

# Guide to comply with labelling requirements

Ministry for Primary Industries  
Manatū Ahu Matua



## A Date marking

Date markings help consumers work out when the food they have purchased needs to be eaten by. Foods with a shelf life of less than two years must have a date mark. Foods that must be consumed before a certain date because of health or safety reasons need a “use by” date. Food cannot be sold after this date. Foods that decrease in quality after a certain time and remain safe to eat can be labelled with a “best before” date. Foods may be sold after the best before date. See Standard 1.2.5 for more.

## B Name or description of the food

It is important that customers know what they are about to buy. The name of the food must accurately describe the food, and must not be misleading. Some foods have prescribed names which must be used. These are fermented comminuted meat products (see Standard 2.2.1 clauses 8 and 9), infant formula, and follow on formula and honey. See Standard 1.2.2 and Chapter 2 Standards for more.

## C Name and address of the business

People need to know who to contact if something goes wrong. The address shown must be a physical location from which the supplier is operating. The supplier may be the manufacturer, importer, vendor or packer of the food. A post box or other type of postal address is not enough but can be used in addition to the physical address. It can, for example, be the street address of the processing site, head office or importing business. See Standard 1.2.2 for more.



## General requirements

### Legibility

The required information on labels must be easy to read and in English. The information must be in prominent type which is distinct from the background. Retailers or manufacturers may choose to present the required information in other languages too. In that case, the information in any other languages must not be different to the information presented in English.

### Labels must tell the truth

Information on the label should be clear and accurate. It is illegal to include misleading information on the label. In most cases, health claims are not permitted on food products. See Fair Trading Act and Weights and Measures Regulations.

**Important:** The information contained in this document is only intended as a guide. For full information about what needs to be on a food label visit [www.foodstandards.govt.nz](http://www.foodstandards.govt.nz)



#### D Warning and advisory statements

Warning statements are required if ingredients, such as aspartame, quinine, guarana, phytosterol esters, caffeine, propolis, royal jelly, unpasteurised milk and egg products have been used in the product. These warning statements need to have specific words, and the height of the words must be 3 mm or more. See Standard 1.2.3 for more.

Certain foods, ingredients or components can cause severe adverse reactions in some people. Cereals with gluten, shellfish, eggs, fish, milk, peanuts, soybeans, tree nuts, sesame seeds and added sulphites are some commonly known sources of allergens. Even if these are present in negligible amounts in the food they must be declared. These are usually declared in the ingredients list. See Standard 1.2.3 for more.

#### E Ingredients list

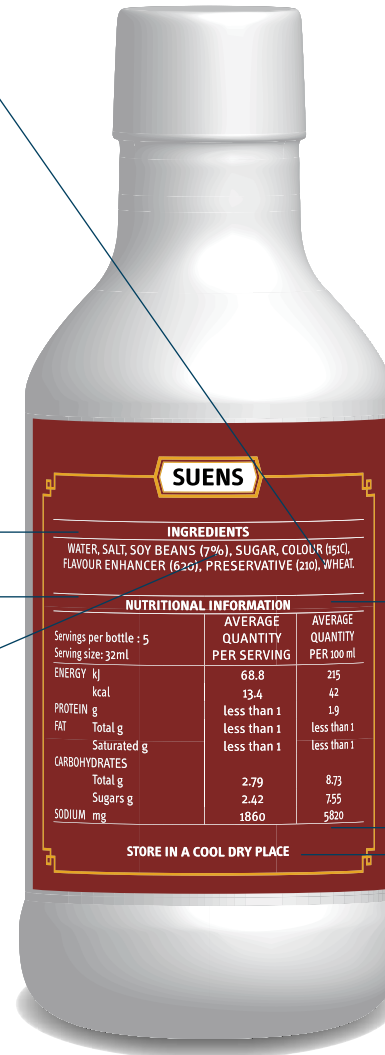
Listing the Ingredients helps consumers get a better idea of what is in the food. This is particularly important for people on special diets. All ingredients must be listed from greatest amount to smallest by ingoing weight, including added water. See Standard 1.2.4 for more.

#### F Percentage labelling

Percentages of the characterising ingredients must be included in the ingredients list. This helps consumers compare similar products and make informed choices. A characterising ingredient is one that is mentioned in the name of the food, is usually associated with the name of the food, or is emphasised on the label of the food (e.g. in a picture). Some examples of characterising ingredients are fruit in jam, apple in apple pie, milkfat in ice cream, cocoa solids in chocolate.

See Standard 1.2.10 for more.

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#### G Nutrition information panel

Most packaged foods require a Nutrition Information Panel. It tells consumers the amount of a nutrient the food supplies to their diet and allows them to compare between foods. Typically the nutrition information panel includes information on the levels of energy (kilojoules), protein, total fat, saturated fat, carbohydrate, sugars and sodium, as well as any other nutrient that relates to a claim on the label. This information has to be presented as prescribed in the food standards. See Standard 1.2.8 for more.

#### H Use and storage directions

If specific storage conditions are required in order for a product to keep until the date mark, these must be on the label. For example, chocolate biscuits might be labelled “store unopened in a cool dry place, away from direct sunlight”. Directions for safe use must also be given. For example, raw bamboo shoots and raw sweet cassava must be labelled with a statement indicating the required cooking instructions to make these foods safe to eat. Any food requiring special use or storage conditions for reasons of health or safety will need to be labelled with that information. See Standard 1.2.6 for more.