



22 November 2010

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 24**

Series of 2010

**Subject: GENERAL GUIDELINES ON LABELING OF MEAT AND MEAT PRODUCTS**

**WHEREAS**, the Meat Inspection Code of the Philippines (RA 9296) shall provide regulations to ensure the safety, quality and wholesomeness of meat and meat products;

**WHEREAS**, Rule 37.2 of Section 37, Chapter VII of the IRR of RA 9296 states that the BAFPS, in collaboration with NMIS and with the participation of various stakeholders, shall set the standards for labeling of meat and meat products.

**WHEREAS**, Article 74 of Chapter 4 of the Consumer Act of the Philippines (RA 7394) states that the State shall enforce compulsory labeling, and fair packaging to enable the consumer to obtain accurate information as to the nature, quality and quantity of the contents of consumer products and to facilitate this comparison of the value of such products;

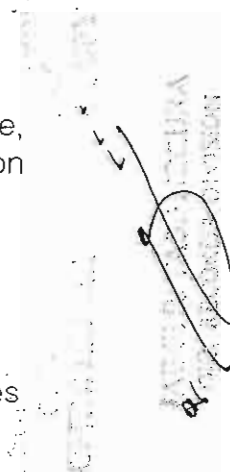
**WHEREAS**, pursuant to the Consumer Act of the Philippines, the state shall implement measures to achieve the objectives of protecting the consumer against hazards to health and safety, deceptive, unfair and unconscionable sales acts and practices;

**WHEREAS**, the Act shall provide information and education to facilitate sound choice and the proper exercise of rights by the consumer;

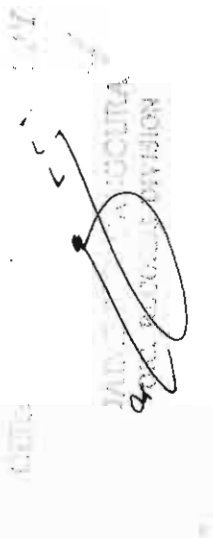
**NOW THEREFORE, I, PROCESO J. ALCALA**, Secretary of Agriculture, pursuant to the foregoing premises, do hereby issue the General Guideline on Labeling of Meat and Meat Products.

**Section 1 DEFINITION OF TERMS**

As used in this General Guideline, the following terms, words and phrases shall be construed to mean as follows:



- 1.1 Abattoir or Slaughterhouse - premises that are approved and registered by the controlling authority in which food animals are slaughtered and dressed for human consumption.
- 1.2 Carcass - the body of any slaughtered animal after bleeding and dressing.
- 1.3 Chilled Meat - meat at an internal temperature of 0-4°C (32 to 40°F)
- 1.4 Claim - a statement or representation which, suggests or implies that a food has particular qualities relating to its origin, nutritional properties, nature, processing, composition or any other quality.
- 1.5 Consumer - persons and families purchasing, and receiving food in order to meet their personal needs.
- 1.6 Container - any packaging that holds food as a single unit during its distribution, storage or sale. A container may also enclose several units or types of packages.
- 1.7 Controlling Authority - the official authority charged by the government with the control of meat hygiene and meat inspection. In this case, the DA-National Meat Inspection Service.
- 1.8 Fit for Human Consumption - meat that has passed inspection by the meat inspector as safe and wholesome and in which no changes due to disease, decomposition or contamination are evident.
- 1.9 Fresh Meat - meat that has not yet been treated in any way other than by refrigeration and/or by modified atmosphere packaging or vacuum packaging to ensure its quality and safety.
- 1.10 Frozen Meat - meat with a center temperature of -18°C (0°F).
- 1.11 Food Additive - any substance not normally consumed as a food by itself and not normally used as a typical ingredient of the 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 food. The term does not include "contaminants" or substances added to food for maintaining or improving nutritional qualities.



- 1.12 Halal – a term used for food allowed under Islamic law.
- 1.13 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.
- 1.14 Inspected and Passed – a condition wherein the carcasses or parts of carcasses so marked have been inspected and found to be safe, wholesome and fit for human consumption.
- 1.15 Kosher – a term applied to the preparation of food in accordance with Jewish dietary guidelines.
- 1.16 Label – a display of written, printed, or graphic matter on that part of the container of a food visible to the consumer.
- 1.17 Labeling - includes any written, printed or graphic 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.
- 1.18 Locally Registered Meat Establishment – slaughterhouses, meat processing plants, poultry dressing plants, meat cutting plants and cold storages that are allowed to operate by the city/municipal government but are not accredited by the NMIS.
- 1.19 Lot - means a definitive quantity of a commodity produced essentially under the same conditions.
- 1.20 Marks of Inspection – any symbol prescribed by regulations of the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture showing that an article was inspected and passed in accordance with NMIS regulations; any symbol or inscription prescribed by the DA-NMIS to be stamped on a carcass, major meat cuts, or on the packaging of meat and meat products.
- 1.21 Meat – refers to the fresh, chilled or frozen edible carcass including offal derived from food animals.
- 1.22 Meat Brand - the mark, stamped on the surface of meat and meat products or attached as a label showing distinct characteristics or information for the main purpose of identification and traceability.
- 1.23 Meat Establishment – premises such as slaughterhouse, poultry dressing plant/slaughterhouse, meat processing plant, meat cutting plant, cold storage, warehouse and other facilities in which food animals or meat products are slaughtered, prepared, processed, handled, packed or stored.

- 1.24 Meat Product - a product capable of use as human food which is made wholly or in part from any meat or other portion of the carcass of any food animal, except products which contain meat or other portions of such carcasses only in a relatively small portion or historically have not been considered by consumers as products of the meat industry, and are exempted from definition as a meat product by the Secretary under such conditions as he may prescribe to assure that the meat or other portions of such carcasses contained in such product are not adulterated and that such products are not represented as meat products
- 1.25 Prepackaged Meat - refers to meat packaged in a container in advance, ready for offer to the consumer, or for catering purposes. The packaged meat can be chilled, frozen or processed.
- 1.26 Processed - refers to meat that has been subjected to methods of manufacture and preservation but does not include prepackaged fresh, chilled, or frozen meat.

## **Section 2 SCOPE**

This general guideline shall apply to the labeling of prepackaged, chilled, frozen and processed meat and meat products for trade and commerce.

## **Section 3 THE LABEL**

### **Section 3.1 General Features**

3.1.1 Labels shall carry the necessary information about the product.

3.1.2 The information shall not be described or presented in a manner that is false, misleading or deceptive or is likely to create an erroneous impression regarding the product.

3.1.3 The information shall not be described or presented by words, pictorial or other devices which 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. Statements shall be clear, prominent, indelible and

readily legible by the consumer under normal conditions of purchase and use.

3.1.4 Labels shall be readily legible and shall be applied in such a manner that they shall not become separated from the container.

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

3.1.6 Labels can be in English or Filipino language or a combination thereof when intended for domestic consumption. If the language on the original label is not acceptable (for imported meat products), to the consumer for whom it is intended, a supplementary label containing the mandatory information in the English language may be used instead of relabeling.

3.1.7 In the case of either relabeling or a supplementary label, the mandatory information provided shall fully and accurately reflect that in the original label.

## Section 3.2 **Parts of the Label**

3.2.1 The "**Principal Display Panel**" of the label shall be that part which either through design or general use, is presented or shown to the consumer under customary conditions of display for retail sale. The Principal Display Panel must include (1) Name of the Product and (2) Net Quantity of Content Declaration, and shall appear in the same field of vision.

3.2.2 The "**Information Panel**" of the label shall be that part immediately contiguous to the principal display panel and in the case of rectangular, cylindrical or four-sided (tetra-pak) containers, any of the sides adjacent to the principal display panel except the bottom side which serves as the base of package. The Information Panel should include (1) Ingredient Listing, (2) Name and Address of the Manufacturer, Packer or Distributor, The following other types of information may be included on an optional basis: Number of Servings; Nutrition Facts, Warning Statements, if needed, Disclosure Statements and Accompanying Statements. .

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## Section 4 **Mandatory Label Information**

4.1 For meat and meat products sourced from accredited meat establishments and if imported.

4.1.1 **Name of the product** – The following may be adopted in naming the product:

- a. based on the name established in Philippine National Standard
- b. Common or usual name or an appropriate description thereof of the product. Example: Chilled Pork – Ham, Frozen Pork – Ham (Pigue).
- c. Coined or fanciful, provided name is not confusing

4.1.2 **Net quantity** – the total volume of meat or meat product inside the container in terms of weight or numerical count rounded off to at least the nearest tenths in the metric system.

4.1.3 **List of ingredients** – the following shall be included but not limited to:

- a. complete list of ingredients using their specific names shall be declared and listed in descending order of proportion by weight except for spices, seasonings and herbs (except salt), natural and artificial flavors, flavor enhancers, food additives, and vitamin and mineral nutrients and their derivatives or salts;
- b. Food ingredients known to cause hypersensitivity shall always be declared; and
- c. Food additives should be listed in their common or class name to indicate functional categories.

4.1.4 **Name and address of the manufacturer, packer/distributor and country of origin if imported:**

4.1.4.1 The name of the accredited abattoir, cutting plant or packer/distributor of the meat/meat product shall appear as the name of the manufacturer or packer/distributor;

4.1.4.2 If the product is manufactured, processed, refilled or repacked under license from a principal, the label shall so state the fact;

4.1.4.3 If the meat product is not manufactured by the person or company whose name appears on the label, the name must be qualified by "Manufactured for" or "Packed for" or similar expression, otherwise, the name of the distributor of the meat/meat product shall be shown with the phrase such as "Prepared for...";

4.1.4.4 The official place of business of the manufacturer, packer, or distributor shall be shown on the label as the official business address as name of street and city/town/municipality and zip code; In case of company with several plants, the main business office shall be used. However, marking or code name corresponding to the particular plant where the meat product was manufactured shall be indicated on the label.

4.1.4.5 The country of origin shall be indicated if the product is being exported or imported; when a 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 labeling, however, the country source of origin of the raw materials shall likewise be indicated.

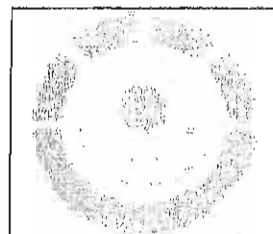
4.1.4.6 In the case of products carrying foreign brands or manufactured under license by a foreign company, the name or name and address of the foreign company, if declared, shall be in letters of type size not bigger than those used for the local company;

4.1.4.7 The name and address of the local distributor shall be declared in the labels of imported products. A sticker indicating the name and address of the importer must be attached if not printed on the label.

4.1.5 **Date of preparation or production** – shall refer to the date the meat/meat product was prepared/produced.



- 4.1.6 **Lot identification code** – shall refer to any combination of letters or numbers by which the history of the manufacture, control, packaging and distribution of the product is determined; the lot identification code shall be embossed or otherwise permanently marked on immediate individual packages or containers.
- 4.1.7 **Safe handling instruction for chilled or frozen meats** – fresh meat packed in chilled or frozen state shall bear the labeling statement “KEEP REFRIGERATED/FROZEN”; otherwise state the temperature for which the refrigeration facility or freezer shall be set and all other instruction necessary to maintain the safety, freshness and quality of the product.
- 4.1.8 **Information for Irradiated Foods** – 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 meat/meat product; 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.



## Section 5 Other Label Information

- 5.1 **Expiry or Expiration Date** – means the date after which the product is not expected to retain its quality and should not therefore be sold; the day, month and year shall be declared in uncoded numerical sequence except that the month shall be indicated by letters so as not to confuse the consumer. It shall be mandatory on the label of imported products.
- 5.2 **Establishment accreditation number** - the accreditation number assigned by the NMIS to the slaughterhouse, cutting plant, or processing plant where the meat/meat products are sourced.



5.3 Claim, symbol or recognized logo on religious preparation such as halal or kosher may be used. The recognized authority shall give certification for such claim.

5.4 Nutrition information may be included on the label or in the labeling.

### **Section 6 Labeling Requirements for Shipping Containers**

6.1 All of the mandatory information shall be pre-printed or applied to a shipping container.

6.2 The requirements for the General Features of a Label in Section 3 shall apply.

### **Section 7 Exemptions**

7.1 Meat and meat products under the following conditions, are exempted from labeling.

7.1.1 meat not in a package; or meat/meat products made and packaged on the premises from where it is to be sold to the consumer or which is packaged in the presence of the consumer

7.1.2 meat product delivered packaged, and ready for consumption, at the express orders of the purchaser.

7.2 Exporters of products shall seek exemption from the NMIS if the standard required by a receiving country is different.

### **Section 8 Responsibility for the Labels**

8.1 The meat establishment operator shall be responsible for all labels on their product. The controlling authority shall verify compliance to this requirement.

8.2 All labels intended for meat and meat products shall be submitted for review and shall be approved by the controlling authority prior to use as part of the requirements for product registration. The local

authority shall issue an ordinance pertaining to labeling of meat and meat products sourced from locally registered meat establishments.

### **Section 9 Custody of Labels**

The meat establishment operator is responsible for all labels. The controlling authority shall monitor the controls exercised by the operator.

### **Section 10 Disposal of Obsolete Labels**

The meat establishment operator is responsible for disposal of obsolete labels. The controlling authority shall monitor the controls exercised by the operator.

### **Section 11 Penalty Clause**

11.1 Any person, firm or corporation who shall violate the provision of this A.O. shall be subject to a fine of not less than Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00) but not more than Twenty Thousand Pesos (P20,000.00) or imprisonment of not less than three (3) months but not more than two (2) years or both, at the discretion of the court as provided in the Consumer Act of the Philippines.

11.2 Meat and Meat Products sold in market outlets without the prescribed label shall be seized or confiscated as prescribed in Sec. 58 of R.A. 9296.

### **Section 12 Repealing Clause**

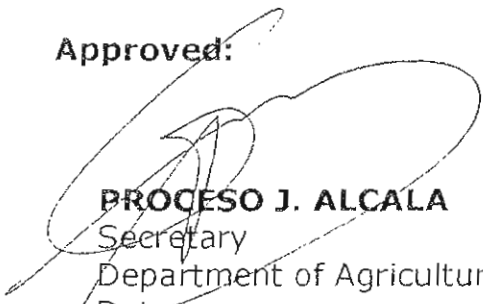
All existing laws, decrees, executive orders and rules and regulations or parts thereof which are inconsistent with this Administrative Order, are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

### **Section 13 Effectivity**

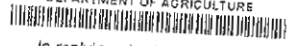
This order shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in newspaper of national circulation or in the Official Gazette or its filing with the UP Law Center.

OFFICE OF THE  
CONTROLLING AUTHORITY  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
MANILA

Approved:



**PROCESO J. ALCALA**  
 Secretary  
 Department of Agriculture  
 Date: \_\_\_\_\_

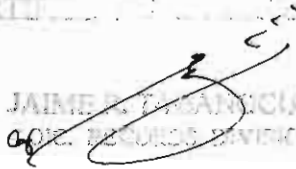
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
  
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Recommended by:



**ATTY. JANE C. BACAYO, DVM, MPA**  
 Acting Executive Director

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**JAIME B. CASANUEVA**  
 CHIEF, RECORDS DIVISION