

**GUIDE TO FOOD LABELLING AND ADVERTISING**

**Chapter 1**

**Introduction**



## Chapter 1

### Introduction

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

#### 1.1 Reason for the *Guide*

The *Guide* provides information on food labelling and advertising requirements as well as policies which apply to statements and claims made for foods, including alcoholic beverages. As such, it is a tool to assist industry in compliance with legislation and consumer protection. Food claims which adhere to the guidelines set out in this document are considered to comply with the provisions set out in the *Food and Drugs Act* (FDA) and the *Food and Drug Regulations* (FDR), the *Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act* (CPLA) and *Regulations* (CPLR) and other relevant legislation.

Where it has been established that inequity or economic fraud has arisen when a segment of the food industry fails to adhere with these guidelines, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency will take steps designed to bring about national compliance.

Note: The framework set out in this *Guide for Food Labelling and Advertising* (Guide) of food specifically applies to foods imported into, manufactured in and/or sold in Canada. The policies do not apply to foods destined solely for export unless otherwise indicated.

#### 1.2 Legislative Framework: Key Acts and Regulations

In this Guide, references to the *Food and Drug Regulations* appear between square brackets, for example, [B.01.001]. When references to other legislation are made, the abbreviated name of the Act or Regulations will follow the reference, for example, [2, CPLR]. For the abbreviations used to represent various pieces of legislation, refer to the Glossary.

##### 1.2.1 The *Food and Drugs Act* and the *Food and Drug Regulations*

Subsection 5.(1) of the *Food and Drugs Act* (FDA) prohibits the labelling, packaging, treating, processing, selling or advertising of any food (at all levels of trade) in a manner that is false, misleading or deceptive to consumers or is likely to create an erroneous message regarding the character, value, quantity, composition, merit or safety of the product. Subsections 3(1) and (2) prohibit health claims that might suggest that a food is a treatment, preventative or cure for specified diseases or health conditions, **unless provided for in the regulations.**

A food that does not meet the requirements of the Regulations is in violation of the Act:

An article of food that is not labelled or packaged as required by, or is labelled or packaged contrary to, the regulations shall be deemed to be labelled or packaged contrary to *subsection (1)* [5(2), FDA].

The *Food and Drug Regulations* (FDR), as they apply to food, prescribe, among other things, the labelling of all prepackaged foods, including requirements for ingredient labelling, nutrition labelling, durable life dates, nutrient content claims, health claims and foods for special dietary use. It also sets out bilingual labelling requirements.

### 1.2.2 The Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act

The *Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act* (CPLA) provides for a uniform method of labelling and packaging of prepackaged consumer goods (products sold at retail). It contains provisions regarding prevention of fraud and provides for mandatory label information with which consumers can make informed choices. It also requires the use of metric units of measurement and bilingual labelling.

No dealer shall apply to any prepackaged product or sell, import into Canada or advertise any prepackaged product that has applied to it a label that contains any false or misleading representation relating to or that may reasonably be regarded as relating to that product [7(1), CPLA].

No dealer shall, in advertising any prepackaged product, make any representation as to net quantity except in accordance with this Act and the Regulations [5, CPLA].

### 1.2.3 Definitions: The Food and Drugs Act and the Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act

The following excerpts from the *Food and Drugs Act* (FDA) and *Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act* (CPLA) are important in regard to food advertising and labelling. It should be noted that the definition of a term can vary from one piece of legislation to another. Therefore, care is needed to ensure the applicable definition is used.

"**Advertise** means to make any representation to the public by any means whatever, other than a label, for the purpose of promoting directly or indirectly the sale of a product" (CPLA).

"**Advertisement** includes any representation by any means whatever for the purpose of promoting directly or indirectly the sale or disposal of any food. . ." [2, FDA].

"**Distributor**" – see "manufacturer"

"**Label** includes any legend, word or mark attached to, included in, belonging to or accompanying any food, . . ." [2, FDA].

"**Label**" means any label, mark, sign, device, imprint, stamp, brand, ticket or tag [2, CPLA].

"**Manufacturer**" or "**distributor**" means a person, including an association or partnership, who under their own name, or under a trade-, design or word mark, trade name or other name, word or mark controlled by them, sells a food . . ." [A.01.010].

"**Prepackaged product** means any product that is packaged in a container in such a manner that it is ordinarily sold to or used or purchased by a consumer without being re-packaged" [2, CPLA].

"**Prepackaged product** means any food that is contained in a package in the manner in which it is ordinarily sold to or used or purchased by a person" [B.01.001]

"**Sell** includes offer for sale, expose for sale, have in possession for sale and distribute, whether or not the distribution is made for consideration" [2, FDA].

"Sell includes:

- (a) offer for sale, expose for sale and have in possession for sale, and
- (b) display in such manner as to lead to a reasonable belief that the substance or product so displayed is intended for sale" [2, CPLA].

#### 1.2.4 Relevant Legislation Administered by the CFIA

Other legislation may impose requirements on the advertising and labelling of food in addition to those imposed by the *Food and Drugs Act* (FDA) and *Food and Drug Regulations* (FDR) and the *Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act* (CPLA) and *Regulations* (CPLR). There are many federal and provincial acts and regulations that pertain to agricultural practices and to the production, manufacture, composition, packaging, labelling, grading, marketing, storage, advertising, importation and exportation of food products. See 1.6 of this Guide.

At the federal level, these include:

- the *Canada Agricultural Products Act* (CAPA) and *Regulations* (CAPR)
- the *Meat Inspection Act* (MIA) and *Regulations, 1990* (MIR, 1990)
- the *Fish Inspection Act* (FIA) and *Regulations* (FIR)

The above legislation applies to federally registered or licensed plants. The *Canada Agricultural Products Act* (CAPA) is a trade and commerce act with regulations pertaining to dairy products, eggs, processed eggs, fresh fruit and vegetables, honey, livestock and poultry carcass grading, maple products, and processed products (processed fruits and vegetables). The *Fish Inspection Act* and the *Meat Inspection Act* apply to fish and fish products and meat and meat products respectively, which are marketed through import, export and interprovincial trade. More information may be obtained through the CFIA website at:

<http://www.inspection.gc.ca>

#### 1.3 Other Relevant Federal Legislation

Other federal legislation may also have to be considered, such as:

- the *Competition Act*
- the *Trade-marks Act*
- the *Radio and Television Broadcasting Regulations* under the *Broadcasting Act*

The *Competition Act* and the *Trade-marks Act* are both administered by Industry Canada. A *Guide to Trade-marks* is available through the Canadian Intellectual Property Office's (CIPO) website at:

[http://www.cipo.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/cipointernet-internetopic.nsf/eng/h\\_wr02360.html](http://www.cipo.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/cipointernet-internetopic.nsf/eng/h_wr02360.html)

The *Radio and Television Broadcasting Regulations* under the *Broadcasting Act* are administered by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC). (For more information, see Chapter 3 of this Guide.)

Other legislation, such as the *Weights and Measures Act and Regulations*, can be relevant in some instances. (For a reference to the *Weights and Measures Act and Regulations*, see 2.6 and 2.15 of this Guide, Net Quantity, and Labels of Shipping Containers.)

### 1.3.1 The *Broadcasting Act*

Broadcast advertising of alcoholic beverages is subject to the *Radio and Television Broadcasting Regulations* under the *Broadcasting Act* which require compliance with the Code for Broadcast Advertising of Alcoholic Beverages, revised February 1, 1997. Commercial messages must not be designed to promote the general consumption of alcoholic beverages. (See 1.5.2 of this Guide.)

## 1.4 Purpose of Food Labelling

The food label is one of the most important and direct means of communicating product information between buyers and sellers. It is one of the primary means by which consumers differentiate between individual foods and brands to make informed purchasing choices.

A label serves three primary functions.

- It provides basic product information (including common name, list of ingredients, net quantity, durable life date, grade/quality, country of origin and name and address of manufacturer, dealer or importer).
- It provides health, safety, and nutrition information. This includes instructions for safe storage and handling, nutrition information such as the quantity of fats, proteins, carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals present per serving of stated size of the food (in the Nutrition Facts table), and specific information on products for special dietary use.
- It acts as a vehicle for food marketing, promotion and advertising (via label vignettes, promotional information and label claims such as "low fat", "cholesterol-free", "high source of fibre", "product of Canada", "natural", "organic", "no preservatives added", and so on).

### 1.4.1 Canadian Federal Food Labelling Responsibility

Federal responsibility for development of Canadian food labelling requirements is shared among two federal departments, Health Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA).

#### Health Canada

Health Canada is responsible, under the *Food and Drugs Act* (FDA), for the establishment of policies and standards relating to the health, safety, and nutritional quality of food sold in Canada.

#### Canadian Food Inspection Agency

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is responsible for the administration of food labelling policies related to misrepresentation and fraud in respect to food labelling, packaging and advertising, and the general agri-food and fish labelling provisions respecting grade, quality and composition specified in the *Canada Agricultural Products Act* (CAPA), the *Meat Inspection Act* (MIA) and the *Fish Inspection Act* (FIA). In addition, the CFIA has responsibility for the

administration of the food-related provisions of the *Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act* (CPLA), including basic food label information, net quantity, metrication and bilingual labelling.

The CFIA is responsible for the enforcement of **all** of the above requirements.

#### **1.4.2 CFIA's Food Labelling Information Service**

The CFIA Food Labelling Information Service consolidates and coordinates voluntary federal food label reviews. This service is particularly directed to facilitating market entry for new businesses. (For contact information, see 1.6 of this Guide, Canadian Food Inspection Agency Food Labelling Information Service).

#### **1.4.3 CFIA's Label Registration Unit**

Certain food labels **must** be registered by the CFIA Process, Formulation and Label Registration Unit.

1. Labels originating from **federally registered Canadian meat, poultry and processed fruit and vegetable establishments** require label registration as follows:

a) from Canadian federally registered meat and poultry establishments:

- i) all labels intended for prepackaged products of prepared edible meat products for domestic sale, except:
  - meat products exempted under paragraph 3(1)(i) of the *Meat Inspection Regulations*,
  - salted Kosher meat, and
  - salted casings; and
- (ii) all labels for single ingredient meats and poultry meats where an animal production claim is made such as "organic", "vegetable grain fed – no animal by-products" or "raised without antibiotics".

b) from Canadian federally registered establishments processing fruit and vegetable products:

- all labels intended for prepackaged products where grades, standards of identity and/or prescribed container sizes exist in the *Processed Products Regulations*.

2. Labels originating from **foreign meat, poultry and processed fruit and vegetable establishments** require label registration as follows:

a) from foreign establishments authorized to export meat products to Canada:

- (i) same as from Canadian registered establishments; and
- (ii) all labels intended for prepackaged products of single ingredient edible meat products intended to be sold directly to consumers at the retail level in Canada.

b) from foreign establishments wishing to export regulated processed fruit and vegetable products in larger than the largest (LTL) container sizes to Canada.

**Submission of registration requests:**

Label registration requests are to be submitted using form CFIA 1478 accompanied by the appropriate number of labels and recipes. This form is available on the CFIA Web site: <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/for/mpppe.shtml>. Consult the CFIA Fees Notice to determine whether a fee is applicable for your product.

Mail completed registration forms to:

Clerk  
Label and Recipe Registration Unit  
Canadian Food Inspection Agency  
1431 Merivale Road  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0Y9

**1.5 Food Advertising Responsibilities**

All advertising for food, including alcoholic beverages, is subject to the *Food and Drugs Act* and the *Food and Drug Regulations* and the *Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act and Regulations*. (See Chapter 3 of this Guide.)

**1.5.1 Radio and Television Advertising for Food**

The Code of Ethics of the Canadian Association of Broadcasters states no commercial message containing a claim or endorsement of a food or non-alcoholic beverage to which the *Food and Drugs Act and Regulations* apply may be broadcast unless the script for the commercial message or endorsement has been approved by the Food and Beverage Clearance Section of Advertising Standards Canada (ASC) and carries a current script clearance number. (Please refer to 3.14 of this Guide.)

**Advertisements are reviewed using criteria in the *Food and Drugs Act and Regulations* and other related explanatory documents.** Information on the procedure for submitting scripts to ASC is found in 3.14 of this Guide.

**1.5.2 Radio and Television Advertising for Alcoholic Beverages**

Radio and television advertising for alcoholic beverages is regulated under the *Radio and Television Broadcasting Regulations* under the *Broadcasting Act*. Broadcasters must adhere to the *Code for Broadcast Advertising of Alcoholic Beverages* to maintain a Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunication Commission (CRTC) licence. In response to a request from the alcoholic beverage advertisers and the broadcasters, Advertising Standards Canada (ASC) has established the Alcoholic Beverage Advertising Clearance Section to review and assign a clearance approval number to advertising copy. (See 3.14 of this Guide.)

**1.5.3 Print Advertising for Food and Alcoholic Beverages**

There is currently no mandatory federal requirement for the review of print advertising for food and alcoholic beverages. Print ads, however, may be voluntarily submitted for review to any one of the offices of the CFIA's Food Labelling Information Service. (See 1.6 of this Guide.)

#### **1.5.4 Provincial Jurisdiction for Alcoholic Beverage Advertising**

Some provincial liquor boards have criteria for print advertising. It would therefore be advisable to verify this issue with the provincial liquor board of the province(s) where the promotion of alcoholic beverages will take place, to ascertain whether the print advertising must meet provincial requirements.

See Chapter 10 of this Guide, Guide to the Labelling of Alcoholic Beverages, for the Addresses of Provincial and Territorial Liquor Boards.

#### **1.5.5 Internet Advertising and the World Wide Web**

Canada considers information available through the Internet as advertising and as such, it is subject to the same criteria as other advertising.

#### **1.6 Sources of Additional Information on Labelling and Claims**

The following acts and regulations are available on the Department of Justice Website at:

<http://canada.justice.gc.ca>

- i) the *Food and Drugs Act* and the *Food and Drug Regulations* (H41-1-2001 F (French) or E (English)),
- ii) the *Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act* (YX55-1985-C-38),
- iii) the *Consumer Packaging and Labelling Regulations* (RE910),
- iv) the *Canada Agricultural Products Act*,
- v) the *Meat Inspection Act*,
- vi) the *Fish Inspection Act*,
- vii) the *Competition Act*,
- viii) the *Trade-marks Act*.

Office consolidations are available from **Canadian Government Publishing** at the address indicated below.

**Canadian Government Publishing**  
Communication Canada  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0S9  
Tel. 613-941-5995 or 1-800-635-7943  
Fax 613-954-5779 or 1-800-565-7757

**Canadian Food Inspection Agency Food Labelling Information Service**

Additional information on labelling and claims is available from offices of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

**British Columbia**

**Canadian Food Inspection Agency**

400-4321 Still Creek Avenue  
Burnaby, British Columbia V5C 6S7  
Tel. 604-666-6513  
Fax 604-666-1261

**Canadian Food Inspection Agency**

1853 Bredin Road  
Kelowna BC V1Y 7S9  
Tel. 250-470-4884  
Fax 250-470-4899

**Canadian Food Inspection Agency**

4250 Commerce Circle  
Victoria, British Columbia V8Z 4M2  
Tel. 250-363-3455  
Fax 250-363-0336

**Alberta**

**Canadian Food Inspection Agency**

7000 - 113 Street, Room 205  
Edmonton, Alberta T6H 5T6  
Tel. 780-495-3333  
Fax 780-495-3359

**Canadian Food Inspection Agency**

110 Country Hills Landing NW, Suite 202  
Calgary, Alberta T3K 5P3  
Tel. 403-292-4650  
Fax 403-292-5692

**Saskatchewan**

**Canadian Food Inspection Agency**

301-421 Downey Road  
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7N 4L8  
Tel. 306-975-8904  
Fax 306-975-4339

**Manitoba**

**Canadian Food Inspection Agency**

269 Main Street, Room 613  
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 1B2  
Tel. 204-983-2220  
Fax 204-984-6008

**Ontario**

Tel. 1-800-667-2657  
e-mail: [labelwindow@inspection.gc.ca](mailto:labelwindow@inspection.gc.ca)

Central Region:

**Canadian Food Inspection Agency**

709 Main Street West  
Hamilton, Ontario L8S 1A2  
Tel. 905-572-2201  
Fax 905-572-2197

Northeast Region:

**Canadian Food Inspection Agency**

38 Auriga Drive, Unit 8  
Ottawa, Ontario K2E 8A5  
Tel. 613-274-7374  
Fax 613-274-7380

**Canadian Food Inspection Agency**

145 Renfrew Drive, Unit 160  
Markham, Ontario L3R 9R6  
Tel. 905-513-5977  
Fax 905-513-5971

Toronto Region:

**Canadian Food Inspection Agency**

1124 Finch Avenue West, Unit 2  
Downsview, Ontario M3J 2E2  
Tel. 416-665-5055  
Fax 416-665-5069

Southwest Region:

**Canadian Food Inspection Agency**

1200 Commissioners Road East, # 19  
London, Ontario N5Z 4R3  
Tel. 519-691-1300  
Fax 519-691-0148

**Quebec**

Montreal East:

**Canadian Food Inspection Agency**  
7101 Jean-Talon St E - Room 600  
Anjou, Quebec H1M 3N7  
Tel: 514-493-8859  
Fax: 514-493-9965

Montreal West:

**Canadian Food Inspection Agency**  
2021 Union St - Room 1450  
Montreal, Quebec H3A 2S9  
Tel: 514-283-8982  
Fax: 514-283-1855

Québec:

**Canadian Food Inspection Agency**  
Place Iberville IV  
2954, Laurier Blvd - suite 100  
Ste-Foy, Quebec G1V 5C7  
Tel: 418-648-7373  
Fax: 418-648-4792

St-Hyacinthe:

**Canadian Food Inspection Agency**  
3100 Laframboise Blvd - Room 206  
St-Hyacinthe, Quebec J2S 4Z4  
Tel: 450-773-6639  
Fax: 450-774-8522

**Nova Scotia**

**Canadian Food Inspection Agency**  
1992 Agency Drive  
Dartmouth, Nova Scotia B3B 1Y9  
Tel. 902-426-2110  
Fax 902-426-4844

**New Brunswick**

**Canadian Food Inspection Agency**  
850 Lincoln Road  
P.O. Box 2222  
Fredericton, New Brunswick E3B 5G4  
Tel. 506-452-4964  
Fax 506-452-3923

**Prince Edward Island**

**Canadian Food Inspection Agency**  
690 University Avenue  
Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island C1E 1E3  
Tel. 902-566-7290  
Fax 902-566-7334

**Newfoundland**

**Canadian Food Inspection Agency**  
Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Centre  
P.O. Box 5667  
St. John's, Newfoundland A1C 5X1  
Tel. 709-772-8912  
Fax 709-772-5100

