

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.

It is important to stay up to date on label regulations as they do change periodically and these changes may affect your product or label. Please see www.inspection.gc.ca for the most up to date information.

Where do you intend to sell your product?

A good place start your journey to success is to determine where you will be marketing your product.

Places to consider are:

- local farmer's market
- within the province
- within Canada
- outside of Canada
- online sales
- grocery store
- gas station
- local boutiques
- restaurant
- food service establishments

Your choice of market will determine the regulations required for your product.

[Farmers' Market Guidelines \(gov.mb.ca\)](http://gov.mb.ca)

www.inspection.gc.ca

[Safe Food for Canadians Regulations \(justice.gc.ca\)](http://justice.gc.ca)

What technical and regulatory requirements are needed on a food label?

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*
- storage instructions*
- nutrition information*

*There are some exemptions. Visit www.inspection.gc.ca for more information.

The above label requirements will depend on the type of product and where it is sold. Three main types of products are (but not limited to):

Consumer Prepackaged Foods (retail)

Consumer prepackaged foods 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, gas stations, online sales, and some farm gate sales.

Foods for Commercial or Industrial Enterprise or Institution (food service)

Foods for Commercial or Industrial Enterprise or Institution are multi-serving, ready-to-serve (may be shipped frozen or thawed but must be precooked, if required) products that are intended to be served solely in a commercial or industrial enterprise or institution, such as a restaurant, hospital or cafeteria.

Foods for use in Manufacturing Other Foods (food service)

Foods for use in manufacturing other foods are prepackaged products that are intended for use as an ingredient

- in the manufacture of other prepackaged products intended for sale to a consumer at the retail level, or
- in the preparation of foods by a commercial or industrial enterprise or institution.

These foods require cooking before consumption; or are to be combined with another ingredient to prepare a food.

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, ingredient listing, or packaging sizes used, among other requirements.

More details regarding standards of identity can be found on the CFIA Industry Labelling Tool www.inspection.gc.ca, the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations [Safe Food for Canadians Regulations \(justice.gc.ca\)](http://www.inspection.gc.ca), and Food and Drug Regulations [Food and Drug Regulations \(justice.gc.ca\)](http://www.inspection.gc.ca). Visit the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) for requirements of each food product type: www.inspection.gc.ca

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

Everything on a food label is regulated, from type heights to the size of the Nutrition Facts Table (NFT). These parameters are dependant on a number of different aspects of the packaging.

Available Display Surface (ADS) – the surface area of a package, tag, or ornamental container that is available for the application of product information; including labels, graphics, claims, etc. Specific areas of different types of packaging can be exempted from the ADS calculation. The ADS is important and is used to determine the size and format of the NFT. See www.inspection.gc.ca for more information.

Principal Display Panel (PDP) - the calculated area of the package that is displayed or visible under normal or customary conditions of sale. Specific information is required on the PDP. The type size of the net quantity statement is regulated by the size of the PDP.

Being aware of the layout requirements and having your label reviewed by a knowledgeable service provider 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 listed all of your ingredients and allergens?

The ingredient list is a very important part of your label. Ingredients should be listed in descending order of their proportion by weight of the prepackaged product. Sugars-based ingredients are required to be grouped within the list of ingredients following the term "Sugars". There are specific rules around legibility and location of the ingredient list and the allergen statements. See for www.inspection.gc.ca for more information.

It is important to check product information from your supplier when receiving ingredients. Changes in ingredients can affect ingredient list, allergens, nutritional information, and claims.

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

Universal Product Codes (UPC's) are 12-digit, scanner-readable codes for pricing and inventory controls. UPCs are not required by law, but many retailers and distributors want you to have them. To have a code issued, see www.gs1.org/standards.

Are you making a claim about your food product?

When you make a claim, 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.

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 <https://marquecanadabrand.agr.gc.ca/intro/index-eng.html>

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

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

For more information on food product claims, go to www.inspection.gc.ca

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 an NFT applied to the container or by some other permitted mechanism.

Nutrition Facts Table

The graphic and technical requirements of the NFT are highly prescriptive and specific to your product. The required information on an NFT will depend on the product, its ingredients, and the types of claims being made. Some food products may qualify for an exemption.

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

Front-of-package nutrition labelling

Health Canada is introducing new nutrition labelling requirements for packaged foods requiring a symbol on the front of packages indicating that a food is high in saturated fat, sugars and/or sodium. The food industry has been given until January 1, 2026, to make this change. Visit Health Canada for detailed information.

Help with creating your Nutrition Facts Table

Contact a Manitoba Agriculture Business Development Specialist for a list of service providers who can assist in creating your NFT and reviewing your label to ensure it meets the requirements set out by Health Canada.

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

- finalized recipe including all ingredients by weight (weight-based recipe – not volume)
- detailed ingredient description (product name, brand name and supplier)
- nutritional information for ingredients, preferably based on 100 g
- processing steps (e.g. baking, smoking, dehydrating)
- processing yields (e.g. moisture losses due to baking, boiling, smoking)
- serving size [e.g., one slice (50 g)]

The CFIA Food Labelling for Industry – Industry Labelling Tool

The CFIA Industry 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 your first point of contact for help as you build your future in food. Business Development Specialists can offer consulting and path finding services, workshops, training, and market development activities that will help you manage and grow your business.

For more information:

Go to manitoba.ca/agriculture/food-and-ag-processing/

Email mbagrifood@gov.mb.ca

Follow us on Twitter @MBGovAg

And [Manitoba Agriculture YouTube](#)

Available in alternate formats upon request