



Voluntary Report - public distribution

Date: 8/24/1999

GAIN Report #FR9055

France

Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards

Summary of French Regulations and Labeling for Dietetic/Health Food Products

Approved by:

Frank J. Piason

U.S. Embassy

Drafted by:

Roselyne Gauthier

Report Highlights:

This report gives detailed information on French regulations for dietetic/health foods, and updates Section VII - para. 2 of the FAIRS Report FR9051 submitted by Post on July 30, 1999. It is intended for U.S. exporters of these products.

Includes PSD changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Paris [FR1], FR

Definition

A common definition of a dietetic/health food product is applied throughout the European Union (EU), and is governed by EU Council Directive No. 89-398 of May 3, 1989. This EU Directive was adopted in France by Decree No. 91-827 on August 29, 1991. The French decree stipulates that:

“To be considered as a dietetic/health food, a product must be different from a product currently consumed, either by its particular composition, or by its particular procedure of manufacturing.

A dietetic/health food product should also correspond to certain nutritional criteria.”

The major groups of products considered as dietetic/health foods are:

1. Food products for persons affected by digestion or metabolism problems, for example, diabetes, mucoviscidoses, etc;
2. Food products with low or reduced energetic value intended for weight control;
3. Food products beneficial to people in a certain physiological condition, for example, athletes, pregnant women, obese persons, etc; and
4. Baby foods or preparations for babies or small children in good health.

The range of dietetic/health food products may vary widely. However, the manufacturer should always be in a position to certify that products meet nutritional criteria outlined above.

EU Harmonization of Dietetic/Health Food Products:

Harmonization of dietetic/health food products at the EU level is aimed at protecting EU consumers, as well as facilitating the free circulation of these products within EU Member States. To date, apart from the basic EU Directive 89/398 defining health/dietetic food products, only the label and product ingredient regulations for infant foods (0 to 12 months old), toddler foods (1 to 3 years old), and food products with low or reduced calories intended for weight control have been harmonized throughout the EU.

-2-

Other health/dietetic food regulations are in the process of being harmonized in the EU. In the interim, the French decree of July 20, 1977, as amended, applies to non-harmonized health/dietetic foods in France. For additional regulation information, U.S. exporters of health/dietetic food products may contact the French Ministry of Agriculture or the Office of Agricultural Affairs of the American Embassy in Paris at the following addresses:

Direction Générale de l'Alimentation
Sous-Direction Recherche, Innovation et Réglementation
Bureau de la Réglementation Générale
251, rue de Vaugirard
75732 Paris Cedex 15
Tel: (33-1) 49 55 5007
Fax: (33-1) 49 55 5948

Office of Agricultural Affairs
American Embassy
2, avenue Gabriel
75382 Paris Cedex 08
Tel: (33-1) 43 12 2264
Fax: (33-1) 43 12 2662
Email: FasParis@compuserve.com
Internet address: <http://www.amb-usa.fr/fas/fas.htm>

-3-

Labeling of Dietetic/Health food Products

In addition to general French labeling requirements, the following information must be indicated on the labels of dietetic/health food products:

1. Brand name of the product, immediately followed by its properties and nutritional characteristics.
2. Quantity of each nutritional ingredient, expressed in grams (g), or milligrams (mg), per 100 grams of finished product.
3. Energetic value expressed in KJ and Kcal per 100 grams of finished product.
4. Packaged in a manner whereby the packaging covers the product entirely. For dietetic/health food products sold in bulk, all nutritional characteristics should be clearly brought to the attention of the consumer on the outside packaging.
5. The expiration date of the product must be clearly indicated for perishable dietetic/health food product.
6. The list of additives contained in the product. Note that some additives are not authorized in health/dietetic food products in France. The list of authorized additives and substances is contained in French Decree of October 2, 1997.

Note that a dietetic/health food product is not a medicine. Thus, the label should not indicate any curative or preventive properties.

Also, when a dietetic/health food product is first launched on the French market, the person responsible for its sale on the market in France (generally the importer or the distributor) should inform the Regional Direction of Competition, Consumption and Frauds and attach a label sample. Upon request of the administration, the manufacturer or the importer should be able to supply all information to justify the conformity of the product vis-a-vis French regulations, its nutritional characteristics and the truthfulness of the labeling indications.

Contact point for additional information on labeling:

The Office of Agricultural Affairs
American Embassy
2, avenue Gabriel
75382 Paris Cedex 08
Tel: (33-1) 43 12 2264/Fax: (33-1) 43 12 2662
Email: FasParis@compuserve.com
Internet address: <http://www.amb-usa.fr/fas/fas.htm>

L:\inetpub\ftproot\GainFiles\199908\25505582.WPD