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Today's self-service markets stock more than 8,000 items, most of them packaged. Shoppers would be lost without food labeling. The label is your window, indicating what's inside the package. Label reading can help you buy more wisely and cut your food costs.

Labels are also silent salesmen for products. Often it is the color or design of the label which first causes you to look at a new product. After the initial look, studying the label gives information that helps you to decide whether this is the product you want.

Who Has the Responsibility for Food Labeling?

The United States Department of Agriculture has the enforcement responsibility for the labeling of meats, poultry, and meat and poultry products that go into interstate commerce. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has the responsibility for labeling on all other foods distributed across state lines. The Oregon Department of Agriculture has the responsibility for foods sold within the state.

The Department's labeling standards are the same as federal standards, with some additional rules as explained in this circular.

You, the consumer, also have responsibility for labeling. You should report questionable food labeling. Your first avenue of recourse is to complain about inadequate or misleading information to your store manager or to the company responsible for the product—depending upon where the product is labeled. If you feel that your complaint has not been settled satisfactorily, report to the agency that has the responsibility for the enforcement of the labeling requirements. In the case of the Department of Agriculture, refer your complaints to:

Consumer Officer
Oregon Department of Agriculture
Agriculture Building
635 Capitol Street, N.E.
Salem, OR 97310

If interstate commerce is involved, the Oregon Department of Agriculture will forward your complaint to the Federal Food and Drug Administration or, in the case of meats when federal jurisdiction is involved, to the United States Department of Agriculture.

The purpose of labeling information is to help you make informed choices. Industry and government are in constant need of information on what will help you. So, when you are asked to take part in discussions, attend a hearing, or write a letter giving your opinion—*do it!* It's the only way to get more informative food labels—labels that you will find helpful.

Food and Drug Regulations and Laws

The Food and Drug Administration requires all labels on food distributed for sale across state lines to include this information:

- **Name of the product.** The usual or common name makes it easy to identify the product.
- **Variety, style, and pack medium, when signifi-**

cant. This helps you choose the product to suit your exact purpose. You want to know, for example, whether you are buying cream style or whole kernel corn; or buying peaches packed in water, light syrup, or heavy syrup.

- **How much is in the container?** Knowing the net quantity inside the container enables you to make comparisons. If the package weighs more than one pound, but less than four, the contents must be given in both ounces and pounds and ounces. For instance, Net Weight 23 oz. (1 lb. 7 oz.).

A dual declaration also is required for packages containing less than one gallon but at least one pint of any fluid. For instance, Net Contents 50 fl. oz. (1 qt. 18 fl. oz.). The use of exaggerated terms such as jumbo and giant is prohibited.

- **What went into the product?** The ingredients (unless the product has a standard of identity) *must be listed in descending order*—the ingredient present in the largest quantity comes first.

Some foods have a *standard of identity* which has been established by the Food and Drug Administration. This standard of identity specifies the basic ingredients for the product—that is, what the consumers can expect when they ask for the food by its common name. For example, the standard of identity for fruit preserves and jellies requires not less than 45 parts of fruit or fruit juices to each 55 parts of sugar.

About 300 foods have a standard of identity. Once this standard is established, it is not necessary to give the basic ingredients on the label. However, if any optional ingredients are included, they must be on the label. This is the reason why many foods such as catsup, mayonnaise, and cheese may not have a listing of ingredients.

The Food and Drug Administration encourages food manufacturers to list ingredients even on products that *have* a standard of identity. Some manufacturers are voluntarily doing this.

If ingredients are not listed and it is necessary for you to know ingredients used in a food that has a standard of identity, write to the company listed on the container.

- Name and address of manufacturer, packer, or distributor must be given on the label. This tells you who is responsible for the product.
- Any artificial color (except in butter, cheese, and ice cream), flavor, or preservative must be stated.

Voluntary Information

Labels often carry helpful information volunteered by manufacturers, packers, or distributors. In addition to information required by law, the extras may include:

1. Brand name—so you can identify a product you have tried and liked.

2. A picture of the product.

3. Quantity information such as number of servings, pieces, or cups. *But, though voluntary, the law says if the number of servings is listed, the size of the serving must be listed.*

4. Size or degree of maturity, for products like peas, so you can select young, or nearly mature peas, according to your flavor preference.

5. Degree of seasoning.

6. Suggestions for handling, storing, or using the product, and possibly recipes.

7. Grade *may* be on the label. This grade, which is voluntary, may be a company standard or a USDA grade standard. If the USDA grade is used, the product must conform to the standards set up by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. For example, some fruit and vegetable products carry a grade on the label such as "U.S. Grade A." These USDA grades are established on a basis of appearance. They are *not* based on nutritional value. Sometimes, the label may say "inspected for wholesomeness by the U.S. Department of Agriculture."

Nutrition Labeling

Something new is being added to many food labels.

Many food processors are putting nutrition information on their food labels. *By 1975, all fortified and enriched foods, and all foods for which a nutrition claim is made, must display nutrition information on the labels.*

In addition to the usual information, such as name, net weight, and ingredients, the new label will provide information on essential nutrients in the food.

The number of calories will be listed on the food label. Next will be "protein," "carbohydrate," and "fat" listed to the nearest gram.

Following these nutrients, there must appear a list of vitamins, minerals, and protein, all expressed as a percentage of the U.S. Recommended Daily Allowances (US RDA). These nutrients must be listed in the following order: protein, vitamin A, vitamin C, thiamine, riboflavin, niacin, calcium, and iron. If necessary, zeros, or perhaps asterisks to footnote, will appear in the column to the right indicating that there is zero or less than 2 percent of a given nutrient in a food. This was felt important to help people learn that no single food is a source of all nutrients.

The U.S. Recommended Daily Allowances (US RDA) replaces the outmoded FDA Minimum Daily Requirements (MDR). The MDR was little more than the amount of nutrient requirement to prevent a deficiency. It has been out of date for several years. US RDA is the highest value of protein, vitamins, and minerals that an adult needs for good health.

Actually, there are three US RDA's. The best known and the one that will be used on most nutrition information panels is for adults and children.

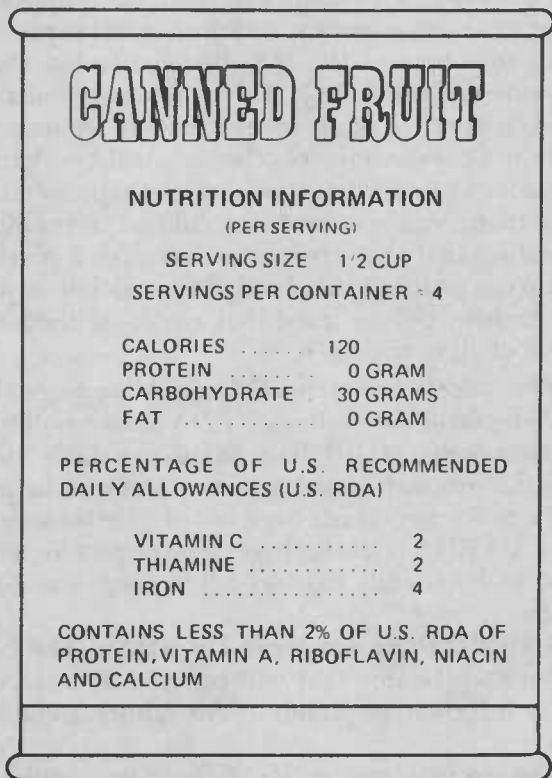
The second one is for infants and children under four. It will be used on baby foods and on vitamin-mineral supplements for infants and small children. The third is for pregnant and nursing women.

The US RDA's are not daily requirements. As allowances, they provide a considerable "margin of safety." Usually it is not necessary for any person to achieve 100 percent of the Recommended Daily Allowances on any given day.

Nutrition information must appear in a standard format and, unless space does not permit, always on the part of the label immediately to the

right of the main panel. Having the nutrients always listed in the same order and location makes it easier for you to compare labels.

The label illustrated here is a typical side of a back panel, showing the nutritional labeling that might appear on a can of mixed fruit.



A label *may* include listings for cholesterol, fats, and sodium. This listing is *voluntary*.

How to Use Nutrition Labels

There are many ways consumers can use nutrition information on labels. Unless you use what you have—having it is of no value.

Nutrition labeling can help you select foods containing the recommended amount of nutrients needed for a balanced diet. And it helps you to become aware of the nutrients required for growth

and health. From nutrition labeling you will discover, for example, that vitamins A and C come mainly from vegetables and fruits; riboflavin, thiamine, and niacin from cereals; calcium and protein from the dairy foods; iron and protein from the meats. Labels help you compare amounts of calories, carbohydrates, and fat (and possibly fatty acids and cholesterol) in a serving of different foods, learn which foods are worthwhile sources of protein, vitamins, and minerals, and compare nutritive values of commercially prepared foods.

Four nutrients on the label that consumers should pay particular attention to are: vitamins A and C, calcium, and iron. Studies show that these four nutrients frequently are found to be low in American diets. Even though we have an abundance of food supplies, we tend to make poor food selections.

Three of these nutrients, vitamins A, C, and calcium, are found only in a few foods, so we must be sure to select these foods. For vitamin A we need a serving of deep orange or dark green fruit or vegetable every day. For example, suppose the day's diet is short on vitamin A. You could then check a can of sweet potatoes, spinach, or yellow beans and decide which is the best buy and best fits the menu plans.

We need a good vitamin C source every day. Check the labels for vitamin C content of equal servings of orange juice and tomato juice. In relation to the cost and amount of vitamin C, which is the better buy—orange or tomato juice? Also, you may find that a less expensive brand contains the same amount of vitamin C as a more expensive, well-known brand of the same kind of food.

If nutrition labels from different food products are compared, it will become evident that those made from milk are by far the richest in calcium. We depend on milk products to supply our needs for calcium and much of our riboflavin.

Iron is a little different in that many foods contain a little iron—meat, fruit and vegetables, breads and cereals. Probably the best illustration of iron-fortified foods that will be nutrition labeled is cere-

als. Cereals are fortified in varying levels. If cereals are a primary source of iron, it would certainly benefit teenage and adult women to select a cereal more highly fortified with iron.

The most meaningful comparisons for the food shopper will be those made among foods that might be substituted for each other in meals. Values for fresh whole milk might be compared with those for chocolate drink, cream cheese with American cheese, canned tuna with peanut butter, or orange juice with tomato juice. If you compare values of a food of one type with those of another—milk with green vegetables, for example—it is not very helpful.

Nutritional labeling can help you count calories. For example, you will note a difference between sugar coated and non-sugared cereals. In some instances nutrition labels may be a little misleading, as the calorie and nutrient content includes the liquid in the container. For example, the calorie content of canned fruits will include the syrup and the fruit. A person who needs to watch calories should know that the fruit without syrup will be considerably lower in calories. Also, we should remember there are nutrients in the liquid of canned vegetables.

Nutrition labeling can help people on special diets select low-sodium and low-cholesterol foods—if this optional information is given.

Other Recent Food and Drug Food Labeling Regulations

Imitation Foods

Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has ruled that after this year the phrase “imitation food” can be used only if a food product is a substitute for another food that it resembles and to which it is nutritionally inferior. For example, imitation margarine contains less than the 80 percent fat required by the standard of identity for margarine.

Flavored Foods

Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has issued a final order to standardize the labeling of spices, flavorings, colorings, and chemical preservatives after the end of 1974.

Points covered include the following:

- Products containing natural flavor—that is, the essential oil or extract taken from a spice, fruit or fruit juice, herb, bark, bud, root, leaf, meat, fish, poultry, eggs, dairy product—shall be labeled; for example, “strawberry flavor” or “natural strawberry flavor.”
- Products containing artificial flavor—that is, flavor not derived from any of the above-named natural sources—shall be labeled as artificial; for example, “artificial strawberry flavor.”
- If a product contains both kinds of flavoring, the label shall be specified, such as “natural and artificial strawberry flavor.”
- “Spice” shall mean any aromatic vegetable substance in whole, broken, or ground form usually regarded as a seasoning, not a nutrient. A spice may be labeled “spice” in addition to its usual name.
- Monosodium glutamate used as an ingredient in food shall be named on the label.
- An artificial smoke flavoring used as an ingredient may be declared on the label as artificial flavor or artificial smoke flavor. No representation may be made that a food flavored with any artificial smoke flavor has actually been smoked or has a true smoke flavor.

Restructured Foods

Food and Drug has a proposal to establish distinctive names for certain packaged foods that appear to be traditional food but are manufactured by new processes.

Such foods are often labeled and sold with the same common name as the traditional foods they resemble, thus creating confusion among consumers.

“Onion rings,” for instance, might be used as

the name for a restructured food made from fresh chopped onions that have been pressed into the shape of a ring. This food is thus made to resemble a true onion ring, which is actually one ring of a sliced onion.

Other examples of restructured foods are “potato chips” made from dehydrated potatoes formed into the shape of potato chips (as opposed to chips sliced from raw potatoes) and “fried clams” made from chopped clam pieces (as opposed to whole fried clams).

A major purpose of this proposal is to enable consumers to avoid confusing such foods with the traditional foods they resemble.

Under the proposal, the following names would be established for various restructured foods:

- “Onion Rings Made from Diced Onions”
- “Fish Sticks (or Portions) Made from Minced Fish”
- “Breaded Shrimp Sticks (or Cutlets) Made from Minced Shrimp”
- “Fried Clams Made from Minced Clams”
- “Potato Chips Made from Dehydrated Potatoes”

These names would have to appear on the package labels.

Foods Packaged as “Main Dishes”

FDA now has requirements for names and labeling of packaged food to be used in preparing a “main dish” or a “dinner.”

These are convenience foods that offer some ingredients needed for the main dish but do not contain the single most important ingredient. A “chicken casserole,” for instance, that contains seasonings and other ingredients, but does not contain chicken, or a “hamburger casserole” which does not contain hamburger.

Purpose of this regulation is to avoid confusing the consumer—to make it clear that the main ingredient is not in the package.

The regulation requires that the main panel of the product’s label must clearly tell what signifi-

cant ingredient must be added as well as naming the ingredients included in the package.

After December 31, 1974, all labels on such products must comply with this regulation.

Nonjuice Beverages

Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has issued a regulation concerning the labeling of non-carbonated beverages whose flavoring, labeling, or color suggest that they contain natural fruit or vegetable juice.

If, in fact, such a beverage does not contain fruit or vegetable juice, its label must indicate that there is no natural juice in the product. This indication must appear on the label as part of the product's name.

This regulation is meant especially to protect consumers in cases where the product's label suggests that the beverage is made from natural fruit or vegetable juice. The regulation applies to beverages in all forms: liquid, concentrated, dehydrated, or powdered.

After December 31, 1974, all labels on such products must comply with this regulation.

Frozen "Heat and Serve" Dinners

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has issued a final order spelling out the foods that must be included in a packaged frozen dinner and also describing how such a product must be labeled.

These frozen meals, often referred to as "TV dinners," must contain at least three foods; one must be a significant source of protein. Each dinner must consist of one or more foods from each of the three following groups: (1) meat, poultry, fish, cheese, eggs; (2) vegetables; (3) potatoes, or another vegetable or vegetable mixture, rice or other cereal-based products (other than bread or rolls). In addition, such dinners may contain other foods, such as soup, biscuits, dessert.

The label on the package must have an accurate description of each of the three (or more) foods

included in the dinner. These foods must be listed so that the first food mentioned is the one that weighs the most, the second is the next heaviest, and so on.

Oregon Department of Agriculture Laws and Regulations

Open Dating of Foods

A new open dating labeling law requires an easily read date to be placed on all perishable foods. Included are meats, poultry, seafood, dairy products, bakery products, eggs in the shell, and packaged or refrigerated foods. This law will aid consumers in determining product freshness.

The Oregon Department of Agriculture has the responsibility for establishing the rules for dating various foods. Dates will be determined by the type of product and may be either a "packing date," a "pull date," or a "slaughter date."

The "packing date" tells when the food was packaged in final form for sale. It is up to the shopper, who may not have the technical "know-how," to judge the shelf life.

The "pull date" is the last day a retail store may sell the item as fresh. It is not the last day it could be eaten without loss of quality, however. To allow for a reasonable amount of home storage, the pull date should be considerably earlier than the end of the shelf life. How long the product should be offered for sale and how much home storage time is allowed are determined by the processor, based on his knowledge of the product and its shelf life.

Included with the date will be an explanation of what the date means.

The main idea behind open dating for food is to deliver food to consumers in as fresh a condition as possible, and open dating should encourage good handling and refrigeration practices. It will encourage distributors to rotate their food stock on a first-in, first-out basis. A well-explained and conspicuous date on the label will aid supermarkets in

keeping track of the freshness of their products. Also it will help consumers to use food while it is still top quality.

Organic Food Labeling

The Oregon Department of Agriculture defines "organically *grown* food" as a food which has been grown without pesticides, synthetic fertilizers, or other synthetic chemicals. "Organically *processed* foods" means organically grown food which in processing has not been treated with preservatives, artificial colorings, artificial flavorings, or any other artificial or synthetic additive.

Meat "produced in an organic environment" means that the meat animal was supplied with feed free from pesticides and other synthetic chemicals. No artificial growth stimulants, hormones, drugs, or antibiotics are given to the animal unless prescribed by a veterinarian for a specific disease at least 90 days before a slaughter date.

The Oregon Department of Agriculture requires that any item offered for sale labeled or advertised as "organically grown" or "organically processed" must have been produced under conditions outlined in the above definitions. It is up to the person selling the items to maintain records and data which will verify the authenticity of the "organic food." In the event of any question, it is up to the seller to submit proof including, if necessary, laboratory analysis.

Meat Regulations (Effective January 1974)

- A meat product must be labeled by its true name, as stated in a standard of identity, or by its common or usual name. If it is made from more than one ingredient, its label must also include an ingredient statement.
- Net weight and price/unit of weight must be included on a meat label.
- A meat label must include the species (i.e. beef) and primal cut (i.e. chuck).
- Ground meat products must be labeled hamburger, ground beef, lean ground beef, etc. If any descriptive terms as to leanness are used,

the maximum fat content must be stated. Ground chuck, round, etc., are no longer permitted. No additives are permitted.

- If a meat product contains an extender such as soy protein concentrate or cereal, the label must state this product contains an extender and give the percentage of extender and meat. The label must also include an ingredient statement.
- Ham which contains added water must have a declaration of "water added" in prominent lettering on the label. (In the past this has been on the whole ham but usually not on ham slices or sections of ham.)
- The term "fresh" shall not be used on labels of meat or meat products which (1) contains any added nitrates, nitrites, or other preservatives; (2) has been salted, pickled, or radiation heated or smoked; or (3) has been frozen and thawed prior to retail sale.
- Packaged fryers, whole or cut up, which do not include giblets shall be labeled "fryer without giblets." Packaged fryer parts labeled as specific parts such as breasts, thighs, etc., shall not contain parts of lesser value unless it is labeled to that effect (breast with portion of ribs).

United States Department of Agriculture Labeling Regulation

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has enforcement responsibilities for labeling of meats, poultry, and related products that cross state lines. Among new USDA regulations are stricter rules on hot dogs. USDA labeling regulations on hot dogs went into effect at the beginning of this year, 1974. They give you considerably more information than did the former regulations. According to these regulations:

1. Products made only from skeletal meat must be labeled with their generic names—such as "frankfurter," "bologna," or "knockwurst." If all the meat is from a particular species, the product

must be labeled accordingly, for example, "*beef frankfurter*."

2. Products made with meat byproducts—such as heart, tripe, and tongue—must be labeled as, for example, "*frankfurters with byproducts*" or "*franks with variety meats*."

3. Products made with up to 3.5 percent binders—such as nonfat dry milk, dried whole milk, cereal, or 2 percent isolated soy protein—also must be labeled; "*franks with byproducts, nonfat dry milk added*," for example.

Symbols on Food Labels

You may have wondered about certain letters that appear on some food labels.

The symbol "R" on a label signifies that the trademark used on the label is registered with the U.S. Patent Office.

The symbol "C" indicates that the literary and artistic content of the label is protected against infringement under the copyright laws of the United States. Copies of such labels have been filed with the Copyright Office, Library of Congress.

The letter "U" inside the letter "O" is one whose use is authorized by the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, more familiarly known as the Orthodox Union, for use on foods which comply with the Jewish dietary laws. Detailed information regarding the significance and use of this symbol may be obtained from the headquarters of that organization at 84 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10011.

The symbol "K" is used for certain food manufacturers to indicate that the food is "Kosher," that is, that it complies with the Jewish dietary laws and that its processing has been under the direction of a rabbi. Sometimes the signature of the rabbi is added for further identification.

None of the symbols referred to are required by the Food and Drug Administration.

Make Good Use of Food Labels

Agriculture, government, and industry have cooperated to produce good, safe foods with labels that accurately represent them. To make the most of this you should use the information on the label. It is to your advantage because information on the labels are a guide as to what's inside the package. Reading and understanding labels help you select:

- Nutritious foods to fit your budget. With so many different products from which to choose, labels help you find the one that meets your particular needs.
- Foods packaged in the quantity you can conveniently use. The net contents, number of servings, and similar information on the label help you to decide what is the most economical buy for you.
- The quality, texture, or style of food you want. Labels can help you get the quality and type of food you need for the intended use.
- Foods to suit your taste. The label lists the ingredients and seasonings so you can select what best suits your tastes.

