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## Canada

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### Canada Proposes Broad Food Labeling Update

**Report Categories:**

Agriculture in the News

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**Report Highlights:**

On June 22, 2019, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency published proposed new requirements for food labeling; interested stakeholders have until September 4 to comment. The proposed changes cover a number of labeling elements, including country of origin designations on consumer packaged goods.

Following several years of successive rounds of public consultations under Canada's [Food Labeling Modernization](#) (FLM) initiative, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) published in [Canada Gazette, Part I](#) proposed new food labeling requirements, by amending two existing regulations:

- [Regulations Amending the Food and Drug Regulations](#)
- [Regulations Amending the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations](#)

According to the CFIA, the goals of the FLM initiative (launched in 2013), are to:

- improve access to information about food labeling to help consumers make informed decisions about the food they buy for themselves and their families;
- protect consumers from potentially misleading information, while enhancing opportunities for industry to be competitive;
- respond more effectively to consumer, industry and government needs in the area of food labeling that is specific to CFIA's mandate.

The proposed regulatory changes are open for a 75-day public consultation period, ending on September 4, 2019. Interested stakeholders may submit comments to:

Kathy Twardek, Director  
Consumer Protection and Market Fairness Division  
Canadian Food Inspection Agency  
1400 Merivale Road, Tower 1  
Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0Y9  
Telephone: 613- 773- 5489  
Email: [cfia.labellingmodernization-modernisationetiquetage.acia@canada.ca](mailto:cfia.labellingmodernization-modernisationetiquetage.acia@canada.ca)

According to the [regulatory impact analysis statement](#), some of the proposed changes to the Food and Drugs Regulations would include:

**Date marking and storage instructions**

Proposed amendments would update Canada's use of the terms "expiration date" and "best before date," and would apply to all labels of prepackaged foods, subject to certain exceptions.

**Food company information**

Proposed amendments would require manufacturer contact information be included on the label.

**Foreign state of origin of imported food**

Proposed changes would require the country of origin to be declared on all "wholly imported foods" (i.e., foods that are not transformed in Canada).

**Legibility and location of information**

Proposed amendments would improve the legibility of mandatory labeling information on labels and require certain labeling information (e.g., country of origin) appear in a consistent location on all prepackaged food labels.

### **Emphasized ingredients**

Proposed amendments would require labels to declare the percentage of an emphasized ingredient on the product label, though there would be exceptions when emphasized ingredients appear in a common name that has a prescribed compositional standard (e.g., raisin bread). Under the proposed amendments, when an emphasized ingredient is referred to on a label but the emphasized ingredient is not added at all or is only an added flavor, then the label would have to clearly indicate that the food is “flavored.” CFIA gives an example of “strawberry” ice cream that contains strawberry flavor rather than real strawberries, which would have to be called “strawberry flavored ice cream.”

### **Standard container sizes**

The regulatory proposal would repeal certain requirements for standard container sizes from the [Safe Food for Canadians Regulations](#) and incorporate by reference the remaining list of sizes. The repealed container sizes would be based on those identified in the [last round of consultations](#) in 2017. Examples of food products that would no longer have prescribed container sizes include prepackaged beets, onions, and parsnips.

### **Incorporation by reference of class names**

The regulatory proposal would make it easier to update lists of mandatory and optional class names for ingredients going forward.

### **Definition of test market food**

The regulatory proposal would introduce a definition for “test market food” into the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations to clarify the intent of an exception for the purpose of test marketing. This definition would limit the application of test marketing exemptions to foods that differ substantially (e.g., in composition, function, packaging) from others sold in Canada and that were not sold previously in Canada in that form.

### **Streamlining commodity-specific labeling**

This regulatory proposal would maintain food commodity-specific labeling requirements necessary for health and safety reasons, but streamline remaining requirements by either repealing requirements or introducing a single horizontal requirement to replace multiple commodity-specific ones.

CFIA indicates that the FLM requirements would come into effect in three phases that reflect the need to inform consumers, the level of industry readiness and the number of label changes required. The table below indicates the coming-into-force date for each phase. During the transition periods, industry could choose to comply with either current or new regulations.

Amendments not requiring a label change would come into force upon registration. Amendments that would require less significant changes to existing labels would come into effect in December 2022 along with other forthcoming labeling changes; for more information on those changes, see the most recent

FAIRS Report [CA18069](#). After an approximately six-year transition period, amendments requiring new label information or significant label changes would be brought into force.

**Coming into force of FLM amendments**

<b>FLM Element</b>	<b>Transitional Period</b> <i>(Assume Final Publication in 2020)</i>
Incorporation by reference of class names Standard container sizes Definition of test market food Streamlining commodity-specific labeling (no change to label)	Immediate
Foreign state of origin of imported food Food company information Date marking and storage instruction Streamlining commodity-specific labeling (changes to label)	Two years (anticipated 2022)
Emphasized ingredient Legibility and location	Six years (anticipated 2026)