

# FACT FILE

## Food Labelling

### OVERVIEW

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All foods packaged must be labelled in accordance with Section 16(3) of the Food Act 1984 (Vic). The detailed requirements of food labelling can be found in the National Food Standards developed by Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ).

Foods manufactured, packed, and sold from the same premises, packaged in the presence of the purchaser or sold at a fundraising event immediately before purchase are exempt from labelling.

Labelling of packaged food products is important for a variety of reasons. For example, it is important that consumers are aware of the ingredients in a product in case they are allergic to an ingredient. Details of lots or batches of production and the place of manufacture will assist in the efficient recall of suspect unsafe product. The information below is a guide to assist your food business with the labelling of packaged food products.

### LABELLING INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS

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The following information should be provided on food packaging to meet FSANZ labelling requirements:

#### **Description of Food**

Foods must be labelled with a description of the food sufficient to indicate the true nature of the food. Labels or descriptions must not mislead consumers.

#### **Food Recall Information**

Lot and/or batch marking is important information that should be labelled on food packaging. This detail will assist in an efficient product recall.

#### **Name & Address of Supplier**

The name and full business address in Australia of the supplier (whether manufacturer, vendor, packer or importer) must be on the label. A post office box does not meet this requirement. This information assists in conducting recalls, complaints, and general enquiries about the product. This requirement also requires that the country of origin is detailed on the packaging. A statement that the food is made from imported or local and imported ingredients is also required where this is the case.

#### **Ingredient List**

The label must include list of ingredients, including food additives, in descending order in proportion by weight (including water). Compound ingredients which themselves are made up of a number of ingredients must list all those ingredients e.g. chocolate (sugar, cocoa solids, etc).

#### **Percentage Characterising Ingredients**

Where ingredients are mentioned in the name of a food (e.g. fruit and nut muesli requires percentage fruit and percentage nuts), usually associated with the name of a food (e.g. meat in rissoles) or represented pictorially in the label, the percentage of those ingredients must be stated (usually in the list of ingredients).

## Food Additives

Food additives must be included in the ingredients list. All food additives must have: a specific use, been assessed and approved by FSANZ for safety; and be used in the lowest possible quantity that will achieve their purpose. Food additives must be identified by the additive class name followed in brackets by the additive code number or name e.g. preservative (220). A full list of numbers and additives can be obtained from the FSANZ website.

## Health Warnings & Mandatory Advisory Statements

Ingredients that can cause severe adverse reactions in some individuals must be declared on the packaging however small the ingredient or additive amount is. Other warning statements are required for specific foods such as unpasteurised milk and egg, aspartame, quinine, caffeine in cola beverages and guarana contained in food. Certain substances in foods that are known to affect certain individuals must also be declared. These include gluten-containing cereals such as wheat, crustaceans, egg, fish, milk, tree nuts, peanuts, sesame seeds, soybeans, and sulphites.

## Date Marking

Foods with a shelf life of less than two years must have a 'Best Before Date'. It is not an offence to sell foods past their 'Best Before Date' provided they are still safe and suitable. Those foods that should not be consumed after a certain date for health and safety reasons must have a 'Use By Date'. It is an offence to sell foods such foods past the 'Use By Date'.

## Storage requirements

Where specific storage conditions are required in order for a product to remain safe until its 'Use By Date' or 'Best Before Date' manufacturers must include this information on the label.

## LABEL FORMATTING

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Labels must be readable and distinct from the packaging background. The label information must be in English. The type in certain legal warning statements must be at least 3mm high.

## NUTRITION PANEL

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Most food packaging must include a nutrition information panel.

Some basic foods such as tea, coffee, herbs and spices, fruit, vegetables, meat and fish do not require a nutritional panel unless the packaging indicates a particular nutritional claim.

The information that should be provided on a nutritional panel is energy level (kilojoules), protein, total fat, saturated fat, carbohydrate, sugars, sodium and any other nutritional claim relating on the packaging. The format for a nutrition information panel is strictly mandated.

An example of a nutrition panel is shown to the right.

To develop your own nutritional panel visit:

<http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/industry/npc/Pages/Nutrition-Panel-Calculator-introduction.aspx>

NUTRITION INFORMATION		
Servings per package: 3		
Serving size: 150g		
	Quantity per Serving	Quantity per 100 g
Energy	608 kJ	405 kJ
Protein	4.2 g	2.8 g
Fat, total	7.4 g	4.9 g
– saturated	4.5 g	3.0 g
Carbohydrate, total	18.6 g	12.4 g
– sugars	18.6 g	12.4 g
Sodium	80 mg	60 mg
Calcium	300 mg (38%)*	200 mg
* Percentage of recommended dietary intake		
Ingredients: Whole milk, concentrated skim milk sugar, strawberries (9%), gelatine, culture, thickener (1442).		