

businesscompanion

trading standards law explained

Retail sale of pet food

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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

This guide covers the labelling of any type of compound or manufactured pet food that is on sale either loose (from bins, hoppers or other retail bulk displays) or in small prepacks you make up yourself by breaking down larger packs.

If you buy in prepacked containers or packages, which you then offer for sale, these should have been labelled already by the manufacturer or supplier.

The pet food must be labelled with the mandatory labelling requirements; this is sometimes referred to as a 'statutory statement'.

What is a compound pet food?

A compound pet food is a product comprising a mixture of at least two ingredients (with or without additives), usually in the form of a coarse mix, kibbles / biscuits, or as a wet food in tins or pouches.

Labelling

The pet food must be labelled with both the general mandatory labelling requirements and specific mandatory labelling requirements.

General mandatory labelling requirements:

- type of feed - for example, 'feed material', 'complete feed', 'complementary feed'. For pets other than cats and dogs, the designation 'complete feed' or 'complementary feed' may be replaced by 'compound feed'. The designation 'pet food' is also allowed
- name or business name and address of the feed business operator responsible for the labelling
- establishment approval number if available
- batch or lot reference number
- net quantity
- list of feed additives, preceded by the heading 'additives'
- moisture content if it exceeds 14%

Specific mandatory labelling requirements:

- species or categories of animals for which the compound feed is intended
- instructions for proper use indicating the purpose for which the feed is intended - for example, amount per animal per day, or percentage of total daily ration)
- in cases where the producer is not the person responsible for the labelling, the name and address of the producer or an identification number
- minimum storage life: 'use before ...' followed by the date DD/MM/YY for highly perishable feed; 'best before ...' followed by the date MM/YY for other feed
- list of feed materials in descending order by weight, based on the moisture content, under the heading 'Composition'
- for pet animals, the specific name of a feed material may be replaced by the category name. A list of categories has been established (see the links to the codes of good labelling practice below)
- if special emphasis is placed on a feed material on the labelling - for example, by words, pictures or graphics - then the name and percentage weight must be indicated
- compulsory declarations of crude protein, crude oils and fats, crude fibre and crude ash under the heading 'analytical constituents'
 - or, without affecting the analysis for pet food, the replacement expressions 'protein', 'fat content' and 'incinerated residue' / 'inorganic matter' may be used respectively
- pet food manufacturers must provide contact details - for example, a free telephone number for purchasers wishing to obtain information on feed additives and the names of feed materials within a category

Labelling presentation

If the pet food arrives in a package or container, the labelling particulars should be included either directly on the container or on a label attached to it (subject to minor exemptions). Where the material arrives in bulk, the information can be supplied in accompanying documentation.

The labelling particulars must be given in a conspicuous, clearly legible and indelible manner, and in English. The particulars must be easily identifiable and not obscured by any other information. The labelling and presentation must not mislead the user as to the nature, method of manufacture, quantity, durability, composition, and species of animals for which it is intended.

Loose

When selling pet food loose (as either a feed material or compound feed) from bins or hoppers, the required mandatory labelling particulars (see above) may be displayed at the point of sale in a conspicuous place (either attached to the bin or with the feed) in such a way that it is clear to which product it relates.

In these circumstances, some of the mandatory information is exempt from being displayed at the point of sale, and instead must be provided to the purchaser at the latest on or with the invoice:

- for feed materials – the type of feed, the name of the feed material and the compulsory declaration (see Annex V to Regulation (EC) No 767/2009 *on the placing on the market and use of feed* - link in '**Key legislation**' below)
- for compound feed – the type of feed, the species or category of species for which the feed is intended and instructions for proper use

This only relates to feed sold loose in quantities not exceeding 20 kg and intended for the final user.

Where pet food is sold loose, care must be taken to ensure that any use-before or best-before dates and batch numbers are updated when new stock is added. Consideration must also be given to efficient and effective stock rotation to ensure the accuracy of information given on the labelling.

Prepacks

For prepacks that you make yourself, you must mark each pack with the required mandatory labelling particulars (see above). However, for 'multipack' pet food (such as one package with several containers, where the total weight of the package is not more than 10 kg) the full mandatory labelling only needs to be given on the outer packaging instead of on each container. The containers within the multipack must be labelled with at least the following:

- type of feed (as above)
- species or categories of animals for which the compound feed is intended
- batch or lot reference number
- minimum storage life
- net quantity
- storage conditions if specific or appropriate

Manufacturing your own pet foods

If you manufacture or mix your own pet foods for sale please contact your local trading standards service for further advice as this is a complex area always requiring prior registration and/or approval. This includes manufacturing pet food in domestic houses and other premises. More information can be found in '[Manufacturing your own pet foods](#)'.

Further information

The advice contained within this guide dictates the information that must be provided on any pet food labelling. Further optional information may also be provided. The European Commission has encouraged the development of two codes of good labelling practice (one for [pet food](#) and one for [compound feed for food-producing animals](#)). Certain EU laws have been retained and 'transposed' into UK law, and the codes

should be consulted as a guide to aid compliance with current labelling requirements.

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

Clarified requirements relating to pet food sold loose in quantities not exceeding 20 kg.

Last reviewed / updated: September 2022

Key legislation

[Regulation \(EC\) No 767/2009 on the placing on the market and use of feed](#)

[Regulation \(EC\) No 1069/2009 laying down health rules as regards animal by-products and derived products not intended for human consumption \(Animal by-products Regulation\)](#)

[Regulation \(EU\) No 142/2011 implementing Regulation \(EC\) No 1069/2009 and Directive 97/78/EC](#)

[Animal By-Products \(Enforcement\) \(England\) Regulations 2013](#)

[Animal Feed \(Composition, Marketing and Use\) \(England\) Regulations 2015](#)

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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