

Food E-ssentials

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CONTENTS

- ▶ Allergen Labeling: EU Announces
New Regulation for Food Products 1

- ▶ BRC Global Standard for Food Safety
– Issue 5 2

- ▶ New Standard for Sustainable
Pangasius Farming 3

- ▶ China Enacts New Food Safety Law 4

- ▶ TÜV SÜD South Asia Expands 4

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Allergen Labeling: EU Announces New Regulation for Food Products

On 20 January 2009 European Commission Regulation No 41/2009 concerning the composition and labeling of foodstuffs suitable for people intolerant to gluten allowed for two new categories of foodstuffs:

1. Very Low Gluten: Applies to foodstuffs with level of gluten not exceeding 100 mg/kg as sold to the final consumer.
2. Gluten-free: Applies to foodstuffs if the gluten content does not exceed 20 mg/kg.

If applicable, these terms can be used in the labeling, advertising and presentation of the food products.

BACKGROUND

EU-wide allergen labeling directive 2003/89/EC was a major step towards protecting people with celiac disease (gluten intolerance). The directive included cereals containing gluten (wheat, rye, barley, oats, spelt, kaput or their hybridized strains) in the list of 12 food allergens that must be declared in the ingredients list on food labels.

Subsequently, on 27 November 2007, European Commission Directive 2007/68/EC exempted the following ingredients from the list of allergens that required declaration on food labels:

- wheat-based glucose syrups including dextrose;
- wheat-based maltodextrins;
- glucose syrups based on barley;
- cereals used for making distillates or ethyl alcohol of agricultural origin for spirit drinks and other alcoholic beverages.

WHO ARE AFFECTED?

Manufacturers of gluten / gluten-free products and food exporters to the EU.



IMPORTANCE OF CORRECT LABELING

Failure to provide correct labels on the food has been found to be the main reason for recalls/consumer alerts in the UK and the US. The figures for 2008 reveal that the reason for approximately 50 per cent of recalls in both countries was failure to describe one or more of the allergens present.

The incorrect labeling of allergens often occurs when producers fail to fully comprehend the various regulations or how the ingredients going into their products are processed by raw material suppliers. Labeling problems can also arise because of some oversight in the production of packaging, for example, when moving to new packaging/labeling.

HOW CAN TÜV SÜD SUPPORT?

TÜV SÜD provides comprehensive solution to support customers meet the nutritional labeling requirement for the EU market. TÜV SÜD PSB's food testing lab is able to detect as low as 20ppm of gluten in food. ■

BRC Global Standard for Food Safety - Issue 5

Certification against the latest version of BRC Global Standard for Food Safety (Issue 5) commenced on 1 July 2008. The Standard specifies safety, quality and operational criteria for processed food manufacturing and

the preparation of primary products supplied as retailer branded food products, and also for food or ingredients used by food service companies, catering companies and food manufacturers.

Originally developed in 1998 by the British Retail Consortium (BRC), the latest version, Issue 5, includes significant changes, which food manufacturers and certification bodies should take note of. ■

Topics	Key Highlights in Issue 5 of BRC Global Standard for Food Safety
SENIOR MANAGEMENT COMMITMENT AND CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Raised importance and emphasis ■ Current issue of standard required ■ Maintenance of certification ■ Attendance of operation manager at audit meetings ■ Closing of non-conformities from previous audit
GRADING SYSTEM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ More rigorous with changes in criteria for B, C and D. Example: Only one major non-conformance (NC) would be acceptable for grade B. ■ Optional unannounced audits for grade A or B ■ Re-visit by the Certification Body required within 28 days to verify corrective actions for grade C ■ Validity of the certificate according to grade (A and B grade – 1 year validity, C – 6 months validity)
HACCP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ More guidance to ensure thorough HACCP study, following closely with the Codex Alimentarius steps ■ By-product/ waste shall be identified in process flow chart and hazard analysis to be conducted
TRACEABILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Previously, the requirement was only to test the traceability system. Now, the test on the traceability system includes quantity check and mass balance.
PRODUCT RECALL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ In case of product recall, notifying the certification body (CB) is now an explicit requirement
PHYSICAL SEGREGATION OF HIGH RISK PRODUCT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ For high-risk products manufacturing, physical segregation between processing and finished products handling areas is required to control cross-contamination
EQUIPMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All equipment in direct contact with food need to have Certificates of Conformity (COC) or other evidence to indicate its suitability of use
MAINTENANCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Control of maintenance contractor ■ All maintenance work has to be followed by a documented hygiene clearance procedure ■ Suitability of maintenance consumables ■ Control of engineering workshop
CHEMICAL AND PHYSICAL CONTAMINATION CONTROL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ For glass and similar materials, documented procedures are required in case of breakage
PRODUCT DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A system to ensure updates of relevant food safety legislation / regulation of import destination ■ Shelf life trial with microbiological, chemical and organoleptic criteria ■ Product claims shall be validated
HANDLING REQUIREMENTS OF SPECIFIC MATERIALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Validation of cleaning methods required
FOREIGN BODY DETECTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Foreign body detector required unless justified otherwise
PRODUCT INSPECTION AND LABORATORY TESTING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Pathogen testing shall be located from manufacturing site ■ Clarification of procedure for reliability of test results ■ Design and operation of lab security and access ■ Organoleptic test for finished products ■ Ongoing shelf life assessment system required

New Standard for Sustainable Pangasius Farming

Pangasius farming is one of the fastest growing aquacultures in the world. In 2008, Vietnam, where 90 percent of pangasius farming occurs, produced 1.1 million tons of pangasius. (Global production was 10,000 tons in 1995.)

The rapid growth of pangasius farming, however, has given rise to the following environmental and social concerns, which, in turn, have led the industry towards forming a new farming standard.

1. **Legal:** Pangasius farms often operate outside the framework for environmental, social and food safety regulations, which itself is a source of many concerns.
2. **Environmental impact:** The new farms pose risk to wild fish, plant and animal habitat, and other water users.
3. **Feed management:** Use of fishmeal, fish oil and trash-fish as pangasius feed results in depletion of food resources for the other fish.
4. **Health management, veterinary medicines and chemicals:** Pangasius farms are prone to health problems that affect other farmed and wild stocks. Also, the inappropriate use of veterinary medicines and chemicals leads to unintended impact on the environment and human health.
5. **Social responsibility:** With large numbers of workers employed in pangasius industries, labor practices and worker rights have become issues of social concern.

PANGASIUS AQUACULTURE DIALOGUE

In order to address the above concerns and move towards sustainable farming, the various stakeholders of the pangasius industry are working together to form a new standard for pangasius farming. The first Pangasius Aquaculture Dialogue, initiated by WWF, was held in October 2007. The Dialogue brought together more than 200 pangasius farmers, processors, exporters, traders, retailers, feed and chemical manufacturers, seed suppliers, government agency representatives, non-



governmental organizations and researchers.

The Dialogue employs a transparent, multi-stakeholder process to develop measurable, performance-based standards for certifying pangasius aquaculture producers. Pangasius farmers and processing plants, and other stakeholders should take active interest in the ongoing Pangasius Aquaculture Dialogue and prepare for certification against the new standard likely to be ready by 2011.

GLOBALGAP PANGASIUS STANDARD

On 29 April 2009, GLOBALGAP launched a standard for pangasius farming. The new standard, now ready for certification, enables one-step certification of pangasius producers for implementing practices in compliance with environmentally and socially responsible farming.

TÜV SÜD SUPPORTS QUALITY TESTING FOR PANGASIUS

Evaluation for microbial contaminants, chemical contaminants and antibiotic residues is necessary, and must be carried out on each shipment of frozen seafood. Backed by state-of-the-art laboratory facilities, skilled microbiologists and chemists, TÜV SÜD provides a comprehensive range of testing services, such as microbiological analysis, chemical analysis and species identification for the seafood industry. ■

MORE INFORMATION

[Pangasius Aquaculture Dialogue](http://www.worldwildlife.org/what/globalmarkets/aquaculture/dialogues-pangasius.html)
<http://www.worldwildlife.org/what/globalmarkets/aquaculture/dialogues-pangasius.html>

[GLOBALGAP pangasius standard](http://www.globalgap.org/cms/upload/Documents/Press_releases/Press_releases_2009/GLOBALGAP_TiI_Pan_Launch_090507_en.pdf)
http://www.globalgap.org/cms/upload/Documents/Press_releases/Press_releases_2009/GLOBALGAP_TiI_Pan_Launch_090507_en.pdf

China Enacts New Food Safety Law



IMPACT ON EXPORTS / IMPORTS

Over the past two decades, Chinese food exports have grown nearly sixfold from \$4.5 billion in 1986 to \$25.7 billion in 2006. For exports, the law still requires inspection and testing by General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ). A health certificate is required before a product can be exported.

The food imported into China will need to comply with the national food safety standards. If a particular food product or additive is not covered by relevant national standards, the importer must apply to the Ministry of Health (MOH) for a safety evaluation. Foreign food exporters supplying food to China must register with AQSIQ. ■

Effective 1 June 2009, China has enacted a new Food Safety Law, which enforces stricter food safety regime under a new state-level Food Safety Commission.

The new law comes in the wake of the melamine-contaminated milk scandal in 2008, which left at least six babies dead and 300,000 others ill, besides causing worldwide scare and banning of Chinese food products.

KEY PROVISIONS

- **No exemptions:** A major problem in recent years had been the system of “trusted” companies, which were left largely unsupervised. The new law cancels all exemptions from the inspection regime.
- **Improved monitoring and risk assessment:** The new law includes a food safety risk system to monitor food-borne diseases and food contamination. Also, a food safety risk assessment system will enable risk assessment of biological, chemical and physical hazards in food and food additives.
- **Tougher penalties:** Potential offenders will be liable to receive severe punishments. Enterprises found producing or selling sub-standard foodstuffs can be subject to claims of up to 10 times the price of the product in addition to the compensation for the harm the product causes to the consumer. Criminal prosecution is also likely in severe cases.
- **Only approved materials:** Any food additives that are not in the approved government catalog cannot be used.
- **Food recall procedures:** In case of a non-conformity with food safety standards, food manufacturers will be required to promptly stop production, recall food already available in the market place, issue a notification to related producers, business operators and consumers, and record the recall.

TÜV SÜD South Asia Expands

After successfully launching seafood inspection services last year, TÜV SÜD South Asia is expanding again to offer agricultural product inspection services by August 2009. The new services on offer would be:

- quality and quantity inspections
- loading inspection
- cargo inspection
- factory inspection
- in-process inspection
- final random inspection

The current supporting infrastructure includes food testing facilities at Delhi, Bangalore and Mumbai. Additional labs will be launched at sea/dry ports in 2010. ■

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