Food Labelling

Requirements

Product packaging and labelling go hand in hand – both require research, planning and consultation from a variety of sources. The design of your label must be integrated with your package. Your label is the place to tell your story and provide information that will help sell your product.

This factsheet will outline the information that is required by law on the label. The graphic design and branding of your product are important aspects to consider for marketing purposes. Working with a graphic designer with experience in labelling requirements is essential when developing a label.

How do food service and retail products differ?

Food service products are:

- foods for commercial or industrial enterprises or institutions (e.g., multi-serving, ready-to-serve), intended to be served solely in a commercial or industrial enterprise or institution, such as a restaurant, hospital or cafeteria.
- foods used as ingredients in manufacturing other foods. They are also pre-packaged products intended solely for use as ingredients in the preparation of food by a commercial or industrial enterprise or institution.

Retail food products are:

- any pre-packaged foods sold in a retail outlet or storefront where the product is being sold directly to the end user. These outlets include grocery stores, local boutiques, convenience stores or gas stations, on-line sales and some farm gate sales.

Getting started with the technical and regulatory requirements of food labelling

All food products require basic food labelling, whether for retail or food service. This includes:

- common name
- bilingual labelling*
- net quantity
- name and address
- ingredient list and allergens
- durable life date*
- special storage conditions
- nutrition information*

*There are some exemptions. Go to: **www.inspection.gc.ca**

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The **food service shipping label** also has requirements. All shipping labels must contain the:

- common name
- list of ingredients and allergen labelling
- identity and principal place of business
- net quantity
- nutrition labelling
- other mandatory information, as required for the product (e.g., labelling of irradiated foods or a previously frozen declaration)

Are you aware of standards of identity?

A standard of identity sets out what ingredients a product must contain and any requirements of manufacturing. Certain food products have a standard of identity and are required by federal law to follow specific regulations for a variety of products.

Be familiar with the standard regulations, if applicable, for your product. Standard of identity could affect the product's common name, the ingredient listing, font size and packaging sizes used, among other requirements.

Visit the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) for requirements of each food product type: **www.inspection.gc.ca**

CFIA has more details on the standard of identity for the Food and Drug Regulations, the Meat Inspection Regulations, the Fish Inspection Regulations and regulations under the Canada Agricultural Products Act.

## Have you designed a label that will meet the regulations for layout?

In general, the Nutrition Facts Table (NFT) must be displayed on the available display surface (ADS). There are label specifications that depend on the package size and shape you choose. The ADS will dictate the proper layout, which is usually determined by a calculation of the total surface area, and will vary depending on whether you are using an ornamental container, a hang tag or a typical package, like a cereal box.

It is important that the ADS calculation is accurate, because the choice of a NFT format and its size are based, in part, on the ADS of the package.

ADS does NOT include:

- the area of a package on which a label cannot be physically applied or on which information cannot be legibly set out and easily viewed.
- any part of a package that is intended to be destroyed when it is opened, other than a package of a food that is intended to be consumed as a single serving.
- the area occupied by the universal product code (UPC).

The principal display surface is the area of the label that is displayed or visible under normal or customary conditions of sale. This is taken into consideration in label design.
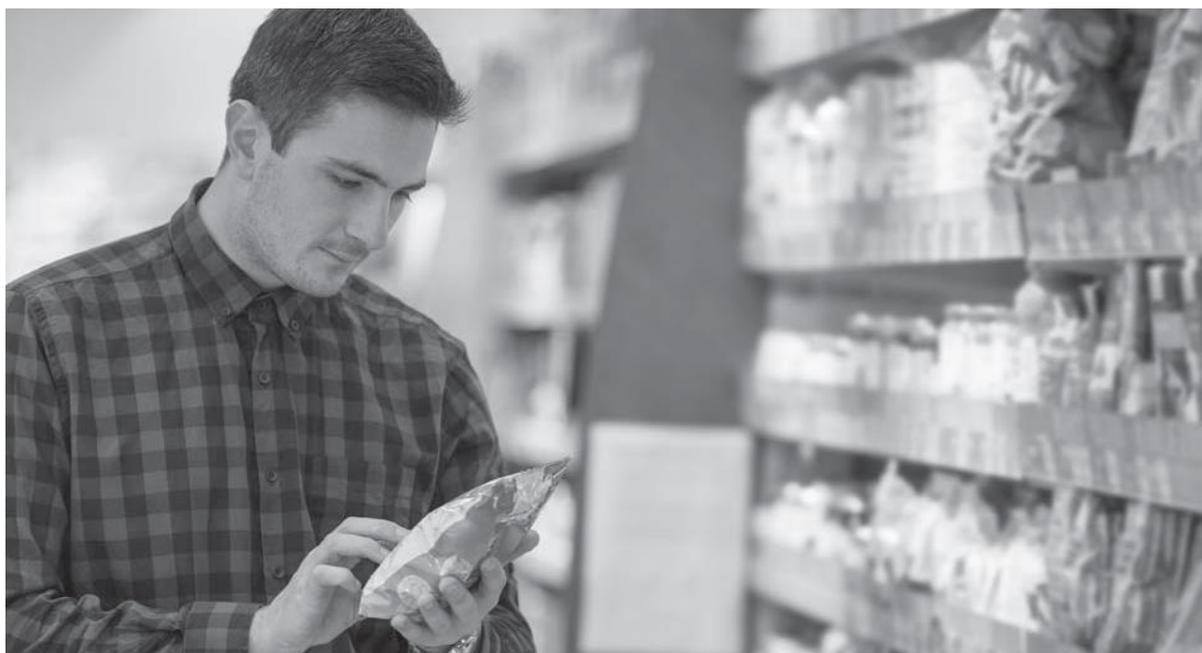
Being aware of the layout requirements and having your label reviewed by a knowledgeable service provider, like the **Food Development Centre** in Portage la Prairie, can help ensure you are meeting the stated requirements.

For more information on legibility and location of labelling, go to: **www.inspection.gc.ca**

Have you designed a label that will meet the regulations for making a claim?

When you make a claim on your label, it must be truthful and not misleading. All statements must be qualified.

Be sure to follow the guidelines to help identify claims made about Canadian content in foods.

Here is a video on how to identify Canadian food:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=5vBD9VqKyBQ.

Your food product will need to meet certain specifications to make any of these claims:

- organic
- product of Canada
- made in Canada
- Canada branding
- composition and quality

Vegetarian and Clean Label Claims are not regulated.

Information on making food product claims

A suite of tools including graphics, images and messaging that can help you brand your products and leverage consumers' positive perceptions of Canada is available online. Go to: **www.marquecanadabrand.agr.gc.ca/intro/ join-joignez-eng.htm**

Making fresh claims - go to: **www.inspection.gc.ca**.

Method of production claims - go to: **www.inspection.gc.ca**.

Have you designed a label that allows for inclusion of Universal Product Codes?

Many retailers and distributors require 12-digit, scanner-readable Universal Product Codes (UPC) for pricing and inventory controls. To have a code issued, see **www.gs1.org/standards**.

Nutrition Facts	
Valeur nutritive	
Per 1 ½ tbsp (15 g)	
pour 1 ½ c. à soupe (15 g)	
Calories 90	% Daily Value* % valeur quotidienne*
Fat / Lipides 7 g	9 %
Saturated / saturés 0.5 g + Trans / trans 0 g	3 %
Carbohydrate / Glucides 1 g	
Fibre / Fibres 1 g	4 %
Sugars / Sucres 0 g	0 %
Protein / Protéines 5 g	
Cholesterol / Cholestérol 0 mg	
Sodium 1 mg	1 %
Potassium 125 mg	3 %
Calcium 10 mg	1 %
Iron / Fer 1.75 mg	10 %
*5% or less is **a little**, 15% or more is **a lot**	
*5% ou moins c'est **peu**, 15% ou plus c'est **beaucoup**	

Have you designed a label that meets the regulations for the prescribed nutritional information?

The Food and Drug Regulations specifically indicate where and how nutrition information must be displayed on each pre-packaged food, whether on a NFT applied to the container or by some other permitted mechanism.

Nutrition Facts table

To ensure legibility, the graphic and technical requirements of the NFT are highly prescriptive.

Go to: **www.inspection.gc.ca** to see graphic and technical requirements within the NFT.

Nutrition Facts Table exemptions

There are exemptions for the requirement of a NFT on certain food products:

- spices and some bottled waters, where all the nutritional information may be expressed as zero
- beverages with an alcohol content greater than 0.5 per cent
- fresh vegetables, fruits and herbs
- raw, single ingredient meat, meat by-product, poultry meat, and poultry meat by-product

- raw, single ingredient marine or freshwater animal products (such as fish or crustaceans)

- foods sold only in the retail establishment where the product is prepared and processed, including products made from a pre-mix when an ingredient other than water is added to the pre-mix. Although there are no requirements to provide a NFT for most restaurant and food service foods, many establishments wish to provide this information on a voluntary basis. The format requirements for prepackaged foods do not apply to restaurant foods, so an alternate way of presenting the information is acceptable, such as the use of a table or chart, tray liners, menu boards, posters, leaflets or brochures. Note that when showing how much of a nutrient is present in a food, you must show how much of the nutrient is present per serving of stated size. In most cases for restaurant foods, this means the information must be shown per portion served to the consumer.

- foods sold only at a road-side stand, craft show, flea market, fair or farmers' market by the individual who prepared and processed the product

- individual servings of foods sold for immediate consumption (e.g., sandwiches or ready-made salad food)

- sold only in the retail establishment where the product is packaged, if the product is labelled by means of a sticker and has an available display surface of less than 200 cm^2

- pre-packaged confections or one-bite confections sold individually (e.g., small individual wrapped candies or mints)

- pre-packaged individual portions of food, solely intended to be served by a restaurant or other commercial enterprise with meals or snacks (e.g., crackers or creamers)

- cow and goat milk products sold in refillable glass containers

Food products listed as exempt to the NFT will not be exempt if:

- vitamin or mineral nutrients are added to the food product.

- sweeteners are added to the product, such as: aspartame, sucralose or acesulfame-potassium.

- the products are ground meat, meat by-products, poultry meat or poultry meat by-products.

- claims are made about nutrient content.

- claims are made about nutrient function in the product.

- claims are made about reducing the risk of disease.

- the product has a health-related name, statement, logo, symbol, seal of approval or other proprietary mark of a third party.

Help with creating your Nutrition Facts table

The Food Development Centre in Portage la Prairie can assist in creating your NFT and reviewing your label to ensure it meets the requirements set out by the CFIA.

To get started on nutritional labelling, you will need to give the service provider:

- Finalized ingredients and quantity of each recipe (weight-based recipe – not volume)
- Detailed ingredient description (product name, brand name and supplier)
- Nutritional analysis of commercial ingredients, preferably based on 100 g
- Processing yields (e.g., moisture loss)
- Serving size (e.g., one slice (50 g))

CFIA food labelling tool

The CFIA food labelling tool will help you navigate important labelling requirements and considerations. It can be found at **www.inspection.gc.ca**.

Packaging and labelling your products properly is a requirement. By following these regulations, you are presenting product information as clearly as possible, so your customers can read and understand what they are buying.

Make **Manitoba Agriculture and Resource Development** your first point of contact for help as you build your future in food. Business development specialists can offer consulting and pathfinding services, workshops, training and market development activities that will help you manage and grow your business.

For more information

- **Go to manitoba.ca/agriculture and click on Food and Ag Processing**

- **Email us at mbagrifood@gov.mb.ca**

- **Visit your local Manitoba Agriculture and Resource Development Office**

Available in alternate formats upon request.