Section J
Nutrition Labelling Evaluation Standard

Introduction: Evaluation Standard for Nutrition Labelling

The new Nutrition Labelling, Nutrient Content Claims and Health Claims regulations were promulgated under the *Food and Drugs Act* on December 12, 2002. These regulations set out parameters and specifications for nutrient content and health claims, and also require that all pre-packaged food, other than specific exemptions, be labelled with a *Nutrition Facts* table.

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to officers of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) when they are:

- assessing nutrition information on a product label, or
- assessing a manufacturer's ability to produce food with accurate nutrition labels in compliance with the Regulations.

When the new Regulations apply

The legislation provides industry with a transition period to bring their labels into compliance. The requirements for the new Nutrition Facts table, nutrient content claims and health claims come into force December 12, 2005. For small manufacturers with total annual sales less than $1 million for the 12-month period prior to December 12, 2002, the regulations come into force December 12, 2007.

- However, the new Regulations are immediately triggered when a label or advertisement for a food, that is made or placed by the manufacturer, contains:

    - the statement "nutrition facts", "valeur nutritive", or "valeurs nutritives";
    - nutrient content claims pertaining to: fat free (100 % or [percentage] fat free), trans fatty acids (free, reduced or lower), omega-3 fatty acids (source of), omega-6 fatty acids (source of) [Items 15, 16, 22-26 of the table following Section B.01.513)]; and
    - a health claim outlined in the table to Section B.01.603.

During the transition period, a label may use the old system of nutrition labelling or the new Nutrition Facts table, but a combination of both systems on one label is not allowed. Consequently, a label using the old *nutrition information* label can not make diet-related health claims or nutrient content claims permitted only under the new regulations.

Review of the contents of this section

The *Evaluation Standard for Nutrition Labelling* is based on the Canadian Code of Practice – General Principles of Food Hygiene, which in turn, was modelled on the Recommended International Code of Practice – General Principles of Food Hygiene, adopted by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

This section consists of two parts:

- Part 1: Evaluation Standard for the Manufacturing Process; and
- Part 2: Evaluation Standard for the Label.

Part 1: Evaluation Standard for the Manufacturing Process, focuses on the means by which a manufacturer determines nutrient values and their validity. It also evaluates a manufacturer's ability to identify and control all facets of the manufacturing process to produce products with a constant nutrient profile: from planning and specification setting to processing and delivery.

Part 2: Evaluation Standard for the Label, focuses on the technical aspects of the Nutrition Facts table. Part 2 is a product inspection.

Structure of the Document:

The Evaluation Standard, Part 1 and Part 2, is further organized into chapters, sections and subsections describing specific requirements. Each sub-section includes a principal statement, rationale and assessment criteria:

- Principal statements are enclosed in boxes and are found at the beginning of sections and sub-sections of the Evaluation Standard. Principal statements are outcome-based generic statements of the objectives to be achieved. They are intended to capture the objective while allowing flexibility to address specific products or processes.

- The rationale identifies the nature of the concern or potential hazard(s) and the need for their control.

- Assessment criteria provide information on the factors that should be considered in assessing adherence to the objectives of the principal statements.

How the Evaluation Standard will be used

While this document is intended to provide guidance, it may not cover all situations encountered in a manufacturing establishment or on a label. For information on issues not addressed in this standard, refer to the *2003 Guide to Food Labelling and Advertising* or the *Nutrition Labelling Toolkit*, both of which are available on the CFIA Web site:

www.inspection.gc.ca

The CFIA will use this document to assess compliance with the *Food and Drug Regulations*. Where applicable and appropriate, the CFIA will take enforcement action. Such enforcement action will be in line with the CFIA Compliance and Enforcement Policy will be based on the legal authorities contained in the *Food and Drugs Act and Regulations*.

This document may be used in conjunction with other CFIA programs/documents that assess other aspects of food manufacturing or importing, including both processes and facilities.