

LABELLING REQUIREMENTS – COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

Country of origin labelling describes the country or countries where the food was grown, manufactured or packaged. It is not required for foods sold for immediate consumption by restaurants, canteens, caterers or self-catering institutions.

How is country of origin labelling regulated?

Through Standard 1.2.11 under the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (the Code).

Statements that describe the country of origin of food are also subject to Australian Consumer Law. The requirements of the Code should be read in conjunction with the Commonwealth *Competition and Consumer Act 2010* which is enforced by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC).

Country of origin labelling for packaged foods

All **packaged** food must be labelled with:

- a statement on the package that clearly identifies the country in which the food was made, produced, or grown, or
- a statement on the package:

- that identifies the country where the food was manufactured or packaged, and
- to the effect that the food is constituted from ingredients imported into that country or from local and imported ingredients

Country of origin labelling for certain unpackaged foods

Some **unpackaged** foods for retail sale need a label placed on the food or in connection with the display to:

- identify the country or countries of origin of the food (including Australia), or
- indicate that the food is a mix of local and imported foods, or
- indicate that the food is a mix of imported foods.

Unpackaged foods for retail sale that require a label are:

- **fish**, including fish that has been mixed or coated with one or more other foods
- **pork, beef, veal, lamb, hogget, mutton, chicken**
- **fruit and vegetables**. This also applies to packaged unprocessed fruit and vegetables displayed in packages that do not obscure the nature or quality of the food
- mix of any of these foods.

This includes a food that has been:

- cut, filleted, sliced, minced or diced
- pickled, cured, dried, smoked, frozen or preserved by other means
- marinated
- cooked.

Country of origin claims

Australian Consumer Law sets out criteria for businesses to follow when statements are made regarding where food has been made or grown. Common claims include 'product of', 'grown in' and 'made in'.

'Product of' and **'Grown in'** means that each significant



ingredient or part of the product originated in the country claimed and almost all of the production processes occurred in that country. 'Product of' is often used for processed food and 'Grown in' is mostly used for fresh food.

Example 1

If 'Product of Australia' appears on a packet of smoked salmon, this means the salmon was both caught and smoked in Australia. If 'Grown in Australia' appears on an apple, it was grown in Australia.

'**Made in**' means that the product was made or 'substantially transformed' (not just packed) in the country claimed and at least 50 per cent of the cost to produce the product was incurred in that country. These products could contain ingredients from other countries.

A product with a 'Made in Australia' label won't necessarily contain Australian ingredients.

Example 2

If 'Made in Australia' appears on a jar of jam, this means the jam was made in Australia and at least half of the cost of making the jam was incurred in Australia. It doesn't necessarily mean that the ingredients for the jam were grown or sourced in Australia.

Size and legibility of labels

Statements on labels must be:

- in English
- legible to the average consumer
- distinct from the background.

Signs for unpackaged goods must be in type size of:

- at least 9 mm in height
- OR
- at least 5 mm in height where food is in an assisted service refrigerated display cabinet.

False or misleading claims

In NSW it is an offence to label or advertise food in a manner that is likely to mislead or deceive customers about the country of origin of a food.

A label must not include words, statements, claims, pictures or graphics that represent a food or its characteristics in a way that is false, misleading or deceptive.

False or misleading representations about the country of origin of foods are also regulated under the *Competition and Consumer Act 2010*.

More information

- Food Authority's website at www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au
- phone the helpline on 1300 552 406
- visit the ACCC website at www.accc.gov.au
- visit the Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) website at www.foodstandards.gov.au

About the NSW Food Authority: The NSW Food Authority is the government organisation that helps ensure NSW food is safe and correctly labelled. It works with consumers, industry and other government organisations to minimise food poisoning by providing information about and regulating the safe production, storage, transport, promotion and preparation of food.

Note: This information is a general summary and cannot cover all situations. Food businesses are required to comply with all of the provisions of the Food Standards Code and the *Food Act 2003* (NSW).



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More resources at foodauthority.nsw.gov.au



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