

GUIDELINES FOR OPEN-DATE MARKING OF PREPACKAGED FOODS

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Pursuant to Administrative Order No. 16 s. 1979, the following shall serve as the guidelines for the implementation of the Open-Date Marking Regulation:

1. Open-Date marking means legibly indicating a date on food labels/packages for the purpose of informing the consumer about the expected quality of the product at a given period of time provided that it has been properly stored. This does not mean, however, that date marking guarantees either the acceptability or the safety of the product.

2. Types of Date-Marking

2.1

Consume Before date ("use-by" Date of Expiration Date") is the date which signifies the end of the estimated shelf-life of the product under a stated storage condition, beyond which the quality of the product is significantly impaired. After this date the food should not be regarded as marketable.

2.2

Best before date (or "Best Use-by" Date) is the date which signifies the end of the period, under a stated storage condition, beyond which certain quality attributes of the product will be expected to deteriorate. However, after this date the product may still be satisfactory for human consumption and shall remain marketable.

3. The type of date marking to be indicated shall be prescribed in the guidelines for specific products.

4. Date Marking Format

4.1

The "Consume before" date and "Best before" date shall be declared by the day, month and year in uncoded numerical sequence that can easily be understood by the consumer. The following suggested format may be used:

Day

Month

Year

01

06

83

15

07

84

30

10

82

05

May

83

12

Aug

84

5. Presentation of Date Marking on Food Packages

5.1

Date Marking shall be indicated on food packages using indelible ink or embossed on cans or any other acceptable manner.

5.2

Date Marking shall appear in a conspicuous place such as in the front panel of the label or in top of packages like boxes, bottles or cans.

5.3

When embossed on the bottom end of cans the front panel of the label shall bear a statement indicating the location of the "date".

6. Guidelines for Mandatory Open-Date marking of specific food products will be issued from time to time by the Food and Drug Administration, as may be necessary in a separate FDA Regulation and shall be considered as an integral part of Administrative Order No. 16 s. 1979. Final date of full implementation for the product concerned shall be stated in said FDA Regulation.

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