

Generic Labeling

Effective July 1, 1996, FSIS meat and poultry regulations 9 CFR 317.5 and 381.133 respectively streamlined the label approval process and allowed establishments more flexibility. The generic approval category was expanded so that establishments could use certain labeling without prior FSIS approval. Labeling materials that qualify for generic approvals are listed below. Any labeling submitted to the Labeling Review Branch identified as qualifying for generic approvals will be returned to the establishments unapproved.

Generically approved labeling is labeling which complies with the following:

- (1) Labeling for a product which has a product standard as specified in part 319 or 381 of this subchapter or the Standards and Labeling Policy Book and which does not contain any special claims, such as quality claims, nutrient content claims, health claims, negative claims, geographical origin claims, or guarantees, or which is not a domestic product labeled in a foreign language;
- (2) Labeling for single-ingredient products (such as beef steak, lamb chops, chicken legs or turkey breasts) which does not contain any special claims, such as quality claims, nutrient content claims, health claims, negative claims, geographical origin claims, or guarantees, or which is not a domestic product labeled with a foreign language;
- (3) Labeling for containers of products sold under contract specifications to Federal Government agencies, when such product is not offered for sale to the general public, provided that the contract specifications include specific requirements with respect to labeling, and are made available to the inspector-in-charge;
- (4) Labeling for shipping containers which contain fully labeled immediate containers, provided such labeling complies with §§ 316.13 or 381.127;
- (5) Labeling for products not intended for human food, provided they comply with part 325 or §§ 381.152(c) and 381.193, and labeling for poultry heads and feet for export for processing as human food if they comply with § 381.190(b);
- (6) Meat inspection legends or poultry inspection legends, which comply with parts 312 and 316 or 381 subpart M
- (7) Inserts, tags, liners, pasters, and like devices containing printed or graphic matter and for use on, or to be placed within containers, and coverings of products, provided such devices contain no reference to product and bear no misleading feature;
- (8) Labeling for consumer test products not intended for sale; and
- (9) Labeling which was previously approved by the Food Labeling Division as sketch labeling, and the final labeling was prepared without modification or with the following modifications:
 - (i) All features of the labeling are proportionately enlarged or reduced, provided that all minimum size requirements specified in applicable regulations are met and the labeling is legible;
 - (ii) The substitution of any unit of measurement with its abbreviation or the substitution of any abbreviation with its unit of measurement, e.g., “lb.” for “pound,” or “oz” for “ounce” or of the word “pound” for “lb” or “ounce” for “oz”;
 - (iii) A master or stock label has been approved from which the name and address of the distributor are omitted and such name and address are applied before being used (in such case, the words “prepared for” or similar statement must be shown together with the blank space reserved for the insertion of the name and address when such labels are offered for approval);
 - (iv) Wrappers or other covers bearing pictorial designs, emblematic designs or illustrations, e.g., floral arrangements, illustrations of animals, fireworks, etc. are used with approved labeling (the use of such designs will not make necessary the application of labeling not otherwise required);

(v) A change in the language or the arrangement of directions pertaining to the opening of containers or the serving of the product;

(vi) The addition, deletion, or amendment of a dated or undated coupon, a cents-off statement, cooking instructions, packer product code information, or UPC product code information;

(vii) Any change in the name or address of the packer, manufacturer or distributor that appears in the signature line;

(viii) Any change in the net weight, provided the size of the net weight statement complies with §§ 317.2 or 381.121;

(ix) The addition, deletion, or amendment of recipe suggestions for the product;

(x) Any change in punctuation;

(xi) Newly assigned or revised establishment numbers for a particular establishment for which use of the labeling has been approved by the Food Labeling Division, Regulatory Programs;

(xii) The addition or deletion of open dating information;

(xiii) A change in the type of packaging material on which the label is printed;

(xiv) Brand name changes, provided that there are no design changes, the brand name does not use a term that connotes quality or other product characteristics, the brand name has no geographic significance, and the brand name does not affect the name of the product;

(xv) The deletion of the word “new” on new product labeling;

(xvi) The addition, deletion, or amendment of special handling statements, provided that the change is consistent with §§ 317.2(k) or 381.125(a);

(xvii) The addition of safe handling instructions as required by §§ 317.2(l) or 381.125(b);

(xviii) Changes reflecting a change in the quantity of an ingredient shown in the formula without a change in the order of predominance shown on the label, provided that the change in quantity of ingredients complies with any minimum or maximum limits for the use of such ingredients prescribed in parts 318 and 319 or § 381.147 and 381 subpart P;

(xix) Changes in the color of the labeling, provided that sufficient contrast and legibility remain;

(xx) A change in the product vignette, provided that the change does not affect mandatory labeling information or misrepresent the content of the package;

(xxi) The addition, deletion, or substitution of the official USDA poultry grade shield;

(xxii) A change in the establishment number by a corporation or parent company for an establishment under its ownership;

(xxiii) Changes in nutrition labeling that only involve quantitative adjustments to the nutrition labeling information, except for serving sizes, provided

the nutrition labeling information maintains its accuracy and consistency;

(xxiv) Deletion of any claim, and the deletion of non-mandatory features or non-mandatory information; and

(xxv) The addition or deletion of a direct translation of the English language into a foreign language for products marked “for export only.”

(xxvi) The addition of a descriptive term as required by §381.129(b)(6)(i).

(xxvii) The addition of a descriptive term as required by §381.129(b)(6)(ii).