



**Saskatchewan
Ministry of
Agriculture**

INDUSTRY ALERT: EUROPEAN UNION UPDATES ITS MANDATORY FOOD LABELLING REGULATIONS

Canadian food processors that are – or are considering – exporting their products to the European Union (EU) should be aware that changes to food labelling regulations have been proposed by the European Commission.

These proposed changes are intended to harmonize the labelling regulations of the 27 member states of the newly expanded EU, and to reflect consumers' increasing knowledge of health and nutrition, and their growing demand for nutritional information on which to base their food-buying decisions.

If approved, the new labelling requirements will apply only to food products destined for the final consumer (i.e. products supplied to a food retailer or to the hotel/restaurant/institutional sector, which is referred to as “mass caterers” in EU regulations).

Front-of-package labels will be required to contain information on energy, fat, saturates, carbohydrates (with specific reference to sugar) and salt. Other mandatory packaging information will include: the name of the food, a list of ingredients (including allergens), net quantity, an expiry date and the name and address of the processor.

A complete list of the new labelling requirements is contained in *The Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the provision of food information to consumers*, Chapter 5, Additional Information, which can be found on the EU website at:

http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/labellingnutrition/foodlabelling/proposed_legislation_en.htm.

The proposed regulations will require that food labels appear in the language used by the majority of consumers in the member state in which the product will be sold. Country of origin labelling is voluntary (except for beef and veal).

A transition period of three years (for large and medium-sized enterprises) and five years (for small enterprises with fewer than 10 employees) is proposed upon enactment of the regulations.

For help interpreting the EU regulations, contact Shika Agblor, Ph.D, Senior Food Scientist, Market Development and Food Branch, Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture, at 306-933-5769.