

Food Safety Sentinel

Quarterly newsletter for Alberta Agriculture and Forestry's provincially licensed meat facility operators

Allergens, Gluten and Sulphites: Insights on how to declare them on your labels

Food allergies are an important food safety issue. When allergens are not easily identified in food, it can be a challenge for food allergy sufferers.

Allergen labelling is mandatory in Canada and applies to all prepackaged foods. Priority allergens, along with gluten sources and added sulphites, must be properly identified on a food label. This article provides an introduction on how to properly label allergens, gluten, and sulphites.

A food **allergen** is defined in the Canada *Food and Drug Regulations* as any protein or modified protein that is derived from any of the following foods:

- Tree nuts (almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, hazelnuts, macadamia nuts, pecans, pine nuts, pistachios or walnuts)
- peanuts
- sesame seeds
- wheat or triticale
- eggs
- milk
- soybeans
- crustaceans
- shellfish
- fish
- mustard seeds

Gluten is defined as any gluten protein from the grain of any of the following cereals:

- barley
- oats
- rye
- triticale
- wheat (all species, including spelt and kamut)

Sulphites are food additives. When added as an ingredient or as a component at a level of 10 ppm or more, it must be declared on the label in the same manner as allergens and gluten sources.

Both sulfites and sulphites are acceptable names. However, they are generally declared by their chemical names, such as sodium sulphite or potassium bisulphites.

Labelling article continues on next page.....

Did you know.....

There is a web page called [Information for Alberta Agriculture Licensed Meat Facilities](#) that includes regulatory updates, food safety resources and more.

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Photo credit: Food Allergy Canada

REGULATORY UPDATES

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency recently released proposed amendments to regulations on Humane Transportation of Animals. [Public comment](#) period will run until February 15, 2017.

[Consultations](#) for a draft Standards for Optimizing Animal Welfare Outcomes during Slaughter without Stunning will run until January 27, 2017.

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How are allergens, gluten sources and sulphites declared on a label?

- Declare by using the common allergen and gluten source name, or chemical name of sulphites, and
- Declare in **either** the list of ingredients or in the allergen “contains” statement.

The allergen “contains” statement is optional if all priority allergens, gluten sources and sulphites have been properly declared in the list of ingredients. If you do decide to include it on the label, the regulations require the word “contains” to be placed after the list of ingredients and that all allergens, gluten sources and sulphites are included.

Example: **Sirloin Beef Patty**

When declared in the list of ingredients, the allergen, gluten source or sulphite must be shown in parenthesis immediately after the ingredient that is an allergen, gluten or sulphite, or contains the allergen, gluten or sulphite.

Ingredients: Beef Sirloin, Seasoning (Dried Beef Stock, Hydrolyzed Soy Protein, Spices, Dried Garlic, Autolyzed Yeast Extract, Dried Onion, Natural Butter Flavour [Maltodextrin, Natural Butter Flavour **(Milk)**], Spice Extract).

There are cases when the parenthesis are not necessary such as: the allergen or gluten source already appears as part of the ingredient name (e.g. Hydrolyzed Soy Protein); it is already shown in the parenthesis of another ingredient, or it appears in the “contains” statement (see below).

Ingredients: Beef Sirloin, Seasoning (Dried Beef Stock, Hydrolyzed Soy Protein, Spices, Dried Garlic, Autolyzed Yeast Extract, Dried Onion, Natural Butter Flavour [Maltodextrin, Natural Butter Flavour], Spice Extract).
Contains Milk, Soy

Precautionary Allergen Labelling - The “May Contain” statement has been used by processors to alert consumers when allergens that are not normally part of the ingredients may be present in the product. The statement is intended to be used in cases where all efforts have been made to prevent cross contact with additional allergens.

For more information, please visit:

List of Ingredients and Allergens - Food - Canadian Food Inspection Agency <http://bit.ly/2ijKtJq>

UPCOMING EVENTS AND TRAINING

Alberta Health Services

Online Food Safety Training for Meat Processors in Alberta (free)

Alberta Food Processing Association (AFPA)

Food Safety Culture Webinar (free) February 3 or February 14, 2017

Contact melody@afpa.com to register

AFPA's Food Safety Conference February 27, 2017

Calgary, Alberta

Alberta Agriculture and Forestry

Industry Day 2017 (free) Spring 2017

Contact 310-FARM for more information.

LABELLING RESOURCES

CFIA Industry Labelling Tool

This is a food labelling reference that provides resources, including a factsheet, infographics and FAQs.

Food Labelling Information Service

Food processors can receive general labelling advice and have draft labels reviewed by contacting the CFIA's Food Safety and Fair Labelling offices in Calgary and Edmonton.

Calgary: 403-230-5450

Edmonton: 780-395-6700