

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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Report Name: FDA Issues New Labeling Standards Directive for Pre Packaged Foods

Country: Burma - Union of

Post: Rangoon

Report Category: FAIRS Subject Report, Trade Policy Monitoring, WTO Notifications, MISC-Commodity

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Report Highlights:

Beginning March 12, 2026, Burma has prohibited importers from using stickers to communicate mandatory information on pre-packaged food labels. The revised requirement still allows labeling in English provided mandatory information is clearly and permanently displayed on the original packaging. U.S. exporters are encouraged to coordinate with their importers as the change may complicate the sale of U.S. products in Burma that are transshipped and stickered or labeled in another regional market. This directive has not been notified to the World Trade Organization.

On March 12, 2026, and with immediate effect, Burma's Food and Drug Administration (BFDA) issued [Directive 5/2026](#) (English version), which prohibits importers from affixing stickers to imported pre-packaged foods to communicate required product information. Instead, all mandatory information must be clearly and permanently displayed on the original packaging, rather than added through supplementary stickers. This directive followed the [January 2022 Labeling Order for Pre-packaged Foods](#), which established labeling standards for pre-packaged food, and [Directive 2/2022](#) (in English) issued on January 27, 2022, which detailed criteria for edibles that do not require a date of production. Under Chapter 3, Paragraph 7(p) of [Order 8/2022 \(see: World Trade Organization G/TBT/N/MMR/8\)](#), the general class names of food ingredients and food additive descriptions must be updated to specified group names and displayed according to the regulations set out in Directive 2/2022.

These regulations, issued under the [National Food Law](#) (English version), apply to all pre-packaged foods and catering services, and aim to inform consumers about food quality, potential risks, and hygiene for safe consumption.

Mandatory Information for Pre-Packaged Foods in Burma

The following information must be declared on the label of pre-packaged foods:

- Name of the food
- List of ingredients
- Net contents, quantity, and drained weight
- Name and address
- Country of origin
- Lot identification
- Date marking (e.g., "Best by" or "Used by")
- Instructions for use

Language Requirements for Food Labels

According to Chapter 2, Paragraph 4, Sub-section (e)(1) of the [January 2022 Labeling Order for Pre-packaged Foods](#), BFDA accepts labels in Burmese or any language that is eligible and acceptable to consumers (including English), provided it does not contradict other laws. Labels may be presented in more than one language. BFDA also confirmed that labels in minority ethnic languages, such as Shan or Mon languages, were permitted on labels, in addition to English and Burmese.

Justification for the Recent Prohibition on Food Label Stickers

BFDA reported that some importers affix stickers on food labels in a way that obscures required information (e.g., country of origin, nutrition facts and traffic light labeling). On March 13, 2026, BFDA issued Directive 5/2026 prohibiting the addition of mandatory information on imported food labels by means of affixing stickers. Importers are now instructed that if the label is not in Burmese, English or a language accepted by consumers, mandatory information for the products (essential product descriptions) must not be added using partial stickers.

If products are imported with labels in languages other than English or Burmese (e.g., Thai, Malaysian, or Vietnamese), the manufacturer must reprint the entire original label in Burmese, or the importer must replace the original label with a Burmese language version. While preparing Burmese language labels at the production stage may increase costs, BFDA considers it as the best method for compliance.

Conflicting Directives from the Department of Consumer Affairs

A separate [directive \(No. 2/2019\)](#) (in English) from the Department of Consumer Affairs (DOCA), Ministry of Commerce, requires business owners to label goods in Burmese and potentially one or more other languages. The following information falls under this DOCA labeling directive:

- Name of the food
- Size, quantity, and weight
- Storage instructions
- Usage instructions
- Description of side effects
- Description of allergies
- Precaution notice

BFDA has recognized that importers may be confused by the conflicting orders and directives issued by BFDA and DOCA. As there has not yet been coordination between the two agencies, the BFDA is preparing to issue clarifications to ensure importers fully understand the requirements.

Challenges and Opportunities for U.S. Food Products

These new regulations present several challenges for importers and distributors. Importers must coordinate with foreign manufacturers on packaging design to ensure compliance, which may require preparing Burma-specific packaging at the production stage, increasing costs and lead times. Multi-language packaging may be necessary, and repacking within Burma will only be allowed with BFDA approval, adding administrative complexity. These requirements compound existing challenges, such as obtaining import licenses and meeting strict food safety regulations. However, the regulations also create opportunities for U.S. exporters.

Since U.S. products are already labeled in English, they largely comply with Burmese labeling requirements, minimizing additional costs or repackaging needs. This gives U.S. exporters a competitive advantage, allowing them to bring products to the Burma market more quickly and efficiently than competitors from countries with non-English labels. These requirements could complicate the re-export of U.S. products to Burma through Thailand, as Thailand requires importers to label products in the Thai language.

Attachments:

No Attachments.