

## **MANDATORY FOOD LABELING REQUIREMENTS**

**Panels**- Most food labels should have at least 2 panels;

**Principle Display Panel (PDP)**- the panel facing the customer at the time of purchase and must contain as a minimum the Statement of Identity and Net Weight Statement as a minimum.

**Information Panel (IP)** - Is located to right of PDP and usually contains the nutritional label, ingredient statement and name of the responsible company (manufacturer, packer, distributor).

### **Five Mandatory Parts of a Label**

#### **A) Statement of identity**

- 1) Use standardized name, common or usual name or fanciful name in priority order.
- 2) It must be a descriptive term or phrase that is not false or misleading and that tells the consumer what they are purchasing
- 3) Must be one of the principle features on the PDP.
- 4) Must be in bold type.
- 5) Should be at least one half the type size of the largest printed matter on the PDP.
- 6) Terms such as "Imitation" and " substitute" have specific meaning. Imitation is nutritional inferior. Substitute foods are nutritionally equivalent

#### **B) Net Weight Statement**

- 1) Must be in the U.S. customary inch-pound system (oz, fl oz, gal, lbs, etc)and in the metric system ( grams, liters, etc)
- 2) Should be the net weight excluding packaging material.
- 3) Must be prominent and in bold type.
- 4) Must be in proportion to the area of the PDP;(< 5 sq in = 1/16" type ; 5 sq in to 25 sq in = 1/8" ; 25 sq in to 100 sq in = 3/16" type)
- 5) Should be in bottom 30% of the PDP and line parallel to bottom of PDP

#### **C) Nutritional Label**

- 1) Is required on all food products
- 2) There are numerous parts but the authorities are going to key in on the following; a) Serving size – this should be standardized across all similar products (e.g. all ketchups are 1 tablespoon). Serving size should be in both household measurement and metric.  
b) Trans fat is required on all labels starting January 2006  
c) If samples are taken for analysis, regulators will key in on total fat and sodium amounts.

#### D) Ingredient Statement

- 1) List of ingredients in descending order of prominence by weight.
- 2) Acceptable at end to have the phrase ("Contains 2% or less of ....").
- 3) NEW; Allergy Law – must identify the proteins in the ingredient statement if one of the 8 major allergens ( wheat, peanuts, eggs, tree nuts, fish , crustacean, soy, milk) OR at the end of the ingredient statement "Contains milk, wheat etc").
- 4) Not necessary if it is a single ingredient (e.g. carrots)
- 5) All oils must be listed (e.g. cottonseed oil, hydrogenated cottonseed oil, partially hydrogenated oil) – Hydrogenated translates to trans fat.
- 6) List a multi-component ingredient followed by a parenthetical listing of all ingredients in the multi-component ingredient OR incorporate each ingredient of a multi-component ingredient into the overall ingredient statement without declaring the multi-component ingredient.

#### E) Responsible Company

Name and place of business of manufacturer, packer or distributor. If in telephone directory, only need company name, city, state and zip code. If business is not in local telephone directory, must include street address.

#### **3)Other Information;**

- A) If any part of the 5 mandatory parts are in a foreign language, all 5 parts must be in both English and that foreign language.
- B) The FDA will not force a recall unless the problem poses a serious health risk (mainly from the use of illegal ingredients or allergen labeling). It is up to the states to regulate all other parts of a food label and they can be highly variable from state to state but are different interpretations of FDA regulations.
- C) Country of Origin must be declared in the information panel if ingredients are from outside the U.S.A.. " Product of Spain." Do not use abbreviations of countries. Type size should be same size as name and address of manufacturer.
- D) If the food product contains 2% or more meat or poultry, the PDP must also contain the USDA Inspection logo with the establishment number.
- E) If the label contains nutritional or health claims such as light, lean, sodium free, there are FDA standards to be followed.
- F) For more complete information with details, go to <http://www.uark.edu/ua/foodpro>. Go to the Food Information Index and click on Labeling and Nutritional Labeling to be linked to numerous websites.