

# General Packaging and Labelling Requirements for Fresh Fruit and Vegetables



*This pamphlet briefly outlines the general packaging and labelling requirements for fresh fruit and vegetables marketed in Canada.*

## PACKAGING REQUIREMENTS

- Fresh produce may be marketed in any suitable container. Containers of fresh produce shall be securely closed in a manner appropriate for the type of container. The *Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Regulations* specify container sizes for certain regulated produce commodities marketed in Canada.
- The following commodities have established Canadian grades and may not be marketed in a container larger than 50 kg net weight.

asparagus	cherries	parsnips
apricots	sweet corn	peaches
beets	crabapples	pears
blueberries	cranberries	plums
brussels sprouts	cucumbers	rhubarb
cabbage	head lettuce	rutabagas
carrots	onions	tomatoes
cauliflower	grapes	strawberries
cantaloupes	prunes	apples
celery	potatoes	

- Apples, apricots, peaches and pears may not be marketed in a container larger than 200 kg (442 lbs) net weight. Packages of apples containing different varieties may not exceed 20 kg (44.2 lbs).

- In addition, beets, carrots, onions, parsnips, potatoes and rutabagas, pre-packaged for sale to consumers, may only be marketed in certain container sizes. The *Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Regulations* should be referenced for these requirements.
- Containers should not be stained, soiled, warped, broken or otherwise damaged as to affect the quality of the produce.
- Sweet Corn in bags or any container of Potatoes and Onions must be new, clean and free from stains.

## PACKAGES OF MIXED FRUIT OR MIXED VEGETABLES

- Whole fruit, packaged in combination with other kinds of fruit or food products must not exceed 10 kg (22 lbs) net weight and no one kind of fruit within the package can exceed 1 kg (2.2 lbs) net weight. These products must be labelled as “Gift Pack”. However, different varieties of apples may be marketed in the same container, as long as the container does not exceed 20 kg net weight and the varieties are clearly marked on the container.
- Whole vegetables, packaged in combination with other kinds of vegetables may not exceed 10 kg (22 lbs) net weight and no one kind of vegetable within the package can exceed 1 kg (2.2 lbs) net weight. These products must be labelled as “Stew Pack”. However, different varieties of creamer potatoes, 19 mm to 41 mm (3/4 in. to 1 5/8 in.), may be marketed in the same container, as long as the container is 0.454 kg (1 lb) or 0.907 kg (2 lbs).

## LABELLING REQUIREMENTS

- All fresh fruit and vegetable containers must be properly labelled to meet the requirements of the *Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Regulations*.
- All information on food labels must be true and not misleading or deceptive and cannot misrepresent the quality, quantity, composition, nature, safety, value, origin or variety of the contents.
- No label of graded produce, domestic or imported into Canada, shall be marked with any word or words declaring or implying that the produce packed within the container is superior in quality to the grade marked thereon.
- Labelling requirements may vary with the type of container used. In addition, certain commodities may have additional specific labelling requirements.
- Types of containers identified for use include: Pre-packaged consumer sized packages; master containers, which contain a number of packages; and, shipping containers.

### Pre-Packaged Consumer Size Packages

A pre-packaged product is considered to be packaged in a container that is ordinarily sold to or used or purchased by a consumer without being re-packaged. All pre-packaged products must comply with the *Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act and Regulations*, as well as the *Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Regulations*.

In general, the following information must be shown, in both English and French, on the principal display surface of this type of package. However, the information is not required if the produce is pre-packed in a wrapper or

confining band that is less than 13 mm (1/2 in.) in width or is displayed in bulk in a retail store or unlabeled, except for bar code, number codes but otherwise in a clear, transparent protective wrapping.

1. Common name of the product. This includes the variety name in the case of apples.
2. The Canada grade name, if one is established for the commodity (e.g. Canada No. 1) or equivalent if imported product (U.S No. 1 or No. 1). The Canada Grade is restricted to produce grown in Canada.
3. Net quantity of the product in terms of numerical count or weight in metric or Canadian units. Where both metric and Canadian units are shown, they must be grouped together, e.g. 1 kg (2.2 lb).
4. Identity and principal place of business of the person by or for whom the produce was produced or packaged for resale. This should include the name of the person, city, province (state) and postal or zip code. This declaration may appear in either English or French.
5. For imported product, the name of the country of origin of the produce, or other words that clearly indicate the country in which the produce was grown (e.g. Product of \_\_\_\_, Produce of \_\_\_\_, Grown in \_\_\_\_ or Country of Origin, \_\_\_\_). The country of origin must be shown in close proximity to the declaration of net quantity or the grade name. That is, it must be directly above or below and separated by not more than two line spaces or directly beside and separated by not more than two type spaces. The two type spaces or line spaces shall be the same size as the letter size in the grade and net quantity.
6. For yellow-fleshed Potatoes: In bold face type, the words “yellow fleshed” or “yellow fleshed potatoes”.
7. For apples: tags used to close apple bags may be stamped or printed with all the required labelling information.

The letter and numerical quantities in the declarations of net quantity, grade name and country of origin shall be shown in bold face type letters and numerals. The minimum height of these three declarations when shown is governed by the total area of the principal display surface of the package. The *Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Regulations* should be referenced to determine the minimum letter height requirements.

### Shipping and Master Containers

The information appearing on these types of containers must be the same as those for pre-packaged consumer packages, except for the following:

1. Containers may be labelled in only one of the official languages (English or French).
2. Master containers need not be marked with the net weight of the container.
3. Required information need not be marked on the master container if it can easily be read through the outer container.

### Nutritional Labelling and Health Claims

The *Food and Drugs Act and Regulations* exempt fresh vegetables and fruit that do not contain any added ingredients, from the requirements of nutritional labelling. This exemption includes: oranges with colour; fruit and vegetables coated with paraffin wax or petrolatum; fresh herbs such as parsley, basil, thyme, etc. (not dried herbs); sprouts; fruits and vegetables that are cut or minimally processed (e.g. washed, peeled, cut-up, shredded, etc.), including mixtures of fruits and vegetables, such as bagged mixed salad and coleslaw (without dressing, croutons, bacon bits, etc.).

If a label or advertisement contains one or more of the following: a nutritional reference or nutrient content claim; a biological role claim; a health claim; a health-related name statement, logo, symbol, seal of approval or other proprietary mark of a third party; or the phrase “nutrition facts”; all the requirements for nutritional labelling must be met.

For more specific information about packaging and labelling requirements for fresh fruit and vegetables or nutritional labelling, visit the Canadian Food Inspection Agency website at [www.inspection.gc.ca](http://www.inspection.gc.ca) and reference the *Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Regulations*, the *Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act and Regulations*, **Fair Labelling Practices Section of the Bureau of Food Safety and Consumer Protection** or contact any local Agency office.

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