IRON FORTIFIED RICE AND RICE-BASED PRODUCTS

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Pursuant to the provisions of R.A. 8976 known as "An Act Establishing the Food Fortification Program and for Other Purposes" and its Implementing Rules and Regulations, and by the Department of Health (DOH) and the National Food Authority (NFA) authorizing the NFA to assist and undertake the implementation and monitoring of the Food Fortification Program for rice, this Letter-Circular is hereby issued for the information and compliance of all concerned.

A. Iron fortification is mandatory for rice, thus:

> 1. This Circular shall apply to all rice millers, importers/distributors, traders, wholesalers, retailers, repackers, manufacturers/producers of rice and rice-based food products and iron rice premix.
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> 2. All millers-traders of all rice except brown rice and locally produced glutinous rice are required to fortify their milled rice using the minimum standard fortificant of 60 mg Ferrous Sulfate/kg raw rice to a maximum tolerable level of 90 mg Fe/kg raw rice as set by BFAD.
>
> 2.1 In casne the rice miller is not the owner of the palay for milling, the palay owner shall:
>
> 2.1.1. Inform the rice miller of the destination of the milled rice, whether for export, for production of other processed food product or for direct human consumption;
>
> 2.1.2. Be responsible for the non-fortification of milled rice where he sells or distributes the same.

2.2 In case the rice miller is not the owner of the palay for milling, the miller shall report monthly to BFAD through the NFA any non-fortification required by the palay/milled rice owner.

3. Importers of all rice except brown rice, shall be responsible for iron fortification of said imported rice whether at the country of manufacture or upon arrival in the Philippines, before they are released for sale or distribution in the Phils.

4. All repackers of rice shall repack only iron-fortified rice.

5. All rice wholesalers/retailers shall sell only iron-fortified rice.

B. A NFA-prescribed label shall be required to be used and printed on all packages/containers of iron-fortified rice offered for sale in the market. It shall include in addition to the existing labeling standards for rice the word "iron fortified".

C. Local manufacturers and/or importers/distributors of iron rice premix shall secure a License to Operate with the DOH-BFAD prior to securing a license to engage in grains business with NFA.

D. All rice mill owners/operators, importers/distributors, repackers, and other grains businessmen required to fortify their milled rice shall be required to submit to NFA, a representative (1 kg) sample of their fortified rice offered for sale/distribution, for verification/testing as to the iron rice premix/fortificant content of the fortified rice. A reasonable fee shall be collected by NFA to cover the administrative cost and other expenses incurred in rendering the service.

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Compliance to this requirement is a pre-requisite to the issuance of a grains business license of NFA.

E. The above subject grains businessmen/operators of grains business establishments concerned, shall be required to attend a training/seminar to be conducted by DOH and NFA for promotion, advocacy and information dissemination on the rice fortification program. A Certificate of Attendance to said training/seminar shall be issued which shall form part of the pre-requisites in the issuance of a grains business license by NFA in addition to the compliance with the regular NFA licensing requirements, including the stated requisites under the Food Fortification Law and this Letter-Circular.

F. Monitoring

The NFA enforcement and investigation officers and/or NFA authorized personnel, in coordination with the LGU units, shall monitor in rice milling plants, public markets, retail stores and at the arrival ports in case of imported rice in coordination with the Bureau of Customs, for the strict compliance of all concerned to the Food Fortification Law and this Letter-Circular.

G. Administrative Sanctions:

Non-compliance with this Circular shall subject the offender to the imposition of any or all the applicable sanctions pursuant to R.A. 8976 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations and/or Sec. 29 of P.D. No. 4, as amended and any applicable laws.

H. This Letter-Circular shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its publication once in a newspaper of general circulation and upon filing with the UP Law Center. Strict compliance, however, by the subject grains businessmen with the mandatory provisions of the Rice Fortification Law and its Implementing Rules and Regulations, and this Letter-Circular, shall commence on November 7, 2004.

Adopted: 15 June 2004

(SGD.) ARTHUR C. YAP
Administrator

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