

# **BELIZE NATIONAL STANDARD**

**BZS 1: Part 3: 1998**

## **BELIZE NATIONAL STANDARD SPECIFICATION FOR LABELLING PART 3: LABELLING OF PREPACKAGED FOOD**

**BBS  
BELIZE BUREAU OF STANDARDS**

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P.O. Box 1647  
Belize City, Belize  
CENTRAL AMERICA**

**June 1998**

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**BELIZE NATIONAL STANDARD  
SPECIFICATION FOR LABELLING PART 3:  
LABELLING OF PREPACKAGED FOOD**

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**Committee Representation**

The preparation of this standard for the Standard Advisory Council established under the Standards Act 1992, was carried out under the supervision of the Bureau's Technical Committee for Labelling, which at the time comprised of the following members:

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**0 FOREWORD**

- 0.1 This standard is the third in a series of standards on the labelling of commodities.
- 0.2 It has been prepared in an effort to prevent fraud and deception arising from misleading labelling, as well as to provide adequate information to the consumer or user of pre-packaged foods.
- 0.3 It is expected that this standard will assist Belize manufacturers in meeting the labelling requirements of regional and extra-regional markets.
- 0.4 Emphasis has been given to the need for international co-operation among standard practices prevalent in different countries of the world. Help has been given in this effort by reference to the following documents:

CODEX STAN 1: 1985 - General Standard for the Labelling of Pre-packaged Food (Revised Text), Codex Alimentarius Commission;

BNS 5: Part 2: 1994 - Labelling of Pre-packaged Foods, Barbados National Standards Institute;

GDS 1: Part 4: 1992 - Specification for the Labelling of Commodities Labelling of Pre-packaged Food, Grenada Bureau of Standards.

- 0.5 This standard is intended to be compulsory.

**1 SCOPE**

This standard applies to the labelling of all prepackaged foods to be offered as such to the consumer or for catering purposes and to certain aspects relating to the presentation thereof. This specification is not applicable to a food, which is: -

- (a) sold in an open or uncovered package;
- (b) weighed measured or counted into the package in which it is sold in the presence of the purchaser; and

- (c) packaged from bulk at the place where food is sold by retail in transparent, colourless, flexible material.

## **2 DEFINITION OF TERMS**

For the purpose of this standard, the following definitions shall apply:

- 2.1 **Alcoholic Beverages** means a liquid containing ethanol and includes spirits, liqueurs, wines, malt liquors, cider, perry, champagne, beer, stout, and spirit compounds used as foods, but does not include flavouring preparation.
- 2.2 **Batch/Lot** means a definitive quantity of a commodity produced essentially under the same conditions.
- 2.3 **Claim** means any representation, which states, suggests or implies that a food has particular qualities relating to its origin, nutritional properties, nature, processing, composition or any other quality.
- 2.4 **Competent Authority** means a Minister, Ministry, department of government or statutory in Belize (other than the Belize Bureau of Standards) administering any law regulating the labelling of food.
- 2.5 **Consumer** means person or persons and family or families purchasing and receiving food in order to meet their personal needs.
- 2.6 **Container** means any packaging of food for delivery as a single item, whether by completely or partially enclosing the food and includes wrappers. A container may enclose several units or types of packages when such is offered to the consumer.
- 2.7 **Country of Origin** means the country where the nature or quality of goods was last changed to a significant extent, other than by packaging.
- 2.8 For use in **Date marking** of prepackaged food:
  - 2.8.1 **Date of manufacture** means the date on which the food becomes the product as described.
  - 2.8.2 **Date of minimum durability** (“Best before”) means the date, which signifies the end of the period under any stated storage conditions during which the product will remain fully marketable and will retain any specific qualities for which tacit or express claims have been made. However, beyond the date the food may still be perfectly satisfactory.
  - 2.8.3 **Sell-by-date** means the last date of offer for sale to the consumer after which there remains a reasonable storage period in the home.

- 2.8.4 **Use-by-date** (recommended last consumption date) (expiration date) means the date which signifies the end of the estimated period under any stated storage conditions, after which the product probably will not have the quality attributes normally expected by the consumer. After this date, the food should not be regarded as marketable.
- 2.9 **Date of packaging** means the date on which the food is placed in the immediate container in which it will be ultimately sold.
- 2.10 **Food** means any substance, whether processed, semi-processed or raw, which is intended for human consumption, and includes drinks, chewing gum and any substance which has been used in the manufacture, preparation or treatment of "food" but does not include cosmetics or tobacco or substances used only as drugs.
- 2.11 **Food additive** means any substance not normally consumed as a food by itself and not normally used as a typical ingredient for food, whether or not it has nutritive value, the intentional addition of which to food for a technological (including organoleptic) purpose in the manufacture, processing, preparation, treatment, packing, packaging, transport or holding of such food results, or may be reasonably expected to result, (directly or indirectly) in it or its by-products becoming a component of or otherwise affecting the characteristics of such foods. The term does not include "contaminants" or substances added to food for maintaining or improving nutritional quantities.
- 2.12 **Foods for catering purposes** mean those foods for use in restaurants, canteens, schools, hospitals and similar institutions where food is for immediate consumption.
- 2.13 **Ingredient** means any substance, including a food additive, used in the manufacture or preparation of a food and present in the final product although possibly in a modified form.
- 2.14 **Label** means any brand, design, imprint, legend, mark, pictorial, symbol, tag, word or other descriptive matter, written, printed, stencilled, marked, embossed on or impressed on, attached to or affixed to, sold with, distributed with any goods.
- 2.15 **Labelling** includes any written, printed or graphic, branded, stencilled, marked, embossed or impressed matter that is present on the label, accompanies the food, or is displayed near the food, including that for the purpose of promoting its sale or disposal.
- 2.16 **Manufacturer** means the person who manufactures, produces, processes, prepares packages or pre-packages any goods for retail sale or the person who sells any food under a trade name controlled by that person. It also includes the importer.

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- 2.17 **Prepackaged** means placed, in advance of sale, in the final package in which it is intended for retail sale, and in which it may be sold, used or purchased without further packaging.
- 2.18 **Processing aid** means a substance or material, not including apparatus or utensils, and not consumed as a food ingredient by itself, intentionally used in the processing of raw materials, foods or its ingredients, to fulfill a certain technological purpose during treatment or processing and which may result in the non-intentional but unavoidable in presence of harmless residues or derivatives in the final product.

**3 GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

- 3.1 Prepackaged food shall not be described or presented on any label or in any labelling in a manner that is false, misleading or deceptive or is likely to create an erroneous impression regarding its character in any respect.
- 3.2 Prepackaged food shall not be described or presented on any label or in any labelling by words, pictorial or other devices which refer to or are suggestive either directly or indirectly, of any other product with which such food might be confused, or in such a manner as to lead the purchaser or consumer to suppose that the food is connected with such other product.

**4 MANDATORY LABELLING OF PREPACKAGED FOODS**

**4.1 Presentation of information**

4.1.1 The following information shall appear on the label of pre-packaged food as applicable to the food being labelled.

4.1.1.1 Labels on pre-packaged food shall be applied in such a manner that they will not become separated from the container.

Statements required to appear on the label by virtue of this standard or any other Belize Standards shall be clear, prominent, indelible and readily legible by the consumer under normal conditions of purchase and use.

4.1.1.2 Where a wrapper covers the container, the wrapper shall carry the necessary information on the label or the container shall be readily legible through the outer wrapper or not obscured by it.



4.1.1.3 The name and net contents of the food shall appear in a prominent position and in the same field of vision.

**4.2 The name of the food**

4.2.1. The name shall indicate the true nature of the food and normally be specific and not generic:

4.2.1.1 Where more than one name has been established for a food in a Belize Standard, at least one of these names shall be used.

4.2.1.2 In other cases, the name prescribed by national legislation shall be used.

4.2.1.3 In the absence of any such name, either a common or usual name existing by common usage as an appropriate descriptive term, which was not misleading or confusing to the consumer shall be used.

4.2.1.4 A “coined”, “fanciful”, “brand name”, or “trade mark” may be used provided it accompanies one of the names provided in Subsections 4.2.1.1 to 4.2.1.3.

4.2.2 There shall appear on the label either in conjunction with, or in close proximity to, the name of the food, such additional words or phrases as necessary to avoid misleading or confusing the consumer in regards to the true nature and physical condition of the food. This should include but not be limited to the type of packing medium, style, and the condition or type of treatment it has undergone; for example: dried concentrated, reconstituted, or smoked.

**4.3 List of ingredients**

4.3.1 Except for single ingredient foods, a list of ingredients shall be declared on the label.

4.3.1.1 The list of ingredients shall be headed or preceded by an appropriate title, which consists of or includes the term “ingredient”.

4.3.1.2 All ingredients shall be listed in descending order of ingoing weight (m/m) at the time of the manufacture of the food.

4.3.1.3 Where an ingredient is itself the product of two or more ingredients, such a compound ingredient may be declared, as such, in the list of ingredients provided that it is immediately accompanied by a list in brackets of its

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ingredients in descending order of proportion (m/m). Where a compound ingredient for which a name has been established in a Belize Standard or in national legislation constitutes less than 25% of the food, the ingredients other than food additives, which serve a technological function in the finished product, need not be declared.

4.3.1.4 Added water shall be declared in the list of ingredients except when the water formed part of an ingredient such as brine, syrup or broth used in a compound food and declared as such in the list of ingredients. Water or other volatile ingredients evaporated in the course of manufacture need not be declared.

4.3.1.5 In the case of dehydrated or condensed foods, which are intended to be reconstituted by the addition of water only, the ingredients may be listed in order of proportion (m/m) in the reconstituted product provided that a statement such as “ingredients of the product when prepared in accordance with the direction on the label” is included.

4.3.2 A specific name shall be used for ingredients in the list of ingredients in accordance with the provisions set out in Section 4.2 (The name of the food) except that:

4.3.2.1 The following class name may be used for the ingredient falling within these classes:

| <u>Name of Classes</u>                             | <u>Class Names</u>   |
|--|--|
| Refined oils other than olive                      | “Oil” together with either the term “vegetable” or “animal”, qualified by the term “hydrogenated” or “partially-hydrogenated”, as appropriate. |
| Refined fats                                       | “Fat” together with either, the term “vegetable” or “animal”, as appropriate.  |
| Starches, other than chemically modified starches. | “Starches”   |

All spices of fish where the fish constitutes an ingredient of another food and provided that the labelling and presentation of such food does not refer to a specific species of fish.

“Fish”

All types of poultry meat where such meat constitutes an ingredient of another food and provided that the labelling and presentation of such a food does not refer to a specific type of poultry meat.

“Poultry meat”.

All types of cheese where the cheese or mixture of cheeses constitutes an ingredient of another food and provide that the labelling and presentation of such food does not refer to a specific type of cheese.

“Cheese”.

All spices and spice extracts not exceeding 2% by weight either single or combination in the food.

“Spice”, “spices”, or “mixed spices”, as appropriate.

All herbs parts of herbs not exceeding 2% by weight either single or combination in the food.

“Herbs”, or “mixed herbs”, as appropriate.

All types of gum preparations used in the manufacture of gum base for chewing gum.

“Gum base”.

All types of sucrose.

“Sugar”.

Anhydrous dextrose and dextrose monohydrate.

“Dextrose” or “glucose”.

All types of caseinates.

“Caseinate”.

Press, expeller or refined cocoa butter.

“Cocoa butter”.

All crystallized fruit not exceeding 10% of the weight of the food.

“Crystallized fruit”.

4.3.2.2 Notwithstanding the provision set out in Section 4.3.2.1, pork fat, lard and beef fat shall always be declared by their specific names.

4.3.2.3 For food additives falling in the respective classes and appearing in lists of food additives permitted for use in foods generally, the following class titles shall be together with the specific name or recognised numerical identification as required by national legislation.

Anti-caking agent(s)  
Antioxidant(s)  
Colour(s)  
Emulsifier(s)  
Flavour Enhancer(s)  
Glazing Agent(s)  
Preservative(s)  
Stabilizer(s)  
Thickener(s)/Gelling agent(s)  
Anti-foaming agent(s)  
Flour Treatment agent(s)  
Artificial Sweetener(s)  
Acidity Regulator(s)  
Propellant(s)  
Raising agent(s)/Baking Powder  
Emulsifying Salt(s) \*

4.3.2.4 The following class titles may be used for food additives falling in the respective classes and appearing in lists of food additives permitted generally for use in foods:

Flavour(s) and Flavouring(s)  
Modified Starch(es)

The expression “flavours” may be qualified by “natural”, “nature identical”, “artificial” or a combination of these words as appropriate.

### 4.3.3 **QUANTITATIVE LABELLING OF INGREDIENTS**

4.3.3.1 Where the labelling of a food places special emphasis on the presence of one or more valuable and/or characterizing ingredients, or where the description of the food has the same effect, the ingoing percentages of the ingredient(s) (m/m) at the time of manufacture shall be declared.

\* *Only for processed cheese and processed cheese products.*

4.3.3.2 Similarly, where the labelling of a food places special emphasis on the low content of one or more ingredients, the percentage of the ingredient(s) (m/m) in the final product shall be declared.

4.3.3.3 A reference in the name of a food to a particular ingredient shall not of itself constitute the placing of special emphasis. A reference in the labelling of a food to an ingredient used in a small quantity and only as a flavouring shall not itself constitute the placing of special emphasis.

#### **4.4 Processing aids and carry-over of food additives**

4.4.1 A food additive carried over into a food in a significant quantity or in an amount sufficient to perform a technological function in that food as a result of the use of raw materials or other ingredient in which the additive was used shall be included in the list of ingredients.

4.4.2 A food additive carried over into foods at a level less than that required to achieve a technological function, and processing aids, are exempted from declaration in the list of ingredients.

#### **4.5 Net contents and drained weight**

4.5.1 The net contents shall be declared in the metric system (International System of Units) immediately followed by Imperial Units in Brackets\*.

4.5.2 The net content shall be declared in the following manner:

- (a) for liquid food, by volume;
- (b) for solid foods, by weight, except when such foods are usually sold by number, then a declaration by count may be given; and
- (c) for semi-solid or viscous foods, either by weight or volume.

4.5.3 In addition to the declaration of net contents, a food packed in a liquid medium shall carry a declaration of the drained weight of the food. For the purpose of this requirement, liquid medium means water, aqueous solutions of sugar and salt, fruit and vegetable juices in canned fruits and vegetables only or vinegar, either singly or in combination.

\* *The declaration of net contents represents the quantity at the time of packaging.*

**4.6 Name and address**

The name and postal address of the manufacturer of the food shall be declared.

**4.7 Country of origin**

4.7.1 The country of origin of the food shall be declared.

4.7.2 When food undergoes processing in a second country, which changes its nature, the country in which the processing is performed shall be considered to be the country of origin for the purposes of labelling.

**4.8 Batch/Lot identification**

Each container shall be permanently marked to clearly identify the lot.

**4.9 Date marking and storage instructions**

4.9.1 The following date mark shall apply:

- (a) the “date of minimum durability” shall be declared.
  - (i) this shall consist at least of:
    - the day and the month for products with a minimum durability of not more than three months;
    - the month and the year for products with a minimum durability of more than three months. If the month is December, it is sufficient to indicate the year.
  - (ii) the date shall be declared by the word:
    - “Best before...” where the day is indicated;
  - (iii) the words referred to in paragraph (ii) shall be accompanied by:
    - either the date itself; or
    - a reference to where the date is given.

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- (iv) the day, month and year shall be declared in uncoded numerical sequence except that letters may indicate the month where such use will not confuse the consumer.
- (v) notwithstanding 4.9.1 (i) an indication of the date of minimum durability shall not be required for:
  - fresh fruits and vegetables, including potatoes, which have not been peeled, cut or similarly treated;
  - wines, liqueur wines, sparkling wines, aromatized wines, fruit wines, sparkling fruit wines, and stout;
  - beverage containing 10% or more by volume of alcohol;
  - bakers' or pastry-cooks' wares which given the nature of their content, are normally consumed within 24 hours of their manufacture;
  - vinegar;
  - food grade salt;
  - confectionery products consisting of flavoured and/or coloured sugars; and
  - chewing gum; spices.

4.9.2 In addition to the date of minimum durability, any special conditions for the storage of the food shall be declared on the label if the validity of the date depends thereon.

### **4.10 Instructions for use**

Instructions for use, including reconstitution, where applicable, shall be included on the label, as necessary, to ensure correct utilization of the food.

## **5 IRRADIATED FOODS**

In the case of

- (a) a food, which can be treated with ionizing radiation/energy;
- (b) a food which contains an irradiated ingredient; and

- (c) a single ingredient product prepared from a material, which has been irradiated;

an indication of the irradiation treatment and the overall dose of radiation absorbed by the food/ingredient shall occur on the main panel of the label on the finished product in close proximity to the name of the food.

### **5.1 Presentation of Information**

- 5.1.1 The label of a food, which has been treated with ionizing radiation, shall carry a written statement indicating that treatment in close proximity to the name of the food. The use of the international food irradiation symbol, as shown below, is optional, but when it is used, it shall be in close proximity to the name of the food.



- 5.1.2 When an irradiated product is used as an ingredient in another food, this shall be so declared in the list of ingredients.
- 5.1.3 When a single ingredient product is prepared from a raw material, which has been irradiated, the label of the product shall contain a statement indicating the treatment.

## **6 EXEMPTIONS FROM MANDATORY LABELLING REQUIREMENTS**

With the exception of spices and herbs, small units, where the largest surface area is less than 10 cm<sup>2</sup> (4 in<sup>2</sup>), may be exempted from the requirement of paragraphs 4.3 and 4.8 to 4.10.

## **7 OPTIONAL LABELLING**

- 7.1 Any information or pictorial device written, printed, or graphic matter may be displayed in labelling provided that it is not in conflict with the mandatory requirements of this standard and those relating to claims and deception given in Section 3 – General Principles.



**7.2 Grade designation**

If grade designations are used, they should be in conformance with national legislation, understandable and not be misleading or deceptive in anyway.

**8 LANGUAGE**

**8.1 Language to be used on labels.**

8.1.1 the information to be included on the label of every container shall be in the English Language.

8.1.2 For export of goods to bilingual countries, all information displayed on the label of every container shall be shown in both official languages. Only the name and business address of the processor, manufacturer, packer or distributor may the shown in one of the official languages.

**9 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

9.1 Where a food consist of, or contain as an ingredient meat from an animal killed by methods of religious or ritual preparation, the food may be labelled:

- (a) “Kosher” if using the method accepted by the Jewish religion;
- (b) “Halal” if using the methods accepted by the religion of Islam.

**10 GENERAL EXEMPTION**

10.1 A processed food that is prepackaged and labelled in English in accordance with the laws or standards in force in Canada, the Caribbean Community, the European Union, or the United States of America shall be deemed to comply with this standard.

**11 ADVICE ON LABELS**

11.1 An applicant shall submit labels or drafts of labels for prepackaged processed foods to the Belize Bureau of Standards for advice as to whether they comply with this standard. The Bureau may require further information before giving an opinion.

- 11.2 The Bureau may refer the applicant to any competent authority administering a law that includes requirements for the labelling of a particular processed food.

**12 CONFLICT**

- 12.1 In the event of conflict between this standard and a supplementary standard, the latter shall prevail.
- 12.2 In the event of conflict between the provisions of this standard and the provisions of any Belize Standard referring to the labelling or marking of particular foods, the latter shall prevail.