 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 see [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards \(FAIRS\) EU-27 GAIN Report E42020-0069](#).

For France specific requirements:

Considering the variety of distribution options available in France, it is important for the new-to-market exporter to select the method best suited to his product. French buyers generally prefer to purchase through an intermediary (distributor, agent, or salaried representative), thus sales directly to the end-user a rare practice. Imports of foodstuffs to France generally require the following:

1. Customs clearance: Must be done by a person or a company present with customs authorities at the port of entry of the imported goods and include the necessary accompanying documents for the food products (i.e., commercial invoice, bill of lading, the certificate of origin, the import and sanitary/phytosanitary certificate). The U.S. exporter should have the customs clearance done by a forwarding agent, importer/distributor, or agent in the country of destination.

2. Customs clearance should be 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)  
<http://www.douane.gouv.fr>

All shipping documents must be in French. Also, some products, as enumerated previously in this report, 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 entire customs clearance procedure is rapid, provided the U.S. exporter has furnished all the necessary documentation with the shipment. Also, it is recommended that the exporter be fully aware of the necessary shipping documents required for the product. Most often the information is provided by the importer.

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, 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 on [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards \(FAIRS\) EU-27 GAIN Report E42020-0069](#)).

### **B. 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 on [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards \(FAIRS\) EU-27 GAIN Report E42020-0069](#)).

### **C. 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 all EU Member States are able to receive U.S. e-Phytos 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 since October 20, 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.

#### **D. 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.

#### **E. 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 organized in an efficient way to perform customs formalities as well as the necessary veterinary and/or plant inspections as efficiently as other developed countries. The most common delays are due to incomplete or incorrect certification, or non-compliance.

#### **F. 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) will be mostly 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-27 GAIN Report E42020-0069](#) .

### 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. They have offices at each point of entry. Their headquarters are 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, puts them to public enquiry, 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)

### **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)  
<http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr>

### **Attachments:**

No Attachments