

business companion

trading standards law explained

Labelling of fruit and vegetables

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Although the United Kingdom has left the European Union (EU), certain pieces of legislation (formally known as 'retained EU law') will still apply until such time as they are replaced by new UK legislation; this means that you will still see references to EU regulations in our guidance.

This guidance is for England and Wales

Fruit and vegetables should be marked with the true name of the food. Most fruit and vegetables have to be labelled with their class and may also need labelling with country of origin and variety.

Care should be taken with any other descriptions to ensure they are correct - 'organic', for example. There are other requirements in relation to pricing and weight marking of the products.

Required labelling should be on a notice with the food (shelf edge etc).

The true name of the food

Food products must have a name indicated that adequately describes them.

Irradiation

Food or ingredients that have been irradiated must be declared and labelled 'irradiated' or 'treated with ionising radiation'.

Marketing rules and grading requirements

Most fruit and vegetables are required by grading legislation to be labelled with their class and may also need labelling with country of origin and variety.

The Horticultural Marketing Inspectorate (HMI) is responsible for the enforcement of these requirements. More information on traders' [legal obligations](#) can be found on the GOV.UK website.

Country of origin or place of provenance

The country of origin or place of provenance should be marked if failure to do so would be misleading. The place of provenance is a more local description than country of origin (such as English strawberries or Tasmanian apples).

Waxed fruit and other treatments

Fruit that has been waxed must be labelled as such. Any other treatment or process that a product has been subjected to must also be given - for example, beetroot that has been dipped in vinegar or cooked should be labelled accordingly.

Cut, peeled or similarly treated prepacked fruit and vegetables

These are required to bear a list of ingredients, unless the product is made up of a single ingredient. Some prepared salads, dried fruit and peeled potatoes are treated with preservative solution to keep them fresh; this, and anything else that has been added, must be declared as an ingredient.

Allergens

If sulphur dioxide or sulphites have been used as a preservative, they must be highlighted in the ingredients list in order to comply with allergen-labelling requirements. For further information on allergen labelling see '[Food allergens and intolerance](#)'.

Organic

Organic fruit and vegetables can only come from producers, importers or processors that have been inspected and approved by a body authorised by the Government. Food from any other source is not 'organic' and to describe it as such is an offence. See '[Labelling and describing organic food](#)' for further information.

Weights and measures

For information regarding weighing and measuring requirements, please see '[Weighing and measuring fruit and vegetables](#)'.

Trading Standards

For more information on the work of Trading Standards services - and the possible consequences of not abiding by the law - please see '[Trading Standards: powers, enforcement and penalties](#)'.

In this update

No major changes.

Last reviewed / updated: March 2023

Key legislation

[Regulation \(EC\) No 1333/2008 on food additives](#)

[Marketing of Fresh Horticultural Produce Regulations 2009](#)

[Marketing of Fresh Horticultural Produce \(Wales\) Regulations 2009](#)

[Regulation \(EU\) No 1169/2011 on the provision of food information to consumers](#)

[Food Additives, Flavourings, Enzymes and Extraction Solvents \(England\) Regulations 2013](#)

[Food Additives, Flavourings, Enzymes and Extraction Solvents \(Wales\) Regulations 2013](#)

[Food Information Regulations 2014](#)

[Food Information \(Wales\) Regulations 2014](#)

Please note

This information is intended for guidance; only the courts can give an authoritative interpretation of the law.

The guide's 'Key legislation' links often only shows the original version of the legislation, although some amending legislation is linked to separately where it is directly related to the content of a guide. Information on changes to legislation can be found by following the above links and clicking on the 'More Resources' tab.

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