

Policy interpretation -- new changes in import food labels of customs

The *Measures for the Management on Safety of I&E Food* (hereinafter referred to as the "*Measures*") was published by No. 249 order of the General Administration of Customs of China on April 12, 2021. There are new regulations on the labeling of import food. Let's take a look at the changes.

I .Historical development of labeling regulations on import food

The General Administration of Customs of China issued announcement No. 70 to cancel the label filing requirements of import prepackaged food for the first time on October 1, 2019.

The General Administration of Customs of China issued the *Measures*, which made new provisions on the labels of import fresh and frozen meat, aquatic products, health food and special diet food on April 12, 2021.

II . Background of new regulations on the import food labeling

The *Measures* stipulated the import food labeling.

(1) The packaging, labeling and identification of import food shall comply with Chinese laws and regulations and national food safety standards; If a manual is specified by law, a manual in Chinese is necessary.

This provision followed the general labeling requirements of the *Food Safety Law of the People's Republic of China* for ordinary import food, which was unchanged from the previous requirements.

(2) The packaging of imported fresh and frozen meat products should have strong, clear and easy-to-definable Chinese and English or export country (region) text marks, indicating the following: country (region) of origin, product name, production company registration number, production batch number; the product packaging should indicate the specifications, place of origin (state/province/city), destination, production date, shelf life, storage temperature, etc. in Chinese. The product must be marked with the destination of the People's Republic of China and the official inspection and quarantine mark of the exporting country.

This clause follows labeling requirements for fresh and frozen meat according to the original State Measure of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine Order No. 136 on January 4, 2011 and the Measure of Customs Order No. 243 on November 23, 2018. The original "Measure for the Inspection, Quarantine, Supervision and Administration of Imported and Exported Meat Products" has been abolished due to the issuance of the "Measure for the Administration of Import and Export Food Safety of the People's Republic of China". It is requested that this clause reflect the labeling requirements for imported fresh and frozen meat.

(3) The package of imported aquatic products should have robust, clear and easy-to-identify Chinese and English or export country (region) text marks, indicating the followings: product name and scientific name, specifications, production date, batch number, shelf life and storage conditions, production methods (seawater fishing, freshwater fishing, aquaculture), production areas (ocean fishing sea areas, freshwater fishing countries or regions, countries or regions where the aquaculture products are located), all production and processing enterprises involved (including fishing vessels, processing vessels, transport ships, independent cold storage) name, registration number and address(state/province/city), the destination must be marked as the People's Republic of China.

This clause follows labeling requirements according to the original "Measure of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine Order No. 135 on January 4, 2011 and the Measure of Customs Order No. 243 on November 3, 2018. The original "Measure for the Supervision and Administration of Import and Export Aquatic Products Inspection and Quarantine" have been abolished due to the issuance of the " *The Measures for the Management on Safety of I&E Food* of the People's Republic of China". It is requested that this clause reflect the labeling requirements for imported aquatic products.

(4) The Chinese labels of imported health foods and special dietary products must be printed on the smallest sales package and must not be affixed.

This clause aims to protect the food safety and health of certain consumer groups.

Tips: Health food refers to foods with specific health functions or for the purpose of supplementing vitamins and minerals, that is, suitable for specific groups of people. It can regulate body functions, does not aim at curing diseases, and does not cause any acute, subacute or chronic harm to the human body.

Special dietary foods refer to foods that are specially processed or formulated to meet special physical or physiological conditions and/or meet special dietary needs under conditions such as diseases and disorders. The content of nutrients and (or) other nutrients in this type of food is significantly different from comparable ordinary foods. Special dietary foods include formula foods for infants and young children, supplementary foods for infants and young children, formula foods for special medical purposes and other special dietary foods (including complementary food supplements, sports nutrition foods, and other special dietary foods with corresponding national standards).