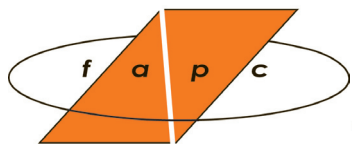


# Food & Agricultural Products Center



## FLASH!!

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY™

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## Two Food Labeling Rules Go Into Effect Jan. 1, 2006

STILLWATER, Okla. — Consumers will soon notice changes in what is listed on food labels, including food allergens and *trans* fat information.

The Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act, which goes into effect Jan. 1, 2006, will require food manufacturers to clearly state if a product contains any food allergens responsible for majority of the allergic reactions.

The act requires the U.S. Food and Drug Administration conduct inspections and issue a report within 18 months, said Nurhan Dunford, oil/oilseed chemist for the Food & Agricultural Products Center.

This procedure ensures the food manufacturers comply with practices to reduce or eliminate cross contact of a food with any major food allergens that are not intentional ingredients of the food.

“Recent studies estimate that 150 Americans die each year due to the ingestion of allergenic foods,” Dunford said. “Allergic reactions can be caused by a variety of foods, and in theory, any food protein is capable of causing allergic reactions.”

Although the exact number of allergic individuals in the United States is unknown, it is estimated that 1.5 percent of the adult population and 5 percent of children younger than three years old have some form of food allergy.

“The act will provide improved food labeling information to the consumers who suffer from food allergies,”

Dunford said. “This labeling will be especially helpful to children who must learn to recognize the presence of substances they must avoid.”

For example, if a product contains the milk-derived protein casein, the product’s label would have to use the term “milk” in addition to the term “casein.”

If the food formulation contains “albumin,” then the label would have both “egg” and “albumin,” so those with allergies would clearly understand the presence of an allergen they need to avoid.

In addition to the Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act, the FDA is requiring that contents of *trans* fat be listed on food labels. This rule also goes into effect Jan. 1, 2006.

The food label panel must specify the contents of *trans* fat in grams on a separate line below saturated fat.

This requirement has emerged from the recent finding of the adverse health effects of *trans* fatty acids. Three examples for listing *trans* fats are:

- The nutritional facts panel for all food and dietary supplements, unless exempt, must include *trans* fat content on a separate line below saturated fat.
- Labels must declare *trans* fat content in grams, rounded to the nearest 0.5 gram below 5 grams and rounded to the nearest 1 gram above 5 grams.
- Products containing less than 0.5 gram of total fat per serving and do not make fat, fatty acid

or cholesterol claims are exempt from declaring *trans* fat on a separate line in the nutritional facts panel. However, products must include the statement, “Not a significant source of *trans* fat,” at the bottom of the nutrition facts panel.

“As a result, the Food & Agricultural Products Center has focused efforts to optimize methods for determining *trans* fat in foods and provide accurate nutritional labeling concerning fat types,” El Rassi said.

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The nutritional attributes of *trans* fatty acids have been the subject of concern among food scientists, nutritionists and consumers, said Guadalupe Davila-El Rassi, FAPC analytical chemist.

Nurhan Dunford is an oil/oilseed chemist for the FAPC, and Guadalupe Davila-El Rassi is an analytical chemist for the FAPC. Both may be contacted by calling (405) 744-6071.

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