



# Food Labelling Guidelines

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Legislation covering the labelling of food products has been put in place to ensure the public are better informed on the ingredients in foods, particularly in respect to nutrition, food allergies and country of origin. Please note that this is a guideline only and for full labelling requirements you should refer to the Food Standards Code which can be downloaded at [www.foodstandards.gov.au](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au)

## LABEL REQUIREMENTS

The following information, where necessary, is to be included on the food package or label:

- Name of product
- Name and physical address of food business (not a post office box)
- Batch number and/or date of manufacture and/or use by or best before or baked on date
- List of ingredients
- The percentage of the key or characteristic ingredients of the food product
- Mandatory warnings for specific food substances
- The best before or use by date
- A Nutrition Information Panel
- Any specific directions for use and storage of the food product
- The net weight of the product
- COUNTRY OF ORIGIN (see heading further down)

### ***How should the ingredients be listed?***

The ingredients are to be listed *in descending order of ingoing weight* and are to be clearly legible.

### ***What does the percentage of key ingredient mean?***

Food products that have a key ingredient like strawberries in strawberry jam need to state a percentage of that ingredient within the food product *by providing the percentage following the ingredient*. You can do this in the list of ingredients. For example: *strawberries (40%)*. This information allows the consumer to compare similar products.

## MANDATORY WARNING LABELS

A mandatory food warning is essential when a food contains an ingredient that may cause an allergic type reaction when eaten by some consumers.

If the following ingredients are used in a food product they should be included in the list of ingredients and highlighted.

- cereals containing gluten
- crustacea (shellfish)
- eggs
- fish
- milk
- peanuts
- soybeans
- nuts and sesame seeds
- added sulphites at certain levels
- propolis
- bee pollen

If the food product contains any of the following ingredients then specific warning notices apply.

- unpasteurised milk and/or their products.
- quinine
- unpasteurised eggs and/or their products.
- royal jelly
- phenylalanine
- aspartame
- caffeine
- guarana
- lactitol, maltitol, maltitol syrup
- mannitol, xylitol, erythritol, isomalt, polydextrose
- sorbitol above specific levels
- kava
- modified or skim milk
- condensed milk

## BEST BEFORE & USE-BY DATES

Food products are to be provided with a use by or best before date on the package or label. Food that must be consumed before a certain date (i.e. they are of a perishable nature) for health and safety reasons **must have a use by date and it is illegal to sell the product after this date**. These types of food are not permitted to be made in home kitchens.

Foods that have a shelf life of less than two years must have a *best before date* on the package or label. An example of this type of food could be sponge cakes, jams and pickled onions. The dates are to be expressed in chronological order by day, month and year. Where the best before date is not more than three months, the date can consist solely of the day and month only in that order.

## CORRECT STORAGE OF FOOD PRODUCTS

Where the food product requires specific storage or use instructions by the consumer after purchase the food package label must indicate this to protect the health and safety of the consumer. For example if the product is jam or chutney the wording *Refrigerate after opening* or *store at or below 4 degrees Celsius* would be appropriate.

## FOOD PRODUCT WEIGHTS

The net weight of a product is to be included on the label. The unit of weight measurement shall be the largest available unit. e.g. 750ml is preferred to 0.750L, 1kg is preferred to 1000g.

## LABEL PRINT SIZE

The print size of the weight depends upon the size of the package.

### For packages:

<u>Maximum dimension of package</u>	<u>Font size</u>
80mm or under	2.0 mm
Between 81 mm and 160 mm	2.5 mm
Between 161 mm and 260 mm	3.3 mm
Over 260 mm	5.0 mm

### For bottles:

<u>Height of bottle</u>	<u>Font size</u>
120 mm and under	2.0 mm
Between 121 and 230 mm	2.5 mm
Between 231 mm and 360mm	3.3 mm
Over 360 mm	4.8 mm

## COUNTRY OF ORIGIN LABELLING

All packaged and some unpackaged food sold in Australia must state which country the food comes from. 'Country of origin' claims are regulated by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission under Australian Consumer Law, which sets the rules for claims such as 'product of' and 'made in'.

### **Unpackaged foods**

Country of origin labelling applies to unpackaged fresh and processed fruit, vegetables, nuts, spices, herbs, legumes, seeds, fish (including shellfish), fresh pork and preserved pork products such as bacon and ham.

For example, the following unpackaged foods should have country of origin on the label: fresh and sun-dried tomatoes, processed ham and bacon, fresh and smoked fish fillets, and frozen crumbed fish fillets, fresh apples and dried apples.

If the food is a mix of foods from different countries, the retailer can state each country of origin or that the food is a mix of local and imported foods.

The information can be written on a sign or be included on a label on the food, for example, on the sticker on a piece of whole fruit.

Country of origin labelling for unpackaged fruit, vegetables, nuts, spices, herbs, legumes, seeds and pork isn't required when they are mixed with other foods that don't require country of origin information (for example capsicum added to a pasta salad). However, labelling is required for unpackaged fish when mixed with other food (for example crumbed fish).

### **What are the requirements for packaged food?**

All packaged food must carry a separate statement identifying the country where the food was produced, made or packaged.

### **Are there any exemptions from country of origin labelling?**

There are some exemptions for country of origin labelling. For example it is not required when food is sold to the public for immediate consumption, for example food sold in cafes, restaurants and canteens, or where a food is made and packaged on the premises it is sold, such as a bakery where the bread is baked and sold on site.

## NUTRITION INFORMATION PANEL

Standard 1.2.8 - Nutrition Information Requirements, of the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code sets out the legal requirements about providing nutrition information panels and other nutrition information for food that is required to be labeled under the Code. On the Food Standards Code website [www.foodstandards.gov.au](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au) you may find a helpful tool to help with the development of a nutritional information panel. The "*Nutrition Panel Calculator*" allows one to enter ingredients into an online calculator, the calculator will then generate a nutritional information panel. The below is an example of the layout generated.

<b>NUTRITION INFORMATION</b>		
Servings per package:	—	
Serving size:	— g	
	Average Quantity per Serving	Average Quantity per 100 g
Energy	— kJ	— kJ
Protein	— g	— g
Fat, total	— g	— g
- saturated	— g	— g
Carbohydrate	— g	— g
- sugars	— g	— g
Sodium	— mg	— mg

## OTHER REQUIREMENTS

The label is to be legible, prominent and in English. The label is to include the name and address of the manufacturer and the date the food product was made.

## LABEL EXAMPLE

Below is an example of a label for a fruitcake (without Nutrition Information Panel):

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>FRUIT CAKE</b></p> <p>City of Fremantle 8 William St FREMANTLE WA 6160 Ph: 9432 9999</p> <p>Ingredients: Dried fruit (35%), <b>plain flour, butter, nuts, eggs,</b> sugar, <b>milk,</b> water, orange peel, baking soda.</p> <p>Made on: ..... Best before:.....</p> <p>Net Weight: 750 grams</p> <p>PRODUCT OF BRITAIN</p>
---

**If you have any queries please contact Environmental Health Services on  
(08) 9432 9999 or email [health@fremantle.wa.gov.au](mailto:health@fremantle.wa.gov.au)**