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Report Highlights:

This report provides an overview of EU food and feed legislation currently in force for the EU. This report looks at general requirements for food and feed labels, food hygiene, contaminants, food packaging, food additives and flavorings, and import procedures. USDA Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) staff reviewed and updated all sections of this annual report.

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Executive Summary

This report provides an overview of food and feed legislation currently in force for the European Union (EU). The “Food Information to Consumers (FIC)” Regulation is the main food labeling piece of legislation in force in the EU. It is applicable to all pre-packaged food and drink products marketed in the EU, including those imported from third countries. However, the FIC regulation allows the 27 EU Member States to deviate from European rules. Information on Member State specific rules can be found in the FAIRS reports prepared by the Foreign Agriculture Service (FAS) offices in the different Member States.

EU requirements for food differ from the ones in the United States and the standard U.S. label fails to comply with EU labeling requirements. This report looks at general requirements for food and feed labels, food hygiene, contaminants, food packaging, food additives and flavorings, and import procedures. The European Union also has some specific rules for novel foods, genetically modified foods, geographical indications, and food for specific nutritional purposes.

Disclaimer:

This report was prepared by the staff of FAS Brussels for U.S. exporters of domestic food and agricultural products. While every possible care has been taken in the preparation of this report, information provided may not be completely accurate either because policies have changed since its preparation, or because clear and consistent information about these policies was not available. It is highly recommended that U.S. exporters verify the full set of import requirements with their foreign customers, who are normally best equipped to research such matters with local authorities, before any goods are shipped.

FINAL IMPORT APPROVAL OF ANY PRODUCTS IS SUBJECT TO THE IMPORTING COUNTRY'S RULES AND REGULATIONS AS INTERPRETED BY BORDER OFFICIALS AT THE TIME OF PRODUCT ENTRY.

Section I. General Food Laws

The European Union (EU) currently consists of 27 Member States with approximately 450 million consumers. EU Member States are Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden. The United Kingdom (U.K.) left the European Union on January 31, 2020. Türkiye, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, Ukraine, and Moldova are candidates to join the EU.

All EU Member States accept the “Community acquis,” i.e., the entire body of EU laws and obligations associated with the treaties and international agreements to which the EU is a party. EU Member States share a customs union, a single market in which goods can move freely, a common trade policy, and a common agricultural and fisheries policy.

A. Brexit

The United Kingdom withdrew from the European Union as of February 1, 2020. The Agreement on the withdrawal of the UK from the EU entered into force on the same date. This Agreement provided for a transition period, which ended on December 31, 2020. During the transition period, EU law was applicable to and in the United Kingdom. On December 24, 2020, the EU and UK negotiators reached [an agreement](#) that sets out the rules on the new partnership between the EU and UK which started to apply from January 1, 2021. More information can be found [here](#).

Since June 2025, checks on medium-risk fruit and vegetables (including tomatoes, grapes, plums, cherries, peaches, peppers, and more) imported from the EU will not be required to enter the United Kingdom to ease trade ahead of the upcoming sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) deal. More information can be found [here](#).

B. EU-Harmonized Legislation

Most but not all food legislation is harmonized at the EU level. Imported products must meet existing Member State requirements in cases where EU regulatory harmonization is not yet complete or absent. U.S. exporters should be aware that products not covered by EU-harmonized food law may be subject to different national rules. The FAIRS reports prepared by the Offices of Agricultural Affairs in the EU Member States are excellent sources of information on Member State specific requirements. These reports can be downloaded from the FAS website at <https://gain.fas.usda.gov/>. Regulatory and marketing information, by Member State, is available on the [Foreign Agricultural Service Europe website](#).

The EU has followed a dual approach with harmonizing food laws: "horizontal" legislation covering aspects common to all foodstuffs (such as additives, labeling, hygiene, etc.) and "vertical" legislation on specific products (e.g., wine, cocoa and chocolate products, sugars, honey, fruit juices, fruit jams, novel foods, etc.). U.S. exporters should be aware that products

may have to comply with several pieces of legislation. For example, wine labeling rules are set out in specific (vertical) legislation but allergen labeling rules which also apply to wine are set out in the EU's general food labeling (horizontal) regulation.

C. Mutual Recognition

Where legislation has not been harmonized at the EU-level, “mutual recognition” should guarantee the free movement of goods in the EU. Under the principle of mutual recognition, products lawfully produced and/or marketed in one Member State should, in theory, be allowed to be marketed in any other Member State. There is one exception to this principle: certain directives allow Member States to make exceptions in cases where a country can prove public safety, health, or environmental concerns about a product intended for import. [Regulation 2019/515](#) on the mutual recognition of goods lawfully marketed in another Member State sets out the procedural requirements for denying mutual recognition and defines the rights and obligations of national authorities on the one hand and enterprises on the other. It also introduces a voluntary ‘mutual recognition declaration’, which businesses can use to demonstrate that their products are lawfully marketed in another EU country. Detailed information about the rules can be found on the European Commission’s website: https://ec.europa.eu/growth/single-market/goods/free-movement-sectors/mutual-recognition_en

D. Regulations and Directives

EU food legislation consists of “Regulations” and “Directives” and rules for their implementation. Directives lay down results that must be achieved, but each Member State is free to decide how to transpose directives into national law (usually within 2-3 years after adoption). Regulations do not require transposition. Regulations are binding in their entirety and automatically enter into force on a set date in all Member States. Amendments to EU legislation are published in separate Directives and Regulations. Consolidated texts, i.e., the consolidation of a basic legal act and subsequent amendments into one text, are available on the European Commission’s Eurlex website. EU laws are translated into the 24 official languages in use in the EU-27 and published in the Official Journal as soon as they are translated. When legislation is referenced in this guide, it is implied that all further amendments also apply. Where possible, this guide links directly to the consolidated versions of referenced EU legislation. The Eurlex website (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/index.htm>) provides free access to European Union law.

E. Food Safety Legislation

The EU’s approach to food safety includes all sectors of the food and feed chain. [The General Food Law Regulation 178/2002](#) lays down the general principles, including the [precautionary principle](#), and sets out requirements and procedures related to food safety and crisis management. The Member States are responsible for carrying out food controls to check that food business operators comply with EU food law requirements. The regulation on harmonized food controls, [Regulation 2017/625](#), has been in force since 2019. A “rapid alert system” for food and feed (RASSF) is in place to share cross-border information when risks to public health are detected in the food chain. The Standing Committee on Food and Feed (PAFF), composed of Member State

technical experts, assists the Commission in the preparation of food and feed safety measures. The General Food Law regulation also provided for the establishment of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), an independent body that provides scientific advice to the European Commission. The regulations on general food law, food and feed controls, food and feed hygiene make up the body of the EU's food safety laws. Revisions of existing EU food regulations or new regulations all apply the principles contained in these framework regulations.

In 2019, [Regulation 2019/1381](#), which refers to the transparency and sustainability of the EU risk assessment in the food chain and amending the General Food law, was published in the EU's Official Journal. The main elements of the regulation aim at ensuring more transparency, increasing the independence of studies, strengthening the governance of EFSA as well as developing comprehensive risk communication. The text regulates eight sectoral legislative acts across the agri-food industry including food additives, smoke flavoring, food contact materials, feed additives, food enzymes and flavorings, and novel foods. For more information, please see GAIN Report on "[Proposed New Rules on Transparency and Risk Communication](#)".

F. EU Institutions

There are three main institutions involved in developing policies and passing legislation that applies throughout the EU: the European Commission, the Council of the European Union, and the European Parliament. In principle, the Commission proposes new laws and the Council and European Parliament adopt them under the "Ordinary Legislative Procedure". EU legislators often invoke the precautionary principle to the detriment of innovation. Detailed information on the EU procedures can be found in [GAIN report "How the EU works –guide to EU decision-making"](#).

G. Transparency

The European Union has a [single web portal](#) where citizens and stakeholders can provide feedback on all initiatives throughout the law-making process. The "REFIT" program evaluates whether existing legislation is still fit for purpose and makes changes where needed. More information is available on the European Commission's website https://commission.europa.eu/law/law-making-process/planning-and-proposing-law/better-regulation_en

H. "Dual Quality" Products

In 2017, three EU Member States - Hungary, Slovakia and Czech Republic - reported that many products, including food products, sold in their countries are of lower quality than the same brands and products sold in "older" Member States. In 2019, the EU adopted [Directive \(EU\) 2019/2161](#) amending the rules for better enforcement and modernization of EU consumer protection rules. The new Directive introduces an article stating that "any marketing of a good, in one Member State, as being identical to a good marketed in other Member States, while that good has significantly different composition or characteristics, unless justified by legitimate and

objective factors” shall be regarded as misleading. For detailed information see [GAIN report “EC Tackles Dual Quality of Foodstuff in the EU”](#).

I. Advisory Bodies

EFSA is responsible for providing scientific advice to the legislators on matters related to food safety. EFSA’s “Applications Helpdesk” assists with the submission and monitoring of applications for regulated products in the following areas: animal by-products, decontamination substances, feed additives, food contact materials, food ingredients, food processing, agricultural biotechnology products, nutrition and pesticides. For more information see <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/applications>

The “European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies” (EGE) is an independent and multi-disciplinary advisory body tasked to advise the European Commission on ethical aspects of science and new technologies in preparation of new EU legislation and policies. For more information: https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/strategy/support-policy-making/scientific-support-eu-policies/ege_en

J. Enforcement

Enforcement of EU food legislation is done by Member State officials. Auditing oversight of Member State performance is done by European Commission officials. The European Commission has the power to initiate legal action in the European Court of Justice against Member States who are not complying with EU Directives and Regulations. For more information, see the [Commission’s website](#).

Section II. Labeling Requirements

A. General Requirements

The standard U.S. label fails to comply with EU labeling requirements. On December 13, 2014, the EU’s [Food Information to Consumers \(FIC\) Regulation 1169/2011](#) was applied to all pre-packaged food and drink products marketed in the EU, including those imported from third countries. The mandatory nutrition declaration requirement introduced by the FIC regulation became applicable in 2016.

Detailed information on food labeling requirements set out in the FIC regulation is available in [GAIN report New EU Food Labeling Rules Published](#), supplemented by [GAIN report How to Comply with the EU’s New Food Labeling Rules](#).

In order to assist food business operators complying with the EU’s food labeling rules, the European Commission, as well as EU food federations, have published guidance documents.

- European Commission: [Notice on questions and answers on the application of Regulation 1169/2011 on the Provision of Food Information to Consumers](#) (June 2018)
- European Commission: [Infographic on labeling rules](#)
- FoodDrink Europe (EU Food and Drink Industry Confederation): [Guidance on the Provision of Food Information to Consumers](#)

The objective of a “Regulation” is to set harmonized rules that apply throughout the EU. However, the FIC Regulation allows EU Member States to deviate from EU rules. Article 39 of the FIC Regulation sets conditions for Member States to adopt additional mandatory national measures, including measures for country-of-origin labeling. The FIC Regulation exempts alcoholic beverages from mandatory nutrition labeling and ingredient listing.

IMPORTANT NOTE: U.S. exporters are strongly advised to check for additional national requirements with their importers.

1. Compulsory Information

Article 9 of FIC Regulation 1169/2011 sets out the list of mandatory declarations on food and drink labels:

- Name of the food
- List of ingredients
- Allergens listed in Annex II
- Quantity of certain ingredients or category of ingredients
- Net quantity of the food
- Date of minimum durability or “use by date”
- Any special storage conditions and/or conditions of use
- Name of business and address of the food business operator under whose name the food is marketed. If that operator is not established in the EU, the name and address of the importer
- Country of origin or place of provenance in accordance with the provisions of Article 26
- Instructions for use where it would be difficult to make appropriate use of the food in the absence of such instructions
- Alcoholic strength by volume for beverages containing more than 1.2% by volume of alcohol
- Nutrition declaration

2. Warnings on Labels

Annex III to FIC Regulation 1169/2011 establishes a list of products that require a special warning on the label:

- Foods whose durability has been extended by means of **packaging gases**

- Foods containing **added sugar and sweeteners** authorized under [Food Additives Regulation 1333/2008](#)
- Foods containing **aspartame** authorized under [Food Additives Regulation 1333/2008](#)
- Foods containing **more than 10% added polyols** authorized under [Food Additives Regulation 1333/2008](#)
- Confectionery and beverages containing **licorice** (glycyrrhizinic acid or its ammonium salt)
- Beverages containing more than 150mg/l of **caffeine** and foods with added caffeine.
- Foods or food ingredients with added **phytosterols, phytosterol esters, phytosterols or phytosterol esters**

Annex V to [Food Additives Regulation 1333/2008](#) requires foodstuffs containing the food colors sunset yellow (E110), quinoline yellow (E104), carmoisine (E122), allura red (E129), tartrazine (E102), and ponceau 4R (E124) to be labeled “may have an adverse effect on activity and attention in children.” This does not concern beverages containing more than 1.2 percent by volume of alcohol.

Any non-edible parts of a packaging system that consumers could mistake for food must be labeled with the words “DO NOT EAT” and where technically possible carry a warning symbol.

3. Minimum Font Size

Article 13 of FIC regulation 1169/2011 introduces a minimum font size for printing the mandatory information on food and drink labels. Generally, the information must be printed in characters using of minimum font size of 1.2 mm for the “x-height” as defined in Annex IV. If the largest surface of a food package or container is less than 80 cm² the minimum font size is reduced to 0.9 mm. On packages with a printable surface smaller than 25 cm², the nutrition declaration is not required. Packages that are smaller than 10 cm² do not need to bear a nutrition declaration nor a list of ingredients.

“x-height” as defined in Annex IV of Regulation 1169/2011:



Legend

1	Ascender line
2	Cap line
3	Mean line
4	Baseline
5	Descender line
6	x-height
7	Font size

The minimum font size does not apply to mandatory labeling requirements set out in other EU legislation, such as the font size requirements set out in Directive 76/2011 to indicate the nominal quantity (see Section III Packaging and Container Regulations).

Minimum font size for printing mandatory information is 1.2 mm.

4. Language Requirements

Article 15 of the FIC Regulation 1169/2011 stipulates that the mandatory information should be provided in “a language easily understood by the consumers of the Member States where the food is marketed.” In practice, this means the official language(s) of that Member State. Member States may specify which information needs to be provided in one or more official EU languages. In order to avoid non-compliance with the new labeling rules, translations of mandatory information must be accurate. Automated online translation tools may generate incorrect translations and should not be used unless edited. Please consult the Member State FAIRS reports for information on specific Member State language requirements.

U.S. exporters should verify with their importers about additional Member State language requirements.

5. Ingredients List

The word “ingredients” must precede the list of ingredients. All ingredients must be designated by their specific name and listed in descending order of weight. Ingredients present in the form of engineered nanomaterials must be indicated in the list of ingredients followed by the word “nano” in brackets. Annex VII to FIC regulation 1169/2011 sets out specific provisions concerning the indication of ingredients and categories of ingredients in the list of ingredients. This Annex requires the mandatory indication of the source of vegetable oils and fats.

In the list of ingredients “vegetable oils” and “vegetable fats” must be followed by a list of the specific vegetable sources.

6. Allergen Labeling

Article 21 of the FIC regulation stipulates that each product or substance capable of inducing an allergic reaction must be indicated in the list of ingredients with reference to the name of the substance or product as listed in Annex II to the FIC regulation. The name of the substance or product must be highlighted through a typeset that clearly distinguishes it from the other ingredients, for example in bold or with a background color.

Example: “tofu” (soya) – “whey” (milk)

Where an ingredients list is provided, the voluntary use of warning boxes or statements such as “contains X” to repeat the presence of the allergenic ingredients is no longer allowed.

On products that do not require an ingredients list, such as wine, the presence of allergens must be indicated using the word “contains” followed by the name of the substance or product as listed in Annex II to the FIC regulation. Allergen labeling is mandatory on all alcoholic beverages and must respect the minimum font size requirement. Member States may decide in which language(s) allergens should be indicated on the label. Please note that the use of precautionary allergen labeling is not harmonized at EU level.

Guidance documents:

- European Commission: [Notice relating to the provision of information on substances or products causing allergies or intolerances](#)
- FoodDrink Europe: [Guidance on precautionary allergen labelling](#)
- [Allergen Labeling – Food Safety Authority Ireland](#)

Allergens must be **highlighted** in the list of ingredients.

7. Minimum Durability

Annex X to FIC Regulation 1169/2011 sets out rules for the indication of the date of minimum durability, use-by date and date of freezing. The use-by date must be indicated on individual pre-packed portions. The durability date **AND** the date of (first) freezing preceded by the words “frozen on” is required on labels of frozen meat, frozen meat preparations and frozen unprocessed fishery products.

Guidance documents:

- European Food Safety Authority: [Guidance on date marking and related food information: part 1 \(date marking\)](#) (2021)
- European Food Safety Authority: [Guidance on date marking and related food information: part 2 \(food information\)](#) (2021)

Dates must be given in the following order: day/month/(if required) year.

8. Quantitative Ingredients Declaration (QUID)

Article 22 of the FIC Regulation requires the indication of the quantity of an ingredient or category of ingredients in the following cases:

- Where the ingredient or category of ingredients appears in the name of the food or is usually associated with that name by the consumer
- Where the ingredient or category of ingredients is emphasized on the labeling in words, pictures, or graphics
- Where the ingredient or category of ingredients is essential to characterize a foodstuff and to distinguish it from similar products

The QUID declaration, expressed as a percentage, must appear either in or immediately next to the name of the food or in the list of ingredients. Annex VIII to the FIC regulation sets out the technical rules and exemptions from the QUID requirement.

The European Commission has published [guidelines](#) on the QUID requirement. The guidelines explain when QUID is mandatory and which products are exempt from QUID.

If an ingredient is emphasized on the label, the quantity (%) must be indicated in the list of ingredients.

Example: “made with butter” => QUID for butter

9. Additives & Flavorings

Annex VII, Part C to FIC Regulation 1169/2011 lists the categories of additives, which must be designated by the name of their category, followed by their specific name or E-number.

Part D of the same Annex sets out rules for the indication of flavorings, smoke flavorings, and the use of the term “natural.” [Regulation 1334/2008](#) lays down additional rules on the use of the term “natural”.

Guidance documents:

- FoodDrinkEurope (EU Food and Drink Industry Confederation): [Guidelines on Flavourings](#) (2019)

10. Origin Labeling

Origin labeling is mandatory for honey, fruit and vegetables, olive oil, fishery and aquaculture products, beef as well as fresh, chilled, and frozen pork, sheep and goat meat, and poultry. In November 2023, the European Commission adopted [Delegated Regulation \(EU\) 2023/2429](#) which imposes mandatory origin labeling rules for nuts and dried fruits and ripened bananas.

Additionally, under Article 26 of the FIC Regulation, mandatory origin labeling applies when failure to indicate the country of origin or place of provenance might mislead the consumer.

In 2018, the European Commission published [Implementing Regulation 2018/775](#), which introduced mandatory dual origin labeling when a country of origin is given or visually implied on the label of a food product but the origin is not the same as that of its primary ingredient. The

country of origin or the place of provenance of a primary ingredient which is not the same as the given country of origin or the given place of provenance of the food shall be given with reference to one geographical areas as listed in article 2 of Regulation 2018/775 or by means of a statement as follows: ‘(name of the primary ingredient) do/does not originate from (the country of origin or the place of provenance of the food)’ or any similar wording likely to have the same meaning for the consumer. This Regulation entered into force on April 1, 2020.

On January 30, 2020, the Commission adopted [Notice C/2020/428](#) that aims to help actors of the food chain as well as the competent national authorities better understand and correctly apply the provisions of Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 related to the origin indication of the primary ingredient.

Example: A jar of peanut butter with a statement such as “made in the USA” or carrying an American flag would trigger this regulation if the peanuts were sourced from another country.

In May 2024, the EU adopted [Directive \(EU\) 2024/1438](#) which changes origin labeling for honey. As of June 14, 2026, if the honey originates in more than one country, the countries of origin where the honey was harvested shall be indicated on the label in the principal field of vision, in descending order of their share in weight, together with the percentage that each of those countries of origin represents. Products which are placed on the market or labeled before June 14, 2026, in accordance with previous origin labeling requirements may continue to be marketed until the exhaustion of stocks.

Guidance documents:

- Primary Food Processor (PFP) – FoodDrinkEurope - EuroCommerce: [Guidance on Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2018/775](#) (May 2020)
- Food Supplements Europe: [Guidance on the obligation of origin labelling with regard to “primary ingredients of different origin” for food supplements](#) (December 2020)
- GAIN report [Commission Briefing on New Origin Labeling Rules](#)

Origin labeling is mandatory for honey, fruits and vegetables, olive oil, fishery and aquaculture products, beef, pork, sheep and goat meat, poultry, nuts, dried fruits, and ripened bananas.

11. Nutrition Declaration

Under FIC Regulation 1169/2011, the nutrition declaration became mandatory on December 13, 2016. Annex V to the FIC Regulation lists foodstuffs that are exempted from the mandatory nutrition declaration requirement. The nutrition declaration must be presented if space permits, in tabular format with the numbers aligned and where space does not permit, in linear format. All elements of the mandatory nutrition declaration should be in the same field of vision on the food label or package.

Mandatory content of the nutrition declaration:

- Energy value: expressed in kilojoules (kJ) and kilocalories (kcal)
- In this particular order: amounts of fat, saturates, carbohydrate, sugars, protein and salt, expressed in grams (g), milligrams (mg) or micrograms (µg) per 100 grams or per 100 milliliters

Nutrition declarations per portion or per consumption unit, in addition to the declaration per 100 grams or milliliters are allowed provided that the number of portions/consumption units is clearly indicated on the package. The salt content must be expressed as “salt” not “sodium” but where appropriate, a statement indicating that the salt content is exclusively due to the presence of naturally occurring sodium may appear in close proximity to the nutrition declaration.

The following elements may, on a voluntary basis, be repeated on the front label:

- Energy value
- Energy value together with the amounts of fat, saturates, sugars, and salt

The content of the mandatory nutrition declaration may be supplemented with the indication of the amounts of one or more of the following:

- Monounsaturates
- Polyunsaturates
- Polyols
- Starch
- Fiber
- Vitamins and minerals listed in Part A of Annex III to the FIC regulation (incl. percentage of reference intakes)

Detailed rules on the presentation of the nutrition declaration are set out in Annex XV to the FIC Regulation. The European Commission also published a [guidance document](#) and a simplified [summary table](#) for tolerances of nutrient values declared on a label with EU legislation.

Annex V to the FIC Regulation establishes a list of products that are exempted from the mandatory nutrition declaration requirement.

FoodDrinkEurope launched a website explaining “reference intakes” to food business operators and consumers: <http://referenceintakes.eu/reference-templates.html>. For detailed information on the nutrition panel, see the guidance documents listed in “General Requirements” (Chapter A).

Article 35 of the FIC Regulation allows Member States to recommend the use of additional forms of expression or presentation of the nutrition declaration.

As of 2024, several Member States have adopted additional front-of-pack nutritional labeling schemes: Sweden and Denmark with the [Keyhole system](#), and France, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, The Netherlands, Luxembourg and Germany with [the Nutri-Score](#). The latter has also been adopted by leading food manufacturers such as Nestlé and Danone. In June 2025, Romania notified the European commission of its intention to adopt the Nutri-Score.

However, some Member States, are not in favor of mandatory front-of-pack labeling. Italy presented an alternative plan for a new nutrition-labeling scheme in January 2020: the [NutrInform](#), which was adopted by the Italian government later that year.

Nutrition information must be presented in tabular format and in a specific order expressed per 100 grams/milliliters.

12. Gluten-Free

Commission [Implementing Regulation 828/2014](#), applicable since July 20, 2016, sets out conditions for using “gluten-free” and “very low gluten” statements on food labels.

13. Trans-Fats

In April 2019, [Regulation 2019/649](#) amending Annex III to [Regulation 1925/2006](#) on trans-fat was published in the Official Journal.

This new Regulation sets a maximum limit of 2 grams of trans fat per 100 grams of fat in food intended for the final consumer, other than trans-fat naturally occurring in animal fat.

14. Use of Stickers

Specific rules on the use of stickers to provide mandatory labeling information are not included in FIC Regulation 1169/2011. On this issue, the European Commission refers to point 2.1.1 of [their Questions and Answers on the Application of Regulation 1169/2011](#) document, which says that “labels should not be easily removable so as to jeopardize the availability or the accessibility of the mandatory food information to the consumer.” Some Member States may allow the use of stickers while others may not. Please consult the Member State FAIRS reports for more information.

U.S. exporters should check with their importers whether the destination Member State allows the use of stickers.

15. Samples

FIC Regulation 1169/2011 does not include any provisions on samples.

16. Checklist for Compliance with new FIC Rules

In December 2020, the European Commission launched the Food Labeling Information System (FLIS), which enables users to select a food and then automatically retrieve the mandatory EU

labeling indications in 24 EU languages. The system also provides links to the relevant legal provisions and existing guidance documents. In all, 87 different categories of food are covered. You can access the FLIS here:

https://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/labelling_nutrition/labelling_legislation_en/food_labelling_information_system/start/select-countries

FOOD LABELS
Language / Specific Member State requirements
Minimum font size
Name of food (must include specific treatments such as “refrozen,” “smoked,” “powdered,” percentage of added water to meat and fishery products)
Warnings (Annex III to FIC Regulation lists products that require a warning label)
Instructions for use (symbols are allowed IN ADDITION to text)

ALLERGEN LABELING
Allergens listed in Annex II to FIC Regulation must be indicated
Allergen boxes are no longer allowed when an ingredients list is provided
Each allergen must be highlighted (bold, background color) in the list of ingredients
“Contains + name of allergen” where no ingredients list is provided

INGREDIENTS LIST
Heading must include the word “Ingredients” (do not highlight)
All ingredients must be listed in descending order of weight
“Nano” in brackets to indicate presence of engineered nanomaterials
Quantitative Ingredients Declaration (QUID) for ingredients given special emphasis
Source of vegetable oil or fat must be indicated
Proteins added to meat products must be indicated

DATE OF MINIMUM DURABILITY
Instructions listed in Annex X to FIC Regulation
“Use by” date on highly perishable foods / on each individual pre-packed portion / storage instructions
“Best before” / “Best before end” on other foods
Durability AND “frozen on” date on frozen products
Reference to where the date is given on the label

ALCOHOLIC STRENGTH
Instructions listed in Annex XII to FIC Regulation
Actual alcoholic strength by volume of alcohol of beverages containing more than 1.2% by volume of alcohol must be indicated as “alcohol” or the abbreviation “alc.” X% vol.
Product name, net quantity and alcohol strength must be indicated in the same field of vision

ORIGIN LABELING
Mandatory origin labeling where failure to indicate this would mislead consumer
Mandatory origin labeling for honey, fruit and vegetables, nuts, dried fruits, ripened bananas,

olive oil, fishery and aquaculture products, beef as well as fresh, chilled, and frozen pork, sheep and goat meat, and poultry.
Mandatory origin labeling for other products may be adopted in near future
Mandatory origin labeling for primary ingredient when its omission could mislead the consumers

Mandatory Nutrition Declaration
Instructions listed in Annex XV to FIC Regulation
Tabular format (linear format where space does not permit tabular format)
Expressed per 100g/ml
Energy in KJ and kcal
In this particular order, amounts of:
Fat
Saturates
Carbohydrate
Sugars
Protein
Salt (not sodium)

Voluntary Nutrition Declaration (may complement Mandatory Nutrition Declaration)
Mono saturates
Polyunsaturates
Polyols
Starch
Fiber
Vitamins and minerals listed in Annex XIII to FIC Regulation
Energy value or Energy Value together with Fats, Saturates, Sugars, Salt may be repeated
Reference Intake (RI) set out in Annex XIII per portion or consumption unit (must include energy value per 100g/ml and per portion)

B. Other Specific Labeling Requirements

The EU's "Food Information to Consumers" Regulation 1169/2011 sets out horizontal rules applicable to all products. Sectorial or "vertical" legislation exists for a number of products. Labeling requirements outlined in product-specific legislation complement the horizontal rules set out in Regulation 1169/2011. For example, EU wine regulations do not include provisions on allergen labeling. This means that wine labels must comply with the requirements set out in wine Regulation 607/2009 but also with the allergen labeling requirement set out in FIC Regulation 1169/2011.

U.S. exporters should be aware that overlapping pieces of legislation may apply to single products.

1. Nutrition Claims

The Annex to [Nutrition & Health Claims Regulation 1924/2006](#) lists the EU authorized nutrition claims and their conditions of use. The use of nutrition claims not included in the annex is not allowed.

The following nutrition claims are authorized in the EU if they follow the criteria laid down in the Regulation:

- Low energy
- Energy-reduced
- Energy-free
- Low fat
- Fat-free
- Low saturated fat
- Saturated fat-free
- Low sugars
- Sugars-free
- With no added sugars
- Low sodium/salt
- Very low sodium/salt
- Sodium-free or salt-free
- No added sodium/salt
- Source of fiber
- High fiber
- Source of protein
- High protein
- Source of [name of vitamin/s] and/or [name of mineral/s]
- High [name of vitamin/s] and/or [name of mineral/s]
- Contains [name of the nutrient or other substance]
- Increased [name of the nutrient]
- Reduced [name of the nutrient]
- Light/lite
- Naturally/natural
- Source of omega-3 fatty acids
- High omega-3 fatty acids
- High monounsaturated fat
- High polyunsaturated fat
- High unsaturated fat

2. Health Claims

Rules on the use of health claims are set out in [Nutrition & Health Claims Regulation 1924/2006](#). [Regulation 432/2012](#) establishes the EU positive list of functional health claims and their conditions of use. Any producer can use the permitted health claims provided the conditions set

out in Regulation 432/2012 are met. The EU's [online “Register of Nutrition and Health Claims”](#) lists the authorized health claims as well as the rejected claims and the reasons for their non-authorization. All claims that are not authorized and not on hold or under consideration are prohibited. Food products carrying claims must also comply with the provisions of the EU's [Food Information to Consumers \(FIC\) Regulation 1169/2011](#).

[Commission Implementing Decision 2013/63](#) sets out guidelines for national control authorities regarding the implementation of specific conditions for permitted health claims.

The authorization of health claims referring to botanical substances was put on hold because of the potential conflict with the EU's Traditional Herbal Medicinal Products Directive.

The list of permitted functional health claims is different from the individual applications for health claims relating to disease risk reduction and claims referring to the health and development of children which require an authorization on a case-by-case basis, following the submission of a scientific dossier to EFSA. A simplified authorization procedure was established for health claims based on new scientific data.

[Regulation 353/2008](#) sets out implementing rules for applications for the authorization of health claims as provided for in Article 15 of Regulation 1924/2006. Please see GAIN Report: [Health Claims - EU Authorization Procedure](#) for a description of how application dossiers for authorization of health claims should be prepared and presented. A guidance document on how companies can apply for health claim authorizations can be downloaded from EFSA's website at <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/6554>.

[Commission Regulation 907/2013](#) establishes rules for the use of “generic descriptors” which could be interpreted by consumers as health claims. Generic descriptors such as “digestive biscuits” and “cough drop” would normally be banned under Regulation 1924/2006 because they suggest a beneficial health effect, but the implied health benefit has not been evaluated scientifically by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). For more information see [GAIN report “Health Claims – New EU Regulation on Generic Descriptors”](#).

Trademarks and brand names that suggest health and/or nutritional benefits but do not comply with the new rules had to be removed from the EU market by January 19, 2022.

Health claims are only allowed if the importance of a balanced diet and healthy lifestyle is also stated on the label.

3. Genetically Modified Foods Labeling

Labeling regulations for genetically modified (GM) food products are established by [Regulation 1829/2003](#) (articles 12-13). These rules apply to products that have undergone varying degrees of processing. The regulation does not require labeling of food products that are not food ingredients, such as processing aids. Meat, milk or eggs obtained from animals fed with GM feed

or treated with GM medicinal products do not require GM labeling. The traceability rules require all business operators to transmit and retain information on GM products in order to identify both the supplier and the buyer of the GM product.

Each individual genetically modified organism (GMO) must be approved before it can be used in food and feed. The EU register of authorized GMOs can be consulted on the European Commission's website at https://food.ec.europa.eu/plants/genetically-modified-organisms/gmo-register_en. All food products containing or consisting of GMOs, produced from GMOs or containing ingredients produced from GMOs must be labeled even if they no longer contain detectable traces of GMOs. The labeling requirement does not apply to foods containing GMOs in a proportion equal to or less than 0.9 percent of the food ingredients considered individually, provided their presence is adventitious or technically unavoidable. Above this level, all products must be labeled using the following wording:

- Where the food consists of more than one ingredient, the words “genetically modified” or “produced from genetically modified [name of ingredient]” must follow in brackets immediately after the ingredient concerned. A compound ingredient with a GM component should be labeled “contains [name of ingredient] produced from genetically modified [name of organism].”

Example: a biscuit containing soy flour derived from GM-soy must be labeled “contains soy flour from genetically modified soy.”

- Where the ingredient is designated by the name of a category (e.g., vegetable oil), the words “contains genetically modified [name of organism]” or “contains [name of ingredient] produced from genetically modified [name of organism]” must be used.

Example: for vegetable oils containing rapeseed oil produced from genetically modified rapeseed, the reference “contains rapeseed oil from genetically modified rapeseed” must appear in the list of ingredients.

The designations may appear in a footnote to the ingredients list, provided they are printed in a font at least the same size as that of the list of ingredients or, where there is no list of ingredients, clearly on the labeling.

- Where there is no list of ingredients, the words “genetically modified” or “produced from genetically modified [name of ingredient]” must appear clearly in the labeling.

Example 1: “a spirit containing caramel produced from genetically modified corn.”

Example 2: “genetically modified sweet corn.”

More information can be found on the European Commission's website: https://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/gmo/traceability_labelling_en and in the annual GAIN reports on agricultural biotechnology. The latest report is available [here](#).

Non-GMO: There is no EU-harmonized legislation defining “non-GM,” “GM-free” or similar labeling terms. National provisions and operator-specific “GM-free” and similar labeling schemes have been developed in several Member States.

In July 2023, the European Commission published a [proposal](#) for a new regulation on plants obtained through genome editing, referred to as New Genomic Techniques (NGTs) in European terminology. The Commission proposed two categories for NGT plants: Category 1 – NGT plants that could also occur naturally or be produced by conventional breeding techniques, and Category 2 – NGT plants that could not occur naturally or be produced by conventional breeding techniques. Plants and products in Category 1 would be labeled in the same way as conventional plants and products. Food containing products from Category 2 would be subject to the same requirements as food containing GMOs. The proposal has been adopted with amendments by both the European Parliament and the Council and is now in the trilogue phase. As it stands, all products obtained via genome editing must adhere to GMO legislation.

4. Organic Food Labeling

A new Regulation on organic production and labeling of organic products was adopted in 2018 and entered into force on January 1, 2022 ([Regulation \(EU\) 2018/848](#)). In July 2024, the European Commission published a [Frequently Asked Questions document](#) on organic rules under Regulation 2018/848.

The term “organic” and all its derivatives or diminutives such as “bio” and “eco” may be used only to label products that comply with EU organic production rules and if at least 95 percent of the ingredients of agricultural origin are organic. For products containing less than 95 percent organic ingredients, the term “organic” may be used only to indicate individual organic ingredients in the list of ingredients. When reference is made to the organic production method in the ingredients list, the total percentage of organic ingredients must be indicated. Products containing GMOs or produced with GMOs cannot be labeled as organic.

The use of the EU organic logo is mandatory on all pre-packaged organic products produced in the EU. Organic products imported from non-EU countries may carry the EU organic logo if they comply with the EU production rules. Since September 2024, the EU organic logo can also be used in black and white; the technical specificities are laid down in Implementing [Regulation 2024/2867](#).



When the EU organic logo appears on the label, the indication of the place of farming is required. This indication may be classified as ‘non-EU Agriculture,’ where the agricultural raw material has been farmed outside of the EU. However, non-EU’ may be replaced or supplemented by the name of a country, or by the name of a region if all the agricultural raw materials of which the product is composed have been farmed in that region.



US-EU Equivalence Arrangement: The [US-EU Organic Equivalence Arrangement](#) took effect on June 1, 2012. The United States and the EU have recognized each other's organic production rules and control systems as equivalent under their respective rules. Organic products certified to the USDA organic standards may be sold and labeled as organic in the EU. Both the USDA organic seal and the EU organic logo may be used on products traded under this Arrangement. When using the EU organic logo, exporters must meet all the EU labeling requirements.

With Regulation 2018/848, the principle of equivalence is replaced by the requirement of strict conformity with EU rules for organic imports from non-EU countries. This means that for countries with an Equivalence Arrangement with the EU, like the United States, these arrangements will need to be changed. Under the new EU Regulation on Organics, the US-EU Equivalency Arrangements will expire on December 31, 2026. To avoid trade disruptions, all non-EU countries- including the United States- that are currently recognized as equivalent may renegotiate the terms and sign a Trade Agreement with the EU. Trade Agreements will aim to recognize that the non-EU country has a “system of production meeting the same objectives and principles by applying rules which ensure the same level of assurance of conformity as those of the Union.”

Please note that on October 4, 2024, the European Court of Justice (ECJ) of the European Union published [a judgement](#) that prohibits the use of the organic production logo of the European Union for products manufactured in a third country according to rules merely equivalent to those laid down by EU law. However, such a foodstuff may nonetheless bear the organic production logo of that third country. The European Commission is currently assessing how the judgement will impact the EU-U.S. Organic Equivalency Arrangement. On September 23, Christopher Hansen, EU Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, announced that the European Commission will propose a revision of the EU organic regulation before the end of the year, noting that the EU organic sector needs clarity on the impact of the ECJ ruling.

Organic Wine: Regulation 2018/848 lays down the rules for the production and labeling of organic wine. Only wines produced in accordance with this regulation qualify as “organic wine” and can carry the EU organic logo. Labeling wine as “made from organic grapes” is no longer allowed in the EU, which means that U.S. wines labeled as such cannot be imported into the EU. Sorbic acid and desulfuration are not allowed. [Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2021/1165](#) sets out the maximum sulfites content which shall not exceed 100 milligrams per liter for red wines, with a residual sugar level lower than 2 grams per liter and 150 milligrams per liter for white and rosé wines and with a residual sugar level lower than 2 grams per liter. For all other wines, the maximum sulphites dioxide content shall be reduced by 30 milligrams per liter.

For more information about the Organic Regulation, please see GAIN report “[New EU Organic Regulation Entering Into Force in 2021 - Regulatory Update](#).” (Please note that this report was published before the postponement of the Regulation and the dates included in the report were all postponed by a year). For additional information see the European Commission's website at http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/organic/index_en.

More information on the organic market in the EU can be found in the [2025 EU Organic GAIN report](#).

5. Wine, Spirits, Beers and Other Alcoholic Beverages

General Requirements

- Allergen labeling is compulsory on all alcoholic beverages (see “Allergen Labeling”).
- Mandatory nominal quantities for wines and spirits are set out in the Annex to [Directive 2007/45/EC](#).

Products sold by volume (*quantity in ml*)

Still wine	On the interval from 100 ml to 1 500 ml only the following 8 nominal quantities: ml: 100 — 187 — 250 — 375 — 500 — 750 — 1 000 — 1 500
Yellow wine	On the interval from 100 ml to 1 500 ml only the following nominal quantity: ml: 620
Sparkling wine	On the interval from 125 ml to 1 500 ml only the following 5 nominal quantities: ml: 125 — 200 — 375 — 750 — 1 500
Liqueur wine	On the interval from 100 ml to 1 500 ml only the following 7 nominal quantities: ml: 100 — 200 — 375 — 500 — 750 — 1 000 — 1 500
Aromatized wine	On the interval from 100 ml to 1 500 ml only the following 7 nominal quantities: ml: 100 — 200 — 375 — 500 — 750 — 1 000 — 1 500
Spirit drinks	On the interval from 100 ml to 2 000 ml only the following 9 nominal quantities: ml: 100 — 200 — 350 — 500 — 700 — 1 000 — 1 500 — 1 750 — 2 000

- For beverages containing more than 1.2 percent of alcohol by volume (excluding wines), the actual alcoholic strength by volume must be indicated in accordance with Annex XII to FIC regulation 1169/2011. The alcoholic strength must be indicated by a figure with maximum one decimal place followed by the symbol “% vol.” The alcoholic strength must be given in the same field of vision as the product name and the net quantity.
- Alcoholic beverages containing more than 1.2% of alcohol by volume are exempted from the obligation to bear a nutrition declaration and a list of ingredients. On December 8, 2023, the labeling of a nutrition declaration and a list of ingredients became mandatory for wines. Please see below for more information.

Spirits

[Regulation 2019/787](#) entered into force in May 2021. This Regulation outlines general rules on the definition, description, presentation, and labeling of spirits, as well as on the protection of geographical indications of spirits. It also establishes rules on the use of legal names of spirits in

the presentation and labeling of foodstuffs other than spirits drinks and provisions on the use of compound terms for the presentation of spirit drinks.

In February 2022, the European Commission published [Guidelines for the implementation of certain labelling provisions of Regulation \(EU\) 2019/787](#). These guidelines are limited to the practical explanation of labeling provisions applicable to spirit drinks, concerning the use of legal names, compound terms, allusions, mixtures and blends.

The public database [eAmbrosia](#) lists the geographical indications of spirit drinks registered in the European Union. In February 2019, “Tequila” was approved as a geographical indication in the EU ([Implementing Regulation 2019/335](#)).

[Commission Regulation 936/2009](#) applies the Agreements between the EU and third countries on the mutual recognition of certain spirit drinks. Under this regulation, “Tennessee Whisky” and “Bourbon Whisky” are protected product designations.

The EU spirits sector committed to voluntarily include energy information on-label while comprehensive ingredients and nutritional information will be available online. The declaration of ingredients follows the definition provided in the FIC Regulation:

- There is no obligation to declare processing aids (if used)
- Calorie information is provided per 100ml and per consumption unit, provided that the unit used and the number of units contained in the package is stated. The proposed consumption unit by default is 30ml.

Illustrative examples of how on-label energy information can be provided for spirits.



Source: SpiritsEurope

Beers

There is no specific EU-harmonized legislation for beer. Some Member States have adopted national provisions to make the list of ingredients compulsory. All alcoholic beverages must comply with the allergen labeling requirements.

On September 5, 2019, the European beer industry signed a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) and committed to voluntarily inform consumers on ingredient and nutrition information. In conformity with the provisions of the FIC Regulation:

- Ingredients must be listed in descending order of weight as recorded at the time of their use in the manufacture of the beverage
- Nutrition information must be provided per 100 ml

- Beers over 1.2% of alcohol by volume shall either solely list the energy values or list all seven nutritional values

More information can be found on the Brewers of Europe's dedicated website:

<https://brewersofeurope.eu/our-priorities/labelling/>

Wines

[Commission Regulation 1308/2013](#) establishes framework rules for wine. [Commission Regulation 2019/33](#) and [Commission Regulation 2019/34](#) outline detailed rules on protected designations of origin and geographical indications, traditional terms, and labeling. Chapters III of Regulation 2019/33 and 2019/34 set out rules on the use of traditional terms. The new EU database for wines and spirits "[eAmbrosia](#)" lists the traditional terms that are protected in the EU.

Non-EU countries need to obtain authorization from the European Commission to use EU-protected traditional terms. To date, the Commission has not made any progress on U.S. applications, submitted in 2010, to use 11 traditional terms (Chateau, Clos, Ruby, Tawny, Crusted, Crusting, Noble, Solera, Sur lie, Vintage and Vintage character).

In 2021, the European Union adopted [Regulation 2021/2117](#) which introduces a compulsory nutrition declaration and a compulsory list of ingredients for wines, aromatized wines, and dealcoholized and partially dealcoholized wines. The Regulation leaves producers the option of having the nutrition declaration on the package or on a label limited to the energy value, which may be expressed by using the symbol "E" for energy. In such cases, the full nutrition declaration shall be provided by electronic means identified on the package or on a label attached thereto (e.g. via a QR code). The Regulation also states that the nutrition declaration shall not be displayed with other information intended for sales or marketing purposes and no user data shall be collected or tracked. However, the option of not providing a full nutritional declaration on the package or on a label attached thereto should not affect the existing requirement that the label list substances causing allergies or intolerances. These new rules on the mandatory nutrition declaration and list of ingredients entered into force on December 8, 2023.

In November 2023, the European Commission published a "[Questions and Answers](#)" notice on the implementation of new EU wine labeling provisions. For more information, please see GAIN Report: [European Commission Publishes New EU Labeling Rules for Wines – January 2022](#).

On March 28, 2025, the European Commission published a proposal for a Regulation laying down a range of measures to support the EU wine industry. This includes the creation of common product denominations for lower alcohol wine products across the Single Market with "alcohol-free" and "alcohol-light" wines. The proposal also addresses the non-harmonization between Member States of the electronic presentation of the list of ingredients and nutrition declaration. For more information, please see GAIN Report: [EU Commission Proposes an Update to Labeling Rules for Wine](#).

US-EU Wine Agreement: In March 2006, the U.S. and the EU signed the "[Agreement between the United States and the European Community on Trade in Wine](#)". The Agreement covers wine

with an actual alcohol content of not less than 7 percent and not more than 22 percent. All U.S. wine imports must be accompanied by [certification and analysis documentation](#) using the format specified in Annex III (a) to the Agreement. The Agreement's "Protocol on Wine Labeling" sets conditions for the use of optional particulars on wine labels. [Commission Regulation 1416/2006](#) concerns the protection of U.S. names of origin in the EU.

Information on US-EU wine trade can also be obtained from the U.S. Dept. of the Treasury - Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau <https://www.ttb.gov/itd/international-imports-exports-requirements/>.

Alcoholic beverages must comply with the EU's allergen labeling rules set out in FIC Regulation 1169/2011.

6. Special Use Foods

The EU's "foods for specific groups" rules are set out in [Regulation \(EU\) 609/2013](#). Its scope is limited to infant formula, follow-on formula, processed cereal-based food and baby food, food for special medical purposes and total diet replacement for weight control. Pictures of infants are not allowed on the packaging of formula, and no text or pictures may idealize its use.

- [Commission Delegated Regulation 2016/127](#) lays down the specific compositional and information requirements for infant formula and follow-on formula and as regards requirements on information relating to infant and young child feeding.
- [Commission Delegated Regulation 2016/128](#) lays down the specific compositional and information requirements for food for special medical purposes.
- [Commission Delegated Regulation 2017/1798](#) lays down the specific compositional and information requirements for total diet replacement for weight control. It also sets out specific compositional and labeling requirements as well as a notification procedure under which food business operators are required to send copies of their product labels to the competent authority of each Member State where the product will be marketed. For more information see [GAIN report "The Skinny on New EU Rules for Weight Loss Products."](#)

Foods that do not fall within the scope of Regulation 609/2013, such as meal replacements and low-calorie cereal bars, are regarded as "normal" foods and must comply with the EU's horizontal food labeling rules. For more information see "Dietetic Foods" in Section VI.

As a rule, labeling requirements set out in the FIC Regulation also apply to food categories covered under Regulation 609/2013. However, given the specific nature of the products covered, regulation 609/2013 introduces additional labeling requirements and derogations from the FIC

Regulation. For detailed information on the new dietetic food rules see [GAIN report “New EU Rules on Dietetic Foods,”](#) complemented by [GAIN report “New EU Rules on Dietetic Foods – Update”](#) and the Commission’s website at http://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/labelling_nutrition/special_groups_food_en.

Food for sportspeople does not fall within the scope of Regulation 609/2013. A Commission report on food and beverages labeled specifically for sportspeople concluded there is no need for specific EU-harmonized provisions as existing horizontal EU food rules already provide an adequate legal framework for these products. Before the adoption of Regulation 609/2013, certain Member States required the notification of sports food as a special use food. U.S. exporters should check with their importers whether re-notification may be necessary. For more information see [GAIN report “New EU Rules for Sports Food.”](#)

Artificial sweeteners are not allowed in dietetic bakery products. For detailed information see [GAIN report “EU bans use of artificial sweeteners in dietetic bakery products.”](#)

The use of artificial sweeteners is no longer allowed in dietetic bakery products.

7. Meat Labeling

Beef

[Regulation 1760/2000](#) sets out rules for compulsory and voluntary beef labeling. Detailed rules for the implementation of Regulation 1760/2000 are set out in [Regulation 1825/2000](#). Under the compulsory beef labeling scheme, labels for all bovine meat must indicate the following information:

- “Born in: name of third country”
- “Reared in: name of third country or third countries”
- For beef derived from animals born, raised and slaughtered in the same third country, the above indications may be combined as “Origin: name of third country”
- A reference number ensuring the link between the meat and the animal or animals
- “Slaughtered in: third country / approval number of slaughterhouse”
- “Cutting in: third country / approval number of cutting plant”
- A traceability code linking the meat to the animal or a group of animals representing the production of maximum one day

Voluntary beef labeling has to comply with the rules set out in the [Regulation 1169/2011](#). Definitions and requirements applicable to terms or categories of terms that may be put on labels of pre-packed fresh and frozen beef and veal will be adopted at a later date.

Veal

Annex VII to [Regulation 1308/2013](#) classifies bovine animals aged less than 12 months in two categories: 1) “category V” - bovine animals aged 8 months or less and 2) “category Z” - bovine animals aged more than 8 months but less than 12 months. For both categories, Annex VII lists the sales descriptions in the different Member State languages and the mandatory labeling requirements.

Pork, Sheep, Goats, and Poultry

[Commission Implementing Regulation 1337/2013](#) sets out rules for the indication of the country or place of provenance for fresh, chilled, and frozen meat of swine, sheep, goats and poultry. The following labeling requirements is applicable:

1) The indication “**Reared in: name of the Member State of third country**” in accordance with the following criteria:

For swine:

- If the animal slaughtered is older than 6 months, the Member State or third country in which the last rearing period of at least 4 months took place
- If the animal slaughtered is younger than 6 months and has a live weight of at least 80 kg, the Member State or third country in which the rearing period after the animal reached 30 kg took place
- If the animal slaughtered is younger than 6 months and has a live weight less than 80 kg, the Member State or third country in which the whole rearing took place

For sheep and goats:

- The Member State or third country in which the last rearing period of at least 6 months took place, or in cases where the animal slaughtered is younger than 6 months, the Member State or third country in which the whole rearing period took place

For poultry:

- The Member State or third country in which the last rearing period of at least one month took place or, in case the animal slaughtered is younger than one month, the Member State or third country in which the whole rearing period after the animal was placed for fattening took place

In cases where any of the above rearing periods are not attained in any single Member State or third countries, the place of rearing must be indicated as “Reared in: several Member States of the EU” or “Reared in: several non-EU countries” or “Reared in several EU and non-EU countries.” As an alternative, the place of rearing may also be indicated as “Reared in: list of the Member States or third countries where the animal was reared.”

The indication “Origin: name of Member State or third country” may be used in cases where the meat has been obtained from animals born, reared AND slaughtered in one single Member State or third country.

2) The indication “**Slaughtered in: name of the Member State or third country.**” By way of derogation for meat imported from third countries, in cases where information on the rearing periods is not available, the meat must be labeled as “Reared in: non-EU” and “Slaughtered in: name of the third country where the animal was slaughtered.”

In 2021, the Commission published [a report](#) on the rules on food information to consumers regarding the mandatory origin labeling for pork, sheep, goats and poultry. The evaluation concluded that the objectives of the Regulation have been met and remained relevant despite a changing context, in particular the increasing consumer demand for more extensive information on food labels.

Minced meat:

According to [Regulation 1169/2011](#), minced meat designations, such as “lean minced meat” may only be used where the minced meat complies with maximum limits for the fat content and the meat/collagen ratio. The following expressions shall appear on the labeling:

- ‘percentage of fat content under ...’,
- ‘collagen/meat protein ratio under ...’,

Exact numbers can be found on Annex VI, Part B of the Regulation.

Please note that EU Member States may allow minced meat which does not comply with the criteria to be placed on their national market.

8. Health and Identification Marks

Annex II to [Regulation 853/2004](#) lays down rules for applying an identification mark to products of animal origin. Linear presentation of the required information is allowed only for imports from EU-approved establishments in third countries.

More information on the EU health mark is available on USDA’s Food Safety and Inspection Service’s website at <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/inspection/import-export/import-export-library/european-union>

9. Fish Labeling

[Regulation 1379/2013](#) sets out labeling rules for fishery and aquaculture products listed in Annex I to the regulation. Mandatory labeling information includes:

- Commercial designation of the species and its scientific name
- Production method
- Area where the products were caught or farmed
- Whether the product has been defrosted
- Date of minimum durability

For more information see the European Commission’s website https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/market/consumer-information_en.

10. Frozen Foodstuffs

[Council Directive 89/108/EEC](#) sets rules for quick-frozen foodstuffs and for their packaging and labeling. Quick-frozen foodstuffs sold to the final consumer should carry the following additional labeling indications: the product name with the indication “quick-frozen,” the date of minimum shelf life, the period during which the purchaser may store the product, the storage temperature and/or type of storage equipment required, batch identification and a clear indication of the type “do not re-freeze after defrosting.” Annex VI, Part A of [Regulation 1169/2011](#) stipulates that for foods that have been frozen before sale and which are sold defrosted, the name of the food must be accompanied by the designation “defrosted.”

For foods of animal origin [Regulation 853/2004](#), requires food business operators to provide the date of production AND the date of freezing to the buyers, and upon request, to the competent authorities. When a food is made from a batch of raw materials with different dates of production and freezing, the older dates of production and/or freezing must be made available.

Annex III to FIC Regulation 1169/2011 requires that labels on frozen meat, frozen meat preparations and frozen unprocessed fishery products indicate the date of freezing or the date of first freezing in cases where the product has been frozen more than once.

Date of first freezing must be indicated when a product has been frozen more than once.

11. Vertical & Product-Specific Legislation

[European Parliament and Council Regulation 1308/2013](#) establishes a single common market organization (CMO) for all agricultural products. The single CMO provides definitions and marketing rules for rice, sugar, beef and veal, milk and milk products, eggs and poultry meat, olive oil, fruits and vegetables, spreadable fats and wine.

Vertical legislation on the manufacture and marketing of specific products has been developed for [sugars](#) (Directive 2001/111), [cocoa and chocolate products](#) (Directive 2000/36), [honey](#) (Directive 2001/110), [fruit juices and similar products](#) (Directive 2001/112), [preserved milk](#) (Directive 2001/114), [coffee extracts and chicory extracts](#) (Directive 1999/4) and [fruit jams and similar products](#) (Directive 2001/113). These Directives are often referred to as the “breakfast directives.”

In May 2024, the Commission published [Directive 2024/1438](#) which amends the “breakfast directives.” The changes are outlined below per product category. Products which are placed on the market or labeled before June 14, 2026, in accordance with Directives 2001/110, 2001/112, 2001/113 and 2001/114 may continue to be marketed until the exhaustion of stocks.

Fruit Juices: Detailed information on fruit juice labeling can be found in [GAIN report “New EU Fruit Juice Labeling Rules”](#) published in May 2012.

[Directive 2024/1438](#) creates three new fruit juice categories: “reduced-sugar fruit juice”, “reduced-sugar fruit juice from concentrate” and “concentrated reduced-sugar fruit juice”. The statement “fruit juices contain only naturally occurring sugars” may appear on the label in the same field of vision as the name of the product.

Honey: [Directive 2014/63/EU](#) defines pollen as a natural constituent of honey that should not be considered an ingredient of honey. This means that GM pollen present as a quantity of more than 0.9% of the honey (not the pollen) would need to be labeled as such. Since pollen only forms around 0.5% of any batch of honey, it will never exceed the GM labeling threshold.

[Directive 2024/1438](#) introduces changes to origin labeling for honey: if the honey originates in more than one country, the countries of origin where the honey has been harvested shall be indicated on the label in the principal field of vision, in descending order of their share in weight, together with the percentage that each of those countries of origin represents. The Directive also specifies that in the case of baker’s honey, the words “intended for cooking only” shall appear on the label in close proximity to the product name.

Jams: [Directive 2024/1438](#) increases the minimum fruit content in jams from 350 to 450 grams per kilo in jams and from 450 to 500 grams per kilo in extra jams.

Preserved milk: The use of treatments that produce lactose-free dehydrated milk products will be allowed from June 14, 2026.

Olive Oil: In November 2022, the European Commission published [Regulation 2022/2104](#) with updated marketing standards for olive oil.

12. Plant-based Meat and Dairy Alternatives

To date, there is no EU-harmonized definition of the terms “vegetarian” and “vegan” and no specific requirements for the labeling of plant-based meat and dairy alternatives.

In July 2017, the European Court of Justice (ECJ) ruled that plant-based products cannot be labeled with dairy names such as “cheese,” “butter” or “milk”. The ECJ based [its ruling](#) on [Regulation 1308/2013](#), which defines definitions and designations that may only be used for the marketing of dairy products. A list of exceptions for non-dairy products that may be labeled with reserved dairy names in each EU official language was established by [Commission Decision 2010/791](#). For more information, please see GAIN Report “[European Court Prohibits Use of Dairy Names for Non-Dairy Products](#).”

In July 2025, the European Commission published a [legislative proposal](#) to amend Regulation 1308/2013 in which the Commission proposes to protect meat-related terms. In the annex of the

proposal, the Commission lists the meat-related terms to be reserved for products derived exclusively from meat at all stages of marketing:

Beef	Ovine	Chop
Veal	Goat	Wing
Pork	Drumstick	Breast
Poultry	Tenderloin	Thigh
Chicken	Sirloin	Brisket
Turkey	Flank	Ribeye
Duck	Loin	T-bone
Goose	Ribs	Rump
Lamb	Shoulder	Bacon
Mutton	Shank	

Please note that this proposal still needs to be adopted by the co-legislators.

Section III. Packaging and Container Regulations

A. Size & Content

The maximum tolerable error between the actual content weight and the quantity indicated on the label, and methods to check this are fixed in [Council Directive 76/211/EEC](#). A small "e" of at least 3 mm on the label guarantees that the actual content corresponds to the quantity indicated. The size of the figures indicating the quantity depends on the nominal quantity:

- nominal quantity greater than 1000 g or 100 cl: at least 6 mm high
- greater than 200 g/20 cl but less than 1000 g/100 cl: at least 4 mm
- greater than 50 g/5 cl but less than 200 g/20 cl: at least 3 mm
- less than 50 g/2 cl: 2 mm. The quantity must be followed by the unit of measurement.

[Directive 2007/45/EC](#) abolished regulations on mandatory pack sizes at both EU and national levels. Under this Directive, only wine and spirits have defined package sizes, with the exception of *shochu* bottled in Japan. Mandatory nominal quantities for wines and spirits are set out in the Annex to Directive 2007/45/EC.

Detailed information on “Legal Metrology” is available on the European Commission’s website <http://ec.europa.eu/growth/single-market/goods/building-blocks/legal-metrology/>.

B. Packaging Sustainability Measures

Member States are required to take measures to reduce packaging waste and must introduce systems for reuse, recovery, and recycling of packaging materials. [Council Directive 94/62/EC](#) outlines measures aimed at limiting packaging waste and promoting recycling, re-use, and other forms of waste recovery.

In January 2025, the EU published the [Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation \(Regulation 2025/40\)](#). The Regulation introduces waste reduction targets and requires that all packaging placed on the EU market is recyclable and carries recycling labeling. The Regulation also introduces new requirements for packaging minimization, minimum recycled content in plastic packaging, and re-use targets for packaging. The Regulation bans certain packaging formats such as single-use plastic grouped packaging, single use plastic packaging for unprocessed fresh fruit and vegetables, and single use plastic packaging for condiments, preserves, sauces, coffee creamer, sugar, and seasoning in the hotel and restaurant sector.

For more information, please see GAIN Report: [European Union: European Union Finalizes New Rules for Packaging and Packaging Waste Reduction](#). Certain aspects of the Regulation will enter into force on August 12, 2026.

Since 2021, [Directive \(EU\) 2019/904](#) bans a list of products that include cutlery, plates, straws, beverage stirrers, food containers made of polystyrene and products made from oxo-degradable plastic.

Additionally, disposable plastic products, such as drinking cups, need to carry a label informing consumers of the presence of plastic in the product and the harmful effects on the environment. Harmonized marking specifications on single-use plastic product labels are laid down in [EU Regulation 2020/2151](#).



For more information, please see GAIN Report [European Union Single Use Plastics Directive Enters into Force](#).

In November 2022 a [Communication](#) on an EU policy framework on biobased, biodegradable, and compostable plastics, which, while nonbinding, will guide future EU work on this issue.

C. Materials in Contact with Foodstuffs

[European Parliament and Council Regulation 1935/2004](#) specifies the main requirements for all materials that come into contact with foodstuffs. It also sets out labeling and traceability requirements and the procedure for the authorization of substances through the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). Annex I to Regulation 1935/2004 lists the group of materials which may be covered by specific measures. More information can be found on EFSA's website: <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/topics/topic/food-contact-materials>

[Commission Regulation 2023/2006](#) lays down rules on good manufacturing practice (GMP) for the groups of materials and articles intended to come into contact with food listed in Annex I to Regulation 1935/2004.

Specific measures set out additional requirements and include lists of authorized substances and materials. To date, [specific directives](#) have been developed for [plastic materials \(Commission Regulation 10/2011\)](#), including a union list of authorized substances. There is an EU guidance document available on its [implementation](#).

Another specific measure in [Commission Regulation 450/2009](#) sets out definitions and authorization procedures for the use of active and intelligent materials and articles intended to come into contact with food.

There are also specific rules for [regenerated cellulose film \(Commission Directive 2007/42/EC\)](#) and [ceramics \(Council Directive 84/500/EC\)](#). In the case of ceramics, migration limits have been established for lead and cadmium. Materials must bear an indication "for food contact" or the symbol reproduced in Annex II to Regulation 1935/2004.

Member States are allowed to provisionally authorize the use of certain substances not listed in one of the specific directives. They may also restrict or temporarily prohibit the use of certain materials authorized by the specific directives for reasons of public health. When there is no specific EU legislation, Member States may establish national measures. U.S. exporters are advised to verify if Member State specific measures apply. A summary of EU and national legislation, as well as guidance documents and contact information with regard to the submission

of applications for authorization, can be downloaded from the European Commission website at http://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/chemical_safety/food_contact_materials_en.

On September 20 2022, the Commission published [Regulation \(EU\) 2022/1616](#) on recycled plastic materials and articles intended to come into contact with foods which entered into force in October 2022. The Regulation sets out rules applicable to the manufacturing process of plastic with recycled content to ensure that the decontamination process leads to the plastic being safe for FCM use. It requires EFSA to assess recycling processes to verify that they can produce safe plastics and that the processes are then authorized. Furthermore, it sets out rules applicable to quality control of the recycled plastics and includes a procedure that establishes whether novel recycling technologies are suitable to recycle plastic FCMs. More information can be found on the [Commission's webpage](#).

Bisphenol A: On December 31, 2024, the European Union published [Regulation 2024/3190](#) which bans the use of Bisphenol A (BPA) in food contact materials as of January 20, 2025. The Regulation includes phase-in periods which differ based on the type of packaging. For more information, please see GAIN Report: [European Union Bans Bisphenol A in Food Contact Materials](#).

Section IV. Food Additive Regulations

The EU's "Package on Food Improvement Agents" includes four Regulations: [Regulation 1331/2008](#): a common authorization procedure for food additives, food enzymes and food flavorings, [Regulation 1332/2008 on food enzymes](#), [Regulation 1333/2008 on food additives](#), and [Regulation 1334/2008 on flavorings](#). Only additives included in the EU's positive list may be used in food products marketed in the EU. Inclusion in the EU positive list is based on a risk assessment by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA).

[Commission Implementing Regulation 234/2011](#) explains in detail how applications to update the EU positive lists should be drafted (content, data requirements and presentation). EFSA then verifies the suitability of the data.

A. Additives (including colors and sweeteners)

Annex II to [Regulation 1333/2008 on food additives](#) lists all additives approved for use in foods and their conditions for use. The authorized uses of additives are listed according to the category of food to which they may be added. Annex I to regulation 1333/2008 lists the definitions of 27 different categories of food additives. Only additives included in the EU's positive list are authorized under specific conditions. An important difference from U.S. legislation is that the EU does not allow the use of flour bleaching agents chlorine, bromates and peroxides.

[Annex III to Regulation 1333/2008](#) contains a second list of food additives approved for use in food ingredients such as other food additives, food enzymes, food flavorings and nutrients. [Commission Regulation 231/2012](#) sets out specifications for food additives listed in Annexes II

and III. Member States may continue to prohibit the use of certain categories of food additives in traditional foods listed in Annex IV to regulation 1333/2008.

In 2016, EFSA completed a re-evaluation of EU-approved food colors. As a result, Annex V to Regulation 1333/2008 was amended to introduce mandatory labeling information for six food colors: Quinoline Yellow (E104), Sunset Yellow (E110), Ponceau 4R (E124), Tartrazine (E102), Azorubine/Carmoisine (E122) and Allura Red AC (E129). Foods containing these colors must be labeled “may have an adverse effect on activity and attention in children” (see also Section V – Labeling Requirements). [Commission Regulation 232/2012](#) lowered the limits for food colors Quinoline Yellow (E104), Sunset Yellow (E110) and Ponceau 4R (E124). Food color Red 2G (E 128) was removed from the EU’s positive list.

The Commission’s [food additives database](#) provides detailed information on the different food additives allowed in the EU. More information on the use of food additives can be obtained from the European Commission’s website at https://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/food_improvement_agents/additives_en.

Re-Evaluation Program

[Commission Regulation 257/2010](#) sets out a re-evaluation program for EFSA to assess food additives that were approved before Food Additives Regulation 1333/2008 entered into force. It was amended by [Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2021/148](#) to provide levels of transparency and confidentiality similar to procedures to update the Union List of Approved Food Additives.

[Commission Regulation \(EU\) 2022/63](#) bans the use of Titanium dioxide (TiO₂ also known as E171) as a food additive in food products.

On July 20, 2023, [Regulation \(EU\) 2023/1329 amending the specification for glycerol \(E 422\), polyglycerol esters of fatty acids \(E 475\) and polyglycerol polyricinoleate \(E 476\)](#) entered into force. [Regulation \(EU\) 2023/1428 amending the specification for mono- and diglycerides of fatty acids \(E 471\)](#) entered into force on July 30, 2023. Please see the [schematic representation of the transitional measures](#).

B. Flavorings

[Regulation 1334/2008](#) establishes a list of authorized flavoring substances, listed according to the category of food to which they may be added. It also sets specific rules for the use of the term “natural.” An [online database](#) allows consumers, food businesses, and food control authorities to verify which flavoring substances are authorized in food.

Smoke flavoring:

[Regulation 2065/2003](#) establishes a safety assessment and authorization procedure for smoke flavorings intended for use in or on foods. [Commission implementing Regulation 1321/2013](#) establishes the EU positive list of authorized smoke flavoring primary products for use in or on foods and/or to produce derived smoke flavorings.

In January 2024, following EFSA's scientific assessments, the Commission decided not to renew the authorizations for eight smoke flavorings: SF-001, SF-002, SF-003, SF-004, SF-005, SF-006, SF-007, SF-008, SF-009 and SF-010. [Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2024/2067](#) sets out different phase-out periods to give time for producers and operators to adapt to the new rules, following the deletion of eight smoke flavorings from the Union list. After a phase-out period, these flavorings will no longer be permitted for use in the EU:

- When used to replace traditional smoking (e.g. hams, fish, cheeses) the phase-out period is in place until July 1, 2029.
- For uses where the smoke flavoring is added for extra flavor (e.g. soups, chips, sauces), the phase-out period will be in place until July 1, 2026.

C. Enzymes

[Regulation 1332/2008](#) on food enzymes introduced harmonized rules for their scientific evaluation and authorization in the EU. Articles 10-13 of Regulation 1332/2008 set out specific labeling requirements. EFSA is currently evaluating industry applications for authorization of existing and new food enzymes. Until the Commission draws up an EU-list of authorized food enzymes, national rules will continue to apply. For detailed information see the European Commission's website

https://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/food_improvement_agents/enzymes/eu_rules_en.

D. Processing Aids

Processing aids are subject to Member States' national legislation. EU harmonized rules exist only for extraction solvents used in the production of foodstuffs and food ingredients ([Council Directive 2009/32/EC](#)).

Section V. Pesticides and Contaminants

A. Pesticides

[European Parliament and Council Regulation 1107/2009](#) sets out rules for the authorization of plant protection products (PPPs). PPPs (also referred to as 'pesticides') contain at least one approved active substance. Only PPPs containing active substances included in the list of approved active substances as established in [Commission Implementing Regulation 540/2011](#) may be authorized for use in the EU. Before any PPP can be placed on the market or used, it must be authorized in the relevant Member State(s). According to Annex I of Regulation 1107/2009, the EU is divided in three different zones. Once a Member State approves the PPP, it can be mutually recognized and thus authorized within the EU. Exporters can look up specific details on PPPs approved for use in a certain Member State in the [EU pesticide database](#) or check the relevant Member State FAIRS report. Maximum Residue Levels (MRLs) for substances that are not on the EU positive list will be set at a default level of 0.01 mg/kg. The legislation allows

exporters to request an "import tolerance" for active substances not yet evaluated or in use in the EU.

[Directive 2009/128](#) on the Sustainable Use of Pesticides (SUD) is also part of the so-called Pesticides Package, which is currently under revision. The European Commission adopted a proposal in June 2022 for a new Regulation on the Sustainable Use of Plant Protection Products (SUR), including EU wide targets to reduce by 50 percent the use and risk of chemical pesticides by 2030. The SUR was proposed as part of the EU's flagship Farm to Fork strategy but was withdrawn in February 2024. The Commission's 2009 directive on the sustainable use of pesticides will remain in place for the foreseeable future.

The European Commission is also considering adding environmental factors into the MRL and import tolerance (IT) setting process in its effort to enhance agricultural sustainability. These non-science-based targets and practices are problematic, and they could potentially lead to additional negative implications for U.S. agricultural trade. For more information see the European Commission website: [Sustainable use of pesticides \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/pesticides/sustainable_use_of_pesticides_en)

1. Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs): Regulation 396/2005

[European Parliament and Council Regulation 396/2005](#) harmonizes all MRLs in the EU on food or feed of plant and animal origin. Pesticide MRLs for processed or composite products are based on the MRLs of the raw agricultural ingredients. A general default MRL of 0.01 mg/kg applies where a pesticide is not specifically mentioned.

See the European Commission's website at https://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/pesticides/max_residue_levels_en for the latest updates.

For a list of authorized active substances or pesticide-MRL combinations, see the European Commission's [online database](#).

In 2016, the European Commission notified a document to the WTO explaining its [on-going review of MRLs \(last updated July 2, 2021\)](#) in the EU to non-EU countries. The information submitted by the EU provided details about, explaining the on-going process in the European Union to review the current maximum residue levels (MRLs) for pesticides under Article 12 of Regulation 396/2005 and how non-EU countries can actively contribute to the reviewing process. Article 12 of Regulation 396/2005 provides for a mechanism to review the existing maximum residue levels (MRLs) of all approved and certain non-approved pesticides. This review process has been on-going since 2008. It also includes references to the EFSA progress report for the Article 12 review of MRLs ([last updated July 1, 2025](#)).

2. Early Alert System for Active Substances and MRLs Under Review

The EU early alert system provides information on ongoing and upcoming reviews for active substances and MRLs that are of interest to U.S. stakeholders. The information presented in this document provides interested stakeholders with advance notice of which active ingredients are under review for renewal of approval in the EU and highlights which substances may be

restricted or not renewed for approval. This list is not all-inclusive and other substances and MRLs may be undergoing review as well.

3. Import Tolerances

If there is no EU legislation in place in the importing Member State, then the exporter can seek to obtain an "import tolerance" for active substances that have not been evaluated or used in Europe before. Applications for import tolerances must be submitted to the “Rapporteur Member State” (RMS). The Commission assigns a Member State if no RMS exists. The RMS-reviewed dossiers are evaluated by EFSA before being forwarded to the Commission. All MRLs, including import tolerances, have applied EU-wide since September 2008. The application form for an import tolerance can be found [here](#).

4. Official Controls

Harmonized sampling methods are established for the official control of residues in and on products of plant and animal origin by [Commission Directive 2002/63/EC](#). [Commission Implementing Regulation 2025/854](#) outlines the latest version of the coordinated multi annual control program of the EU for pesticides residues which requires Member States to take and analyze samples for product and pesticide residue combinations in food of plant and animal origin. Annex I to the Regulation sets out the pesticide and product combinations to be monitored. Annex II sets out the number of samples that need to be taken for each combination. Member States must submit results of the sample tests to the EU by August 31, 2027, 2028, and 2029 for samples tested in 2026, 2027, and 2028 respectively.

Implementing Regulation 2025/854 repeals [Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2024/989](#), which will continue to apply regarding samples tested in 2025 until September 1, 2026. For more information see the European Commission website:
https://ec.europa.eu/food/plants/pesticides/maximum-residue-levels/enforcement_en.

B. Contaminants

1. Maximum Levels

EU-wide harmonized maximum levels for contaminants are set in the Annex of [Commission Regulation \(EU\) 2023/915](#). The Annex this regulation includes maximum levels for:

- Mycotoxins
 - Aflatoxins
 - Ochratoxin A
 - Patulin
 - Deoxynivalenol
 - Zearalenone
 - Fumonisin
 - Citrinin

- Ergot sclerotia and ergot alkaloids
 - T-2 and HT-2 toxins
- Plant toxins
 - Erucic acid, including erucic acid bound in fat
 - Tropane alkaloids
 - Hydrocyanic acid, including hydrocyanic acid bound in cyanogenic glycosides
 - Pyrrolizidine alkaloids
 - Opium alkaloids
 - Delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (Δ9-THC) equivalents
- Metals and other elements
 - Lead
 - Cadmium
 - Mercury
 - Arsenic
 - Tin (inorganic)
 - Nickel
- Halogenated persistent organic pollutants
 - Dioxins and PCBs
 - Perfluoroalkyl substances
- Processing contaminants
 - Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs)
 - 3-monochloropropane-1,2-diol (3-MCPD)
 - Sum of 3-monochloropropanediol (3-MCPD) and 3-MCPD fatty acid esters, expressed as 3-MCPD
 - Glycidyl fatty acid esters, expressed as glycidol
- Other contaminants
 - Nitrates
 - Melamine
 - Perchlorate

In 2017, the EU adopted [Regulation 2017/2158](#) establishing benchmark levels to reduce the presence of acrylamide in food. This regulation requires that food business operators apply mandatory measures to reduce the presence of acrylamide, proportionate to the size and nature of their establishment. In November 2019, the Commission adopted [Recommendation 2019/1888](#) recommending that competent authorities in the Member States regularly monitor the presence of acrylamide and its levels in food, in particular in the food listed in the Annex of this Recommendation. In recent years, the Commission has consulted with stakeholders about the acrylamide issue with the view of initiating discussions on additional measures.

2. Methods of Sampling and Analysis for Official Controls on Contaminants

The following regulations concern the sampling methods and methods of analysis for the official controls of the levels of different contaminants. These regulations concern the methods of sampling and the sample preparation as well as the performance criteria for the methods of analysis:

- Nitrates: [Commission Regulation 1882/2006](#)

- Mycotoxins: [Commission Implementing Regulation 2023/2782](#)
- Dioxins: [Commission Regulation 2017/644](#)
- Trace elements and Processing Contaminants: [Commission Regulation 333/2007](#)
- Plant toxins: [Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2023/2783](#)
- Perfluoroalkyl substances: [Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2022/1428](#)
- Nickel: [Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2024/1045](#)

3. Official Aflatoxin Controls on U.S. Products

In April 2015, the EU approved the pre-export checks (PEC) program for U.S. almonds. U.S. almonds were included in the Annex to [Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2015/949](#) which lists all EU-approved pre-export check programs. The acceptance of the U.S. program reflects the EU's recognition of aflatoxin controls performed at U.S. origin in line with Article 73 of [Regulation \(EU\) 2017/625 of the European Parliament and of the Council](#) (the Official Controls Regulation-OCR). This recognition is still sometimes referred to as “Article 24 recognition”, which was the relevant article in Regulation 882/2004 that was superseded by the OCR. The USDA Agricultural Marketing Service began issuing PEC almond certificates on August 1, 2015.

On July 25, 2019, U.S. peanuts were included in the list of products/origins subject to increased import controls. The mandatory testing level for U.S. peanuts and derived products is laid out in [Commission Implementing Regulation 2019/1793](#). Member States must now test 20 percent of all incoming peanut shipments. The regulation does not impose any requirements on U.S. exporters. [Commission Implementing Regulation 2019/1793](#) also requires aflatoxin controls on 30 percent of consignments of pistachios and derived products originating in the United States but transshipped through Türkiye to the EU. The testing rates specified in [Commission Implementing Regulation 2019/1793](#) are revised semiannually.

For additional information on aflatoxin testing and certification performed in the United States prior to export to the EU, see:

- <http://www.ams.usda.gov/services/lab-testing/aflatoxin>
- [PEC Program Manual](#)
- [Pistachio Export Aflatoxin Reporting \(PEAR\) Program](#)
- [APC Sheller MOU and Peanut Export Program \(PEP\)](#)

4. Pharmacologically Active Substances

The list of MRLs for residues of pharmacologically active substances in products of animal origin is published in the Annex to [Regulation \(EU\) 37/2010](#). The substances listed in Table 2 of this Annex must not be used in animals from which products for human consumption are destined for the EU market.

5. Residues Control Plans for Animals and Animal Products

To be able to export food of animal origin and composite products to the EU, an exporting country must submit a plan setting out its guarantees on the monitoring of the groups of residues

of pesticides, contaminants, and pharmacologically active substances. Furthermore, a split system must be in place guaranteeing that animals have not been treated with growth promotants if their products will be exported to the EU. The prohibition on the use of hormones in meat production itself is addressed in [Council Directive 96/22/EC](#). A country is only eligible to export food of animal origin to the EU if it has received approval from the Commission for the residue plans it submits on a yearly basis to the Commission for the various animal species of interest. Approvals are published in Annex 1 to [Regulation \(EU\) 2021/405](#).

For additional information on how to export food of animal origin to the EU, please see the EU's [Guidance on EU requirements for imports of products of animal origin – Monitoring for residues of veterinary medicines, pesticides and contaminants](#).

Section VI. Other Requirements, Regulations, and Registration Measures

A. Certification and Documentation Requirements

An overview of all U.S. authorities that issue the legally required certificates for export to the EU is available on our website at <https://usda-eu.org/import-controls/u-s-agencies-providing-eu-certificates/>. The websites of each of those authorities provide detailed and up-to-date information on the specific product certificates under their legal authority.

Following an update of the EU's Animal Health Law, which entered into force on April 21, 2021, the EU has updated all required certificates for products of animal origin and for composite products (see below). Models of the new certificates for foods of animal origin were published by the EU and implemented by U.S. agencies. Several amendments to the new certificates were made since their first publication. They are available from [Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) No 2020/2235](#).

Composite Products:

[Regulation \(EU\) 2022/2292](#) defines composite products as food containing both products of plant origin and processed products of animal origin. Composite products include a wide variety of products, including cheesecakes, high protein food supplements, pizza, and lasagnas. U.S. exports of “composite products” continue to be restricted by burdensome certification requirements.

Exporters should be aware that in parallel with the aforementioned changes to the attestations on animal health in the composite product certificate, the EU also made changes to the categories of composite products that require U.S. Government-issued health certificates. The system is no longer based on the percentage of ingredients of animal product in the final product, as was the case until April 21, 2021. The current system that went into effect on April 21, 2021 establishes three categories of composite products: (1) non-shelf stable composite products, (2) shelf stable composite products that contain meat products and (3) shelf stable composite products that do not contain meat products. All processed products of animal origin have to be sourced from EU approved establishments. The EU continues to require composite product certificates for all non-shelf stable products and for shelf stable composite products with a meat ingredient. A private

company attestation is required for shelf stable products not containing meat. It should be noted that this attestation is not issued by the U.S. Government but has to be signed by the representative of the importing company in the EU. The EU approved establishment of production number of the processed animal product must be stated both on the composite certificate and on the private attestation.

USDA's Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) will issue EU composite product certificates for composite products produced at FSIS-regulated facilities and bearing the USDA mark of inspection. AMS Dairy Program will issue the EU composite product certificates for composite products NOT produced in an FSIS-regulated facility and not bearing the USDA mark of inspection, regardless of whether dairy is an ingredient in the composite product. The new EU requirements for composite products will impact stakeholders who have not been required to obtain an export certificate from AMS Dairy Program in the past. Prior to requesting a certificate from AMS Dairy Program, a new customer will need to establish a USDA level 2 e-authentication account. Go to [How to Apply for an AMS Dairy or Composite Product Export Certificate](#) for more information.

More information on the import conditions for composite products is available on the European Commission's [website](#). This website also includes a compilation of [Questions & Answers](#) intended to clarify a multitude of practical questions that have been raised on the new rules.

B. Facility Registration

The EU approves establishments to ship products of animal origin based on submissions from U.S. Government agencies. Only products processed in approved establishments may enter the EU. Third country lists per sector and per country are published on the European Commission's website

<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/tracesnt/directory/listing/establishment/publication/index#!/search>

C. Inspections

The [Official Controls Regulation \(EU\) 2017/625](#) sets common rules for official controls to ensure the correct application of food and feed law, rules on animal health and welfare, plant health and plant protection products (Official Controls Regulation - OCR). The main elements of this regulation went into effect on Dec 14, 2019.

The list of animal origin products subject to official controls at border posts was updated in [Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2021/632](#). Composite products listed in [Commission Delegated Regulation 2021/630](#) are exempted from checks at the border because of the low risk they present. The list includes products such as biscuits, confectionary and food supplements. All consignments to be presented at the border control posts have to undergo documentary checks. Identity and physical checks are carried out at a frequency depending on the risk linked to the specific animals or goods. The criteria to determine and modify the frequency of rates are established by the Commission.

The EU also maintains a list of food and feed of non-animal origin from certain third countries subject to a specified level of physical controls for certain contaminants. This list is published in

[Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2019/1793](#) and is regularly reviewed to account for the latest non-compliance information.

Member State authorities are responsible for carrying out inspections on a regular basis and in cases where non-compliance is suspected. Products can be checked at import or at all further stages of marketing. Infringements of EU food and feed legislation are reported through the Rapid Alert System on Food and Feeds (RASFF). The rapid alert system is a network of Member State authorities managed by the European Commission. The database with RASFF notifications is accessible via the [RASFF portal](#). Information published on this website provides several notification details such as the reason for the non-compliance and the origin of the product but does not include company information. Repeated non-compliance may lead to suspension of imports or special import conditions for products from the third country concerned, applicable on the entire EU territory.

Criteria for laboratories conducting food controls have been harmonized, but it is the Member States' responsibility to designate laboratories that are allowed to perform analyses.

Inspection fees for non-animal origin products differ from one Member State to another. Measures in case of non-compliance also vary widely, ranging from non-admittance of a product to forced destruction. This may be a decisive factor in choosing a port of entry for products where problems are more likely.

Product samples destined for human consumption have to comply with the food regulations applicable in the EU. In order to send product samples to commercial trade shows, it is advised to contact the FAS office in the Member State where the trade show will take place. Please also contact our Member State FAS office or the EU APHIS office (Xavier.Mennig@usda.gov) for export of food samples for technical or research purposes.

D. Product Registration

U.S. exporters should be aware that certain products and ingredients may fall within the scope of the Novel Foods Regulation and need a pre-market authorization. Detailed information is provided in Section VII "Other Specific Standards."

Certain foods, such as total diet replacements for weight control, fall within the scope of the EU's [Foods for Specific Groups Regulation 609/2013](#) and must be notified to the competent authority of the Member State where the food is marketed.

Exporters of **vitamin-enriched foods** or **nutritional supplements** are especially advised to check for the existence of specific Member State registration or notification requirements. A list of the competent Member State authorities is available on the European Commission's website ([contact points](#)). More information is also available at: https://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/labelling_nutrition/vitamins_minerals_en.

Section VII. Other Specific Standards

A. Novel Foods

In the EU, [Regulation 2015/2283](#) defines novel food as food that has not been consumed to a significant degree in the EU before May 15, 1997 **AND** falling within at least one of the categories listed in Article 3 of the regulation (e.g. [cranberry extract powder](#)). It can be a newly developed, innovative food resulting from new production techniques (e.g. nanotechnology) as well as a traditional - but unknown to EU consumers - food from a non-EU country (e.g. noni juice). A [guidance document](#) on “human consumption to a significant degree” is available on the European Commission’s website

The novel food regulation does not apply to GMOs, additives, enzymes, flavorings and extraction solvents.

Authorization procedure: Novel foods require a pre-market authorization. Applications for authorization must be submitted to the European Commission via an [e-submission system](#). The Commission may request the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) to carry out a risk assessment. An [overview of the different steps](#) of the authorization procedure is available on EFSA’s website. [Commission Implementing Regulation 2017/2469](#) sets out administrative and scientific requirements for novel food applications. Authorizations are generic and no longer applicant linked as was the case under the previous rules.

EU Novel Food List: [Commission Implementing Regulation 2017/2470](#) establishes a list of novel foods authorized in the EU. Entries in the list include specifications, conditions of use, additional labeling requirements and post-monitoring requirements. This Implementing Regulation is amended every time a new novel food is authorized, please make sure to reference the latest version.

Novel Food Status: Food business operators are responsible for verifying whether the food they intend to market in the EU is novel or not. The novel food regulation 2015/2283 provides for a consultation process when the status of a food or food ingredient is unsure. [Commission Implementing Regulation 2018/456](#) lists the procedural steps that food business operators must follow to consult with the competent authority of the Member State where they first intend to market their product. For detailed information see [GAIN report “New EU Law on Novel Food Status Determination.”](#)

Engineered nanomaterials: Engineered nanomaterials require a novel food authorization before being used in food.

Food from clones: Until separate legislation on cloning is adopted, food from clones but not offspring falls within the scope of the Novel Food regulation.

Traditional food from non-EU countries: Novel Food regulation 2015/2283 introduces a faster notification and simplified assessment procedure for traditional foods with a demonstrated history of safe food use from non-EU countries. Foods from non-EU countries which are considered novel foods will only qualify as “traditional foods” if they are derived from primary

production. For example, juice derived from an exotic fruit not consumed in the EU before May 15, 1997 but part of a regular diet in a non-EU country, would qualify as a ‘traditional food.’” [Commission Implementing Regulation 2017/2468](#) sets out administrative and scientific requirements for the notification of traditional foods falling within the scope of the Novel Food regulation.

The Commission and stakeholders also published guidance documents about the new authorization procedures for business operators:

- [e-submission user guide](#)
- [Administrative guidance on the submission of applications for authorization of a novel food pursuant to Article 10 of the Novel Food Regulation](#)
- [Guidance on the preparation and presentation of an application for authorization of a novel food in the context of the Novel Food Regulation](#)
- [Guidance on the preparation and presentation of the notification and application for authorization of traditional foods from third countries in the context of the Novel Food Regulation](#)
- [Guidance on the scientific requirements for an application for authorization of a novel food \(NEW 2024\)](#)
- [European Commission: Questions and Answers: Novel Food Regulation](#)
- [FoodDrinkEurope, EU Specialty Food Ingredients, and Food Supplements Europe: Guidance for food business operators on the verification of the status of a new food under the new novel foods regulation 2015/2283](#)

U.S. Exporters are advised to verify the legal status of novel food ingredients

B. Food from Animal Clones

Food derived from cloned animals currently falls within the scope of the [Novel Food Regulation 2015/2283](#). Under this regulation, food produced by “new breeding practices” needs a pre-market approval based on a risk assessment.

C. Nanotechnology

Currently, EU legislation that explicitly addresses nanomaterials in food includes the following Regulations:

Food Information to Consumers (FIC): The presence of engineered nanomaterials in food products must be clearly indicated on the label. The name of such ingredients must be followed by the word “nano” in brackets (Art. 18 of Regulation 1169/2011).

Novel Food Regulation: Novel Food Regulation 2015/2283 defines engineered nanomaterials as “any intentionally produced material that has one or more dimensions of the order of 100 nm or less or that is composed of discrete functional parts, either internally or at the surface, many of which have one or more dimensions of the order of 100 nm or less, including structures,

agglomerates or aggregates, which may have a size above the order of 100 nm but retain properties that are characteristic of the nanoscale” (Article 3.2.f).

Food Additives: [Regulation 1333/2008](#) states that when “there is a significant change in the production methods or in the starting materials used” for food additives already on the Community list of approved food additives, “or there is a change in particle size, for example through nanotechnology, the food additive prepared by those new methods or materials shall be considered as a different additive and a new entry in the Community lists or a change in the specifications shall be required before it can be placed on the market.”

Food Contact materials [Regulation 450/2009 on active and intelligent packaging](#) states that “new technologies to engineer substances with different chemical and physical properties than the same substances at a larger scale, for example nanoparticles, should be assessed at a case-by-case basis as regards their risk until more information is known about such new technology.”

For more information on nanotechnology in the EU see:

- European Food Safety Authority: [New guidance on nanotechnologies in food and feed](#)
- EU Science Hub: <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/research-topic/nanotechnology>

D. Fortified Foods

[Regulation 1925/2006](#) established an EU-wide regulatory framework for the addition of vitamins and minerals and of certain other substances such as herbal extracts to foods. It lists the vitamins and minerals that may be added to foods and sets criteria for setting maximum and minimum levels. A European Commission proposal setting harmonized maximum and minimum permitted levels of vitamins and minerals in foods and food supplements is already more than ten years overdue (original deadline set by Regulation 1925/2006 was January 2009).

Vitamins and minerals must be expressed as a percentage of the “Reference Intakes” listed in Annex III to the [Regulation 1169/2011](#) (see also Section V “Nutrition Declaration.”) The use of vitamins and minerals not included in the annexes to Regulation 1925/2006 is not allowed. A “Community Register” on the addition of vitamins and minerals and of certain other substances is available on the [European Commission’s website](#).

More information can be found on the European Commission’s website:
https://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/labelling_nutrition/vitamins_minerals_en

Maximum permitted levels of vitamins and minerals in foods and food supplements are not EU harmonized.

E. Dietetic Foods

[Regulation 609/2013](#) sets out compositional and labeling rules for foods for specific nutritional uses. Its scope is limited to infant formula and follow-on formula, processed cereal-based food

and baby food, food for special medical purposes and total diet replacement for weight control. Dietetic foods, e.g. gluten-free foods, not covered by Regulation 609/2013 are considered regular foods and must comply with the rules set out [in Food Information to Consumers regulation 1169/2011](#), [Regulation 1925/2006](#) on the addition of vitamins and minerals to food, and with [Regulation 1924/2006](#) on nutrition and health claims.

[Commission Delegated Regulation 2016/128](#) sets out specific requirements for food for special medical purposes (FSMPs).

[Commission Delegated Regulation 2016/127](#) sets out specific compositional and information requirements for infant-formula and follow-on formula.

[Commission Delegated Regulation 2018/561](#) details the protein requirements for follow-on formula.

[Commission Delegated Regulation 2019/828](#) sets out vitamin D requirements for infant formula and erucic acid requirements for infant formula and follow-on formula.

[Commission Delegated Regulation 2017/1798](#) sets out new rules for “total diet replacements for weight control”. The new rules became applicable on October 27, 2022. For detailed information see [GAIN report “The Skinny on New EU Rules for Weight Loss Products.”](#)

[Commission Regulation 2018/97](#) bans the use of artificial sweeteners in fine bakery products. For more information see [GAIN report “EU bans use of artificial sweeteners in dietetic bakery products.”](#)

Rules on the reduction of acrylamide levels in food are set out in [Commission Regulation 2017/2158](#). These rules also apply to baby food and processed cereal-based food intended for infants and young children.

U.S. Exporters of dietetic products should verify whether the products fall within the scope of Regulation 609/2013.

F. Food Supplements

[EU Directive 2002/46/EC](#) only sets out EU-harmonized rules on labeling and vitamins and minerals that may be used in food supplements. Key aspects in the marketing of food supplements such as minimum and maximum levels of vitamins and minerals or the use of other substances such as botanical extracts remain the competence of the Member States. Directive 2002/46 defines food supplements as food which means that all exports of food supplements must not only comply with Directive 2002/46 but also with horizontal rules applicable to all foods including rules on additives, novel foods, hygiene, contaminants and GMOs.

U.S. exporters of whey protein supplements should work with their importers to determine whether their product should be accompanied by a certificate for processed dairy products or one

for composite products. For more information see [GAIN report “Certification and Labeling of EU Whey Protein Supplements.”](#)

Marketing food supplements in the EU is a very complex issue. [GAIN report “Exporting Food Supplements to the EU”](#) provides detailed information on marketing food supplements in the EU.

Guidance documents:

- [European Commission: The application of the Mutual Recognition Regulation to food supplements](#)
- [FoodSupplementsEurope: Guidelines on How to Apply the New Mutual Recognition Regulation \(EU\) 2019/515 to Food Supplements in the EU](#)

G. Irradiated Foodstuffs

Harmonization of EU rules on food irradiation has been slow and only a few products have so far received EU-wide approval. [Directive 1999/2/EC](#) outlines the marketing, labeling, import and control procedures and technical aspects of food irradiation. Irradiated foods or foods containing irradiated ingredients must be labeled "irradiated" or "treated with ionizing radiation." For more information see the European Commission's website: https://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/biological-safety/food-irradiation_en

H. Seafood

Detailed information on shipping seafood and fishery products to the EU is provided on the U.S. Department of Commerce's [website](#). Information on mandatory EU labeling requirements as well as reports on the feasibility of an EU eco-label can be found in the European Commission's Fisheries website https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/market/consumer-information_en.

I. Pet Food

In the EU, pet food is subject to feed marketing legislation and veterinary legislation. The EU's feed marketing legislation covers food for pets as well as feed for food-producing animals. The veterinary legislation covers products of animal origin and hay/straw as these products present a risk for spreading animal diseases. Pet food products containing an animal origin ingredient must be sourced from approved establishments and have to be accompanied by a veterinary certificate. All exports of U.S. pet food to the EU must comply with EU requirements including rules on labeling, hygiene, animal health, certification and the use of additives. [GAIN report “Exporting Pet Food to the European Union”](#) provides a detailed overview of EU legislation relating to imports of pet food.

[Regulation 767/2009](#) sets out rules for the labeling and marketing of feed and pet food. It covers feed materials, compound feed and medicated or dietetic feed for both food and non-food producing animals. Feed and pet food not complying with Regulation 767/2009 and with the provisions on feed additives laid down in [Regulation 1831/2003](#) are not be allowed on the EU market.

EU border inspection officials will verify the labels on imported pet food for compliance with EU requirements. Annex 4 to the [“Code of Good Labeling Practice for Pet Food,”](#) drafted by the European Pet Food Industry (FEDIAF) establishes a “check-list” that pet food manufacturers can use to verify compliance with EU labeling rules.

[Commission Regulation 68/2013](#) establishes a catalogue of feed materials. It enables operators to use more precise names and expressions for the feed they place on the market. The annex to the Catalogue contains three parts: A) general provision, B) glossary of processes and C) list of feed materials. The use of the Catalog is voluntary but where it is used all relevant provisions have to be complied with.

[Commission Recommendation 2011/25/EU](#) establishes guidelines for the distinction between feed materials, feed additives, biocidal products and veterinary medicinal products.

Medicated pet food is regulated by [Regulation 2019/4](#), which replaced Directive 90/167/EEC as of January 28, 2022. The new Regulation creates a new legal framework for manufacturing, placing on the market, and use of medicated pet food. More information is available on the Commission’s website: https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/health/veterinary-medicines-and-medicated-feed/medicated-feed-safe-and-controlled-oral_en

[Commission Regulation 2020/354](#) establishes a list of intended uses of feed intended for particular nutritional purposes. The Regulation updates the general conditions for feed intended for particular nutritional purposes and the list of intended uses. Amendments include essential nutritional characteristics and the labeling declarations. Feed that had been labelled before March 25, 2022, in accordance with the rules applicable before March 25, 2020 may continue to be placed on the EU market and used until the existing stocks are exhausted.

In October 2023, the European Union adopted [Regulation 2023/2419](#) on the labeling of organic pet food. Pet food can now be labeled with the EU organic production logo if 95 per cent of its agricultural ingredients are organic. The new rules make the EU organic production logo mandatory for prepacked organic pet food. Organic pet food labeled in accordance with national rules or private standards accepted by the Member States between January 1, 2022, and October 30, 2023, may be placed on the market until stocks are exhausted. For more information, please see [GAIN Report EU Adopts New Rules for Organic Pet Food](#).

For more information on animal nutrition, see the European Commission website at http://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/animal-feed_en.

J. Vegetarian and Vegan Foods, and Plant-Based Meat and/or Dairy Alternatives

The Food Information to Consumers (FIC) regulation 1169/2011 requires the European Commission to set out rules for the voluntary labeling of foods as “suitable for vegetarians and vegans.” To date, the Commission has not adopted an EU-harmonized definition of the terms “vegetarian” and “vegan.” In the absence of EU-harmonized rules, many food companies have started using the “European V-label,” a labeling scheme launched by umbrella organization the

European Vegetarian Union (EVU). For more information see EVU’s website at <http://v-label.eu/about-v-label>.

In July 2017, the European Court of Justice (ECJ) ruled that plant-based products cannot be labeled with dairy names such as “cheese,” “butter” or “milk”. The ECJ based [its ruling on Regulation 1308/2013](#) setting out definitions and designations that may only be used for the marketing of dairy products. A list of exceptions for non-dairy products that may be labeled with reserved dairy names was established by [Commission Decision 2010/791](#). For more information, please see GAIN Report “[European Court Prohibits Use of Dairy Names for Non-Dairy Products](#).” Please note that some Member States have passed national legislation that ban plant-based products from using descriptors commonly associated with meat and/or dairy products.

In July 2025, the European Commission published a [legislative proposal](#) to amend Regulation 1308/2013 in which the Commission proposes to protect meat-related terms. Please note that this proposal still needs to be adopted by the co-legislators. For more information, see Section II of this report.

Section VIII. Trademarks, Brand Names and Intellectual Property Rights

A. Trademarks

In the EU, trademarks can be registered at the national, regional or EU level. Trademarks registered at the national level are protected in one EU Member State. Applications must be submitted directly to the relevant national intellectual property (IP) office ([full list of national offices](#)). Currently, the only regional-level IP office in the EU is the Benelux Office, which registers trademarks for three Member States: Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. Applications for the protection of a trademark in all EU Member States must be submitted to the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO). Full details on the registration process are available on the [EUIPO website](#).

Rules on the protection of trademarks in the EU are set in EU [Directive 2015/2436](#). [Commission Implementing Regulation 2018/626](#) sets out detailed rules on application procedures. [Commission Delegated Regulation 2018/625](#) sets out procedural rules on opposition and revocation of EU trademarks.

B. Protected Geographical Indications

Several food product names considered as generic in the U.S., such as feta, parmesan, and Parma ham, are protected under EU law. As part of the EU’s system of intellectual property rights, names of products registered as geographical indications (GIs) are legally protected against imitation and misuse within the EU and in non-EU countries where a specific protection agreement has been signed.

On May 13, 2024, the new [Regulation 2024/1143](#) on Geographical Indications for Wine, Spirit Drinks, and Agricultural Products, as well as Traditional Specialties Guaranteed and Optional Quality Terms for Agricultural Products entered into force. This Regulation establishes rules on optional quality terms such as “mountain product” and regulates three EU-wide quality labeling

schemes. It covers the “Protected Designation of Origin” (PDO) scheme, the “Protected Geographical Indication” (PGI) scheme and the “Traditional Specialties Guaranteed” (TSG) scheme. Registration under the different schemes is also open to non-EU countries. The new Regulation improves the protection of GIs used as an ingredient in a processed product and of GI products sold online. The new Regulation also strengthens the protection of GI names in the domain name system.

Wines and spirits are also covered by specific legislation: [Commission Regulation 2019/33](#) and [Commission Regulation 2019/34](#).

In 2019, the EU became a member to the “Geneva Act of the Lisbon Agreement on Appellations of Origin and Geographical Indications.” This membership enables the EU to obtain protection for its GIs in all [30 contracting parties](#) to the Lisbon Agreement. Practical details on the implementation of the Lisbon Agreement in the EU are laid in [Regulation 2019/1753](#). For more information see [GAIN report “EU Prepares to Join Lisbon Agreement on Geographical Indications.”](#)

The [European Commission’s website](#) provides guidance on how to register a PDO/PGI or how to object to a PDO/PGI proposed for registration. [eAmbrosia](#) is the EU’s legal register of the names of agricultural products and foodstuffs, wine, and spirit drinks that are registered and protected across the EU.

“Protected Designation of Origin” (PDO) is defined as follows:

- Originating in a specific place, region or, in exceptional cases, country;
- Whose quality or characteristics are essentially or exclusively due to a particular geographical environment with its inherent natural and human factors;
- The production steps of which all take place in the defined geographical area.

Example of a PDO: Feta

“Protected Geographical Indication” (PGI) is defined as follows:

- Originating in a specific place, region or country;
- Whose given quality, reputation, or other characteristic is essentially attributable to its geographical origin;
- At least one of the production steps takes place in the defined geographical area.

Example of a PGI: Irish Whiskey

“Traditional Specialties Guaranteed” (TSG):

The TSG quality label is used to communicate the value-added characteristics of traditional recipes and traditional production methods to consumers. “Traditional” is defined as a proven usage of at least 30 years. Unlike the PDO and PGI schemes, the geographical origin of a product is irrelevant under the TSG scheme. TSGs are included in a Community Register with

name reservation. Only products complying with the TSG specifications can use the registered name.

Example of a TSG: Pizza Napoletana (Naples-style pizza)

Detailed information on the TSG scheme is available in [GAIN report “The EU’s Traditional Specialties Guaranteed Scheme Explained”](#).

Optional Quality Terms:

Regulation 2024/1143 sets out criteria for the use of optional quality terms. The European Commission is empowered to reserve new terms or amend the conditions of use of existing terms.

Example of an optional quality term: Mountain Product

Registration of GIs for Spirit Beverages

[Regulation 2019/787](#) updates the definitions of various spirits beverage categories. It also clarifies and changes the rules on the protection of GIs, including registration. The GI protects the name of a spirit drink originating in a country, region or locality where the product’s particular quality, reputation or other characteristic is essentially attributable to its geographical origin. For most products, at least one of the stages of distillation or preparation shall take place in the region. However, raw products do not need to come from the region.

Section IX. Import Procedures

A. Union Customs Code

The “Union Customs Code” (UCC) established in [Regulation 952/2013](#) is the framework regulation on rules and procedures for customs throughout the EU. [Commission Delegated Regulation 2015/2446](#) and [Commission Implementing Regulation 2015/2447](#) outline detailed rules for the implementation of certain provision of the UCC, including Binding Tariff Information and origin of goods.

The Code lists all the customs procedures applicable to the trade in goods with third countries. Import duties are determined by the tariff classification of goods and by the customs value. With the implementation of the Code, the Member States of the European Union form a customs union, which means that all the Member States apply the same tariff on goods imported from outside the EU. Once an imported good is cleared in one Member State, it can move freely throughout the EU. All traders involved in customs transactions must provide EU customs authorities with security data on goods before they are imported into the EU. The type of security data requested varies according to the means of transport and can include a description of the goods, information on the consignor or exporter, the route of the goods and any potential hazards. The time limits for submitting advance security data also vary according to the means of transport. A [series of guidance documents on the UCC](#) is available on DG Taxation and Customs

Union (TAXUD)’s website. A [complete overview of the EU’s UCC](#) is available on the European Commission’s DG TAXUD website.

In 2017, the European Commission launched the “[Customs Decisions System](#),” a new pan-EU electronic system that makes it easier for traders to get permission to import goods into the EU. Importers in all the Member States are able to use the same portal and exchange applications between all the relevant customs authorities.

In May 2023, the European Commission released [a proposal](#) to reform the UCC. The reform aims to simplify and rationalize customs reporting requirements for traders, for example by reducing the time needed to complete import processes and by providing one single EU interface and facilitating data re-use. More information about the proposal can be found on the [Commission's website](#).

B. Customs Clearance

The European Commission’s webpage [Access2Markets database](#) provides a complete overview of documents needed for customs clearance such as:

- Tariffs
- Rules of origin
- Taxes and additional duties
- Import procedures and formalities
- Product requirements
- Trade barriers
- Trade flow statistics

C. Import Duties

The EU uses the Combined Nomenclature (CN) for the customs classification of goods. The CN eight-digit code numbers are based on the Harmonized System (HS) nomenclature: the first six digits refer to the HS headings; the two following digits represent the CN subheadings. The EU’s [on-line “TARIC” customs database](#) can be consulted to look up commodity codes and relevant import duties. TARIC is a multilingual database covering all measures relating to tariff and trade legislation. The [EU’s revised 2025 Tariff Schedule](#) was published on January 1, 2025 in the Official Journal. A list of Member State customs authorities can be found at https://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/national-customs-websites_en.

Business operators can obtain Binding Tariff Information (BTI) from a Member State’s customs authority in order to get the proper product classification and relevant import duty. A BTI decision is legally binding in all the Member States. A BTI is valid for three years. U.S. exporters should be aware that the UCC makes the declaration of a BTI decision mandatory when completing customs formalities. All BTI decisions issued by the Member States’ customs authorities are entered into an [EBTI-database](#). All business operators must submit all new applications electronically. More information is available on the [EC’s website](#). The customs value of a good is the Cost, Insurance, and Freight (CIF) price at the European border derived

from the product price found on the invoice and the transportation costs reflected in the airway bill or the bill of lading.

[Commission Regulation 900/2008](#) lays down analytical methods and other technical provisions to calculate the starch/glucose and sucrose/invert sugar/isoglucose content in processed products. These calculations are used to determine the additional duties on flour and sugar in processed products.

Goods are only released after payment of the import duty and other taxes that may be due.

Duties payable on goods imported into the EU may include:

- Import duty (expressed as ad valorem tariffs or specific tariffs per unit weight/volume/number of pieces) – EU harmonized
- Additional duties on flour and sugar (processed products) – EU harmonized
- Entry price (fruit and vegetables) – EU harmonized
- Environmental taxes - not harmonized
- Inspection fees - not harmonized
- Value Added Tax (VAT) - not harmonized
- Excise duties (alcohol and tobacco) - not harmonized

A list of VAT rates applicable in the different Member States can be found at:

https://europa.eu/youreurope/business/taxation/vat/vat-rules-rates/index_en.htm.

D. Excise Duty for Alcoholic Products

[Directive \(EU\) 2020/262](#) sets out common definitions of alcoholic products that are subject to excise duty and ensures that all Member States treat the same products in the same way. It outlines general arrangements for goods subject to excise duty, including those around production, storage, and movement of excise goods across EU territory. The excise legislation also establishes the minimum rates of tax that must be applied for each category, but Member States can decide to set rates at a higher level. As of February 13, 2023, all excise duty transactions in the EU also became fully electronic.

The new Directive increases the threshold for lower strength beer that can benefit from reduced excise duty rates. It extends the special regime of reduced excise duty rates for small beer and ethyl alcohol producers to producers of other fermented beverages, such as cider. [Directive 2020/1151](#) also sets out the conditions for application of the exemption from excise duty rules for denatured alcohol, used for example in cleaning products. More information on excise duties for alcohol can be found on the [Commission's website](#).

A list of excise duties applicable on alcoholic beverages can be found at:

https://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/tedb/#/simple-search

Section X: Trade Facilitation

A. Advance Rulings

The customs duties that must be paid upon import of a product depend on the tariff classification applicable to the product. The Binding Tariff Information (BTI) system was introduced to ensure legal certainty for business operators when calculating import duties. All currently valid BTI decisions are accessible in the [public BTI database](#). Detailed information on the BTI system can be found at the European Commission's website:

https://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/business/calculation-customs-duties/what-is-common-customs-tariff/binding-tariff-information-bti_en.

B. Pre-Clearance Program

The Official Controls Regulation (OCR - [Regulation \(EU\) 2017/625](#)) provides the legal basis for the recognition of official controls in the country of origin of the goods. The OCR does not provide any legal basis for pre-clearance programs similar to the preclearance inspections conducted in foreign countries by APHIS personnel and funded by the exporters. Rather, Article 73 of the OCR provides for the approval of pre-export controls performed by third countries. Under this system, the EU approval specifies the competent authorities of the third country under the responsibility of which pre-export controls must be performed, the certificates to be used for export of these goods and the maximum frequency of official controls to be performed by the competent authorities of Member States at the entry of the consignments into the Union.

C. Electronic Certificates

The Official Controls Regulation (OCR - [Regulation \(EU\) 2017/625](#)) provides the legal basis for the general EU acceptance of electronic certificates using the EU's Integrated Management System for Official Controls (IMSOC). For plant products, all EU Member States are able to receive U.S. e-Phytos sent via the Hub created by the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC). For other commodities, currently no connection exists between IMSOC and the respective systems U.S. Government agencies use to issue electronic certificates. In absence of such a connection, paper certificates are required to satisfy the EU requirement for an original certificate with an ink signature.

D. Import Control Fee

The Official Controls Regulation (OCR - [Regulation \(EU\) 2017/625](#)) provides the legal basis for the financing of import controls. Mandatory fees are charged to operators for certain official controls, including on import controls of animals, products of animal origin, germinal products, animal by-products, composite products, hay and straw, plants, and plant products. Operators also have to pay for the border controls performed on food and feed of non-animal origin listed in [Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2019/1793](#). This regulation mandates specific

frequencies of controls for certain hazards in products depending on their origin. Several products have to be tested for aflatoxins under this Regulation. In addition, fees are also charged to operators for official controls that were not originally planned because they are necessary to follow-up non-compliance.

E. Average Release Time for Products –Common Delays

The average release time for products depends on the Member State and port of import. The main ports in the European Union are organized in an efficient way to perform customs formalities as well as the necessary veterinary and plant inspections. Incomplete or incorrect certification generally leads to delays in the clearance of goods throughout the EU.

F. Duplicative Inspections

Inspections on imported foods are concentrated at the external borders of the European Union. Once goods have passed inspection and customs duties are paid, they can move freely throughout the EU. However, official controls remain possible at any stage of distribution in the EU.

Appendix I. Government Regulatory Agency Contacts

European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200
1049 Brussels
Belgium
Tel: (32-2) 299 1111

European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO)
Avenida de Europa, 4
E-03009 Alicante
Spain
Tel: (34-96)513 91 00
E-mail: information@euipo.europa.eu
Website: <https://euipo.europa.eu>

European Union - Delegation of the European Commission to the United States
2175 K Street NW
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Fax: (202) 429-1766
E-mail: delegation-usa-info@eeas.europa.eu
Website: https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/united-states-america_en

United States Mission to the European Union
Office of Agricultural Affairs
27 Boulevard du Regent
1000 Brussels
Belgium
Tel: (32-2)811-5793
Fax: (32) (2) 811-5560
E-mail: AgUSEUBrussels@fas.usda.gov

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) - EU office
27 Boulevard du Regent
1000 Brussels
Belgium
Website: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/internationalservices/is-contacts>
E-mail: APHISBrussels@usda.gov

National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Representative to the EU:
27 Boulevard du Regent
1000 Brussels
Belgium

Tel: (32-2)811-5831

E-mail: Stephane.Vrignaud@trade.gov

Food and Drug Administration (FDA) - EU Office

27 Boulevard du Regent

1000 Brussels

Belgium

Tel: (32-2)8114518

E-mail: US-FDA-EUR@fda.hhs.gov

Other FAS Offices in the European Union:

<https://fas.usda.gov/regions/europe-and-eurasia>

FDA contacts for certification of animal products:

<http://www.fda.gov/AnimalVeterinary/Products/ImportExports/default.htm>

Food Safety & Inspection Service (FSIS) Export Requirements for the EU:

<https://www.fsis.usda.gov/inspection/import-export/import-export-library/european-union>

Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) –Exports:

- <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal-product-export>

- <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant-exports>

Appendix II. Other Import Specialist Contacts

There are no other import specialist contacts.

Attachments:

No Attachments