

Labelling – 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).

Labelling of packaged foods

A statement on the package must clearly identify the country in which the food was made, produced, or packaged, and whether it contains imported and/or local ingredients.

Labelling of unpackaged fresh and processed food, and fresh food in clear packages

Some unpackaged foods for retail sale need a label to:

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

Unpackaged foods requiring a label are:

- **fresh fish**, either singly or mixed with one or more other foods,
- **fish that has undergone any other processing**,
- **fresh pork and pork preserved** by any process (except where the pork is mixed with food other than those used in preserving the pork and fresh or preserved fruit or vegetables, or fresh or processed fish),
- **whole or cut fruit and vegetables, fresh or preserved by any means** (except where the preserved fruit and vegetables have been mixed with foods other than those used in preserving the fruit or vegetables and fresh or preserved pork, or fresh or processed fish), and
- **whole or cut fruit and vegetables displayed in a package** that does not obscure their nature or quality (nuts, legumes, herbs, spices and mushrooms are classified as vegetables under the Code).

Consistency with Trade Practices Act

- The labelling standard follows the principles of the *Trade Practices Act 1974 (Cwlth)* relating to false and misleading representations about the place of origin of goods. The Act specifies when statements—such as ‘product of’ or ‘made in’—can be made.

- ‘**Product of**’, ‘**produce of**’ and ‘**produced in**’ are premium claims. The country claimed must be the origin of each significant ingredient of the food and virtually all the process of manufacture of the food must have happened in that country.
- ‘**Made in**’ and ‘**manufactured in**’ can be used only if the food has been ‘substantially transformed’ in the country claimed, and 50% of the cost of production must have been incurred in that country.
- Qualified claims such as ‘**made in Australia from imported ingredients**’ or ‘**packaged in Australia from local and imported ingredients**’ can be used where uncertainty exists around the ‘substantial transformation’, the 50% production costs or variability due to seasonal changes of the produce.

Size and legibility of labels

Statements must be in **English, legible** to the average consumer and **distinct** from the background. Signs for **unpackaged goods** must be in type size of **at least 9 mm**. Where food is in an assisted service refrigerated display cabinet, the size of the type on the label must be **at least 5 mm**.

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.

More information

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

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).