Labelling Summary for Prepackaged Foods for Retail Sales

This fact sheet summarizes some label requirements and will help retail food establishment operators develop food package labels that meet requirements.

Packaged food must be labeled. Food is packaged if the food establishment bottles, cans, cartons, wraps or bags the product and makes it available for self-service.

The label on a food package tells consumers exactly what is inside the package. Food package label information must be written in English.

These are the main categories of a food label:

- Identity (name of food)
- Net Quantity of Contents
- Ingredient List
- Major Food Allergens
- Business Name and Address
- Nutrition Facts (if applicable)
- Safe Handling Instructions (applicable to raw Meat and Poultry)

Identity:
The identity is the truthful common or usual name of the product. Providing a brand name is voluntary.

- Use a name that is not misleading.
- Use large, bold type.
- Print the name in the middle of the label.

Net Quantity of Contents:
The net quantity of contents is the minimum amount of food contained within a package, not including the weight of the package and packing material.

- Print the net quantity of contents as weight (for solids or semi-solids), volume (for liquids), or count (in limited situations). Examples: NET WT 12 OZ; 64 FL OZ; 6 COUNT.
- Place in the lower third of the PDP with no other information next to or below.
- Use weight for meat, fish, and shellfish labels

Ingredient List:
List all ingredients by their common or usual name.
- List all ingredients in descending order (most to least) by weight. If less than 2% by weight, an ingredient can be mentioned at the end of the list, stating "contains 2% or less of _____."
- Include all sub-ingredients. Example: Flour (bleached wheat flour, malt barley, flour, niacin, iron, potassium thiamine, riboflavin).
- Include chemical preservatives and food coloring in descending order (most to least) by weight.

Major Food Allergens:

Allergen labeling is required for packaged food products that contain any of the eight major food allergens: milk, eggs, fish, crustacean shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat, and soy. Identify by name any major food allergens in the product, as part of the ingredient list. This must include protein derived from a major food allergen. Use one of the following options:

List the common or usual name of the food source, followed by the name of the allergen in parentheses. Example: flour (wheat), whey (milk), or

After the ingredient list, place the word "Contains:" followed by the food allergen. Example: Contains: wheat, milk. For tree nuts, declare the specific type of nut. Examples: almonds, coconut, pecans. For fish or crustacean shellfish, declare the species. Examples: walleye, shrimp, lobster.

Business Name and Address:

Print the business name, city, state, and ZIP code of the manufacturer, packer, or distributor. If the business is not listed in the current telephone guide for the city, include the street address.

If the name given is not the actual manufacturer, also state the establishment's relation to the product. Examples: "Manufactured for" or "Distributed by."

Nutrition Facts: A nutrition facts panel is sometimes required.

Packaged foods that do not have a nutrient content claim or health claim may be exempt due to:

- Size of the business
- How food is sold, served or offered for sale
- Insignificant amount of nutrients, such as in spices, tea or coffee

If required, the nutrition facts panel includes information about the serving size, calories and key nutrients of the food.

Safe Handling Instructions: Include for Meat and Poultry that is not a Ready-to-Eat Food

The following statement and list must be included:

This product was prepared from inspected and passed meat and/or poultry. Some food products may contain bacteria that could cause illness if the product is mishandled or cooked improperly. For your protection, follow these safe handling instructions.

- Keep refrigerated or frozen. Thaw in refrigerator or microwave.
- Keep raw meat and poultry separate from other foods. Wash working surfaces (including cutting boards), utensils, and hands after touching raw meat or poultry.
- Cook thoroughly.
- Keep hot foods hot. Refrigerate leftovers immediately or discard.

For more information here are some additional resources:

Food Labeling Guide (FDA) https://www.fda.gov/downloads/Food/GuidanceRegulation/UCM265446.pdf