

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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Report Name: Temporary Labeling and Packaging Flexibility for Pre-Packaged Meat Products

Country: Canada

Post: Ottawa

Report Category: Livestock and Products, Poultry and Products, Agricultural Situation

Prepared By: Alexandria Watters

Approved By: Philip Hayes

Report Highlights:

In response to industry challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) has announced temporary flexibility, until September 15, 2020, in enforcing some Canadian labeling and packaging regulations for pre-packaged meat products. CFIA has confirmed this flexibility is applicable to both pre-packaged meat products made in Canada and products imported from the United States (ex- product labeled for retail sale in the United States). Label requirements associated with food safety are mandatory and businesses must continue to ensure that traceability documentation is maintained.

On June 15, 2020 the CFIA [announced](#) flexibility around certain labeling requirements for pre-packaged meat products to be in place for a period of 90 days. All laws and regulations around labeling remain in force during this time, however, CFIA is exercising discretion in the enforcement of non-food safety related labeling and packaging. Safe Food for Canadians Regulations licensing requirements continue to be in force.

Pre-packaged meat products **must** continue to display the following information on the label:

- have labels that are not false, misleading or deceptive
- provide the following information, as applicable to the product
 1. a common name
 2. a list of ingredients and Canadian [priority allergen](#) and [gluten source](#) declaration
 3. a name and contact information for the person responsible for the food
 4. a net quantity (in metric or imperial units)
 5. a lot code identifier (such as date of production, best before date, lot number)
 6. storage instructions, expiry date, best before date
 7. directions for use (such as safe cooking instructions)
 8. food safety statements for meat (for example, previously frozen, mechanically tenderized meat)

Flexibility is permitted in the areas of labeling format and for bilingual language requirements:

- Required information can be provided in any legible format or in any place on the label
- In the event that the packaging format does not include the required information on the label, this information can be supplied to consumers in any legible format such as by placing a sticker on the package with the information or supplying signage at the point of purchase
- Required information can be compliant with CFIA bilingual (English/French) language labeling requirements by applying a sticker to the packaging, supplying consumers with a leaflet/pamphlet, providing signage at the point of purchase, or on the retail business website, providing that consumers are given instructions on how to access this information.
- Provincial bilingual labeling requirements continue to remain in effect.

For those businesses which utilize this flexibility, CFIA is requiring the following documentation to be completed and to be available for CFIA inspection if requested:

- traceability documentation as required under the *Safe Food for Canadians Regulations* (SFCR)
- how COVID-19 led to the need to sell food with non-compliant labels
- the nature of the non-compliance
- the actions taken to prevent or minimize any risk to human health
- steps taken to return to compliance at the earliest opportunity

CFIA has provided three example scenarios where labeling and packaging flexibility would apply and confirms that U.S. retail packaged product imported into Canada would be eligible:

- meat products made for Canadian retail sale or foodservice use
- meat products made for U.S. retail sale
- meat products that do not meet standardized container size requirements

Source: CFIA

For additional guidance on the specifics of what flexibility is permitted and scenarios for compliance refer to the CFIA [guidance document](#).

Additional questions may be addressed to CFIA via: cfia.covid-19industryquestions-questionsdesindustries.acia@canada.ca

Attachments:

No Attachments.