
Labelling of pre-packaged foods to be revised

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which describes the level of a nutrient contained in a food on a label or in an advertisement may be made unless it complies with certain prescribed conditions and may not be worded in any way differently from the applicable prescribed wording, namely “low”, “free or virtually free”, “source”, “high” or “very high”. Analogous terms in common current use, such as “rich in”, “excellent source”, “good source”,

“enriched”, “enriched with (name of nutrient)”, “with added (name of nutrient(s))”, “contains (name of nutrient(s))” or similar wording are expressly prohibited. The term “trace” is also prohibited in this context.

Claims such as “x% fat free” or “x% (name of nutrient) free” will be prohibited as from June 1 this year.

The words “wholesome”, “nutritious” and any other words with a similar meaning will be prohibited, including use in the name or trade

name of foods.

Labels and advertisements for foods will not be able to reflect an endorsement by a manufacturer or seller in the form of a logo, mark, symbol or written or verbal statement regarding the nutritional or safety properties of a food unless it is valid according to the new regulations and appropriate substantiation can be provided to a Department of Health inspector within two working days.

The use of statements to the effect

of a food being “fresh”, “natural”, “nature’s”, “pure”, “traditional”, “original”, “authentic”, “real”, “genuine”, “home made”, “farmhouse”, “hand-made”, “selected”, “premium”, “finest”, “quality” or “best”, or any other words, statements, phrases, logos or pictorial representations which convey or imply similar concepts will only be permitted if compliant with the criteria stipulated in a specified document published by the United Kingdom Food Standards Agency (FSA), which has

been incorporated into the new regulations by reference.

The food manufacturing industry has been very involved in the development process of the new regulations from the time of the publication of a previous, more onerous, draft in 2007, giving them time to prepare for the impending regulatory changes.

It remains to be seen whether retailers have given as much consideration to the impact of the new regulations on their businesses.