

# **2003 GUIDE TO FOOD LABELLING AND ADVERTISING**

**Draft Document**

**Fair Labelling Practices Program  
Bureau of Food Safety and Consumer Protection  
Canadian Food Inspection Agency**

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Glossary

## Preface

Since 1961, the *Guide for Food Manufacturers and Advertisers* has served as an important reference document for the food industry on policies and regulations for the labelling and advertising of foods in Canada, in particular those falling under the *Food and Drugs Act* and *Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act*. By providing clear policy advice and basic ground rules respecting the use of labelling and claims, the *Guide* seeks to enhance industry compliance and consumer protection.

In recent years, the *Guide* has undergone two major amendments, in 1993 and again, ten years later, in 2003.

In 1993, a review of the *Guide* was initiated and included:

- the revision of policies and updating of regulations in the existing *Guide*,
- the consolidation of various labelling and advertising policies, handbooks and manuals into a single compendium and
- the development of processes for the ongoing updating and communication of labelling policies.

At that time, a Review Committee comprised of industry and consumer associations advised on planning and priorities for the project and reviewed in detail the *Guide* format, content, distribution and updating process as well as individual policy proposals. A sub-group of the Review Committee (Canadian Advertising Foundation, Canadian Council of Grocery Distributors and the Grocery Products Manufacturers of Canada) developed the guiding principles on behalf of the food industry, in consultation with the associations which supported the principles.

The result of the review was an expanded *Guide*, the "*Guide to Food Labelling and Advertising*". A number of policies were revised or introduced as a result of consultation: "Kosher", "Home-made", "Organic", "Bran", "Lean", "Sweetened", "Salted", "Fresh", "Negative Claims", "Compliance Guidelines for Nutrition labelling" and "% (name of the nutrient)-Free". Others had minor updates or included new information.

In 2003, the *Guide* underwent another amendment process to include the nutrition labelling, nutrient content claims and diet-related health claims amendments of the *Food and Drug Regulations*. The *Guide* was reorganized, reformatted, updated and expanded to include guidelines on the nutrition labelling format, nutrient content claims, and diet-related health claims.

Industry and Consumer Associations will be asked to confirm their support of the guiding principles.

The revised *Guide* was renamed the *2003 Guide to Food Labelling and Advertising* (the *2003 Guide*)

Amendments will be made to the *2003 Guide* to further clarify policies or as new policies are issued. In addition, the *2003 Guide* will be expanded to include labelling requirements specific to commodities.

**Amendments**

The *2003 Guide to Food Labelling and Advertising* is available on the Internet at <http://www.inspection.gc.ca> To find out about amendments, visit the *2003 Guide to Food Labelling and Advertising* website or contact the Fair Labelling Practices Program, Canadian Food Inspection Agency at Tel: (613) 225-2342; Fax: (613) 221-7295

**Guiding Principles for the Federal Food Labelling and Advertising System**

1. **Policies** will be developed in a responsible manner to ensure that federal food labelling policies and regulations:
  - are necessary to protect health and safety and to prevent product misrepresentation and fraud;
  - promote an informed food choice, by providing consumers with reliable and comparable information, that reflects current food technology and nutrition recommendations and that can be easily understood;
  - support marketplace equity and fair competition;
  - respect obligations under international and federal provincial trade agreements;
  - do not entail costs of implementation that outweigh benefits to society.
2. **Consultations** will be conducted in a timely and thorough manner with interested parties so that regulations and policies will be responsive to stakeholder needs.
3. Final regulations and policies will be **communicated** to all stakeholders:
  - those who are subject to the policy or regulation will be informed in a timely manner; and,
  - communications will be clear, concise and complete, so that requirements will be readily understood by all those affected.
4. Enforcement of regulations and policies will be applied in a fair and responsible manner.

**Guiding Principles for Labelling and Advertising by the Canadian Food and Beverage Industry**

The Canadian food and beverage industry, working in partnership with government, is committed to:

- maintain truth and integrity in consumer communications
- strive to ensure that product communications comply with existing food regulations and current practices and policies

- allow consumers to make informed choices by striving to promote messages in advertising and labelling that:
  - reflect consumer requirements for food consistent with current health, safety and nutrition recommendations;
  - reflect current technological advancements;
  - do not mislead the consumer;
  - promote fair competition in the marketplace.