

Potato Monthly

Food
+
Nutrition
News



FOOD DIRECTIONS LLC.



Potatoes[®]
USA



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Food Labeling

Food Safety

GMO Labeling Rule

The USDA is aiming to publish a final rule on labeling food containing bioengineered (BE) ingredients by Dec 1, 2018, in order to begin enforcing the rule at the same time as FDA's update to the Nutrition Facts panel (Jan. 1, 2020). Per the proposed rule, potatoes are considered a "non-highly adopted" BE food, meaning all products that contain BE potatoes would need labeling. The final rule is currently pending review.

FDA Nutrition Facts Panel Compliance Date

This past month, FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb stated that the FDA is sticking to its January 2020 compliance date for the overhaul of Nutrition Facts labels and will not allow for further extensions, meaning all potato products will need new labels by this date.

FDA Nutrition Innovation Strategy

The public comment period for FDA's Nutrition Innovation Strategy officially closed October 11th. NPC submitted comments focused on a few main topic areas:

1. Modernization of claims (including healthy, the potential healthy icon, and the claims process)
2. Modernization of ingredient labels
3. Modernization of standards of identity
4. Sodium reduction
5. FDA's consumer education campaign

FDA 'Healthy' Definition

The FDA is planning to issue a proposed rule in March to update how the word "healthy" can be used on food labels. It's not clear how the agency will approach the update, but FDA plans to make the definition based on food groups recommended by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and also address which nutrients to limit. FDA also plans to develop an icon that could be used on food packages to accompany the new definition.

FDA Allergen Labeling

The FDA is considering new allergen labeling requirements for packaged foods containing sesame and has issued a request for information on sesame allergies from epidemiologists, nutritionists, allergy researchers, physicians, food industry and consumers. Comments are due by December 31, 2018.

FDA Nutrition Facts Guidance

The FDA issued one draft and one final guidance on various topics related to the two final rules updating the Nutrition Facts label. A comment period is open until January 4, 2019 to provide feedback on the draft guidance. The draft guidance provides information needed by manufacturers relating to a single-serving container, reference amounts customarily consumed, and dual-column labeling among other issues. The final guidance provides information regarding how to calculate "added sugars" in products for the new "added sugars" line on the Nutrition Facts Panel.

FDA Food Recall Draft Guidance

In an effort to improve the FDA food recall system, FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb announced that the agency will begin to disclose which retailers are selling recalled food products in certain situations. New draft guidance from the agency outlines the specific scenarios that they will post information about retailers carrying recalled products. The instances mostly include 'Class 1' recalls when the targeted foods could cause "serious adverse health consequences or death to humans or animals," or cases in which recalled foods might not have packaging that clearly warns buyers of the recall.

FDA Synthetic Flavors Update

Last month, the FDA announced a ban on multiple synthetic flavors linked to cancer in animals, following a May lawsuit from a coalition of public health groups. The newly banned synthetic flavoring substances are widely used in processed foods, but are typically not included on ingredient lists except as an "artificial flavor." The list of 6 flavoring substances includes synthetically-derived benzophenone, ethyl acrylate, eugenyl methyl ether (methyl eugenol), myrcene, pulegone, and pyridine. Of note, the FDA stated that these 6 flavoring substances do not pose a risk to public health under the conditions of their intended use, and there were no human studies linking these synthetic flavors to cancer at doses commonly found in human food. These ingredients will need to be removed from all foods by October 9, 2020.

FDA FY 2016 Pesticide Analysis

The FDA issued the results of its FY 2016 Pesticide Residue Monitoring Program, which marked the first time glyphosate and glufosinate were tested by the FDA. Their testing of glyphosate residues in food found no detectable amounts of the herbicide in over half of commodities tested and minimal amounts in corn and soybean samples.



Food Policy

FDA Staffing Changes

Stephen Ostroff will retire as FDA deputy commissioner for foods and veterinary medicine on January 5th. Frank Yiannas, a well known food safety executive from Walmart, plans to join the FDA in November to fill a similar role as deputy commissioner for food policy and response.

FDA Trans Fat Update

The FDA announced plans to release a rule next summer to remove all mention of partially hydrogenated oils (PHO) across the food supply and to revoke all prior sanctioned uses. As a reminder, per a 2015 announcement, all PHOs should be removed from foods.

NASEM Tax Policy Workshop Proceedings

NASEM released a report on September 20 detailing proceedings from their Roundtable on Population Health Improvement; held on December 7th, 2017. The report includes discussions on the use of selective excise taxes for nutrition-related products, such as sugary drinks, junk food (such as potato chips), and specific ingredients (e.g., high fructose corn syrup) as a public health tool.

Farm Bill Update

Several food and environmental groups have joined forces to publicly declare support for a farm bill closely aligned to the Senate version, adding that Congress needs to quickly pass legislation before the end of the year. Issues like stricter work requirements for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, commodity and energy policy, and how to pay for various proposals remain to blame for slowing down the process. Discussions also continue regarding if it truly is critical for Congress to pass an extension of the current farm bill, despite assurance from Senate Agriculture leaders that a temporary stopgap might not be needed until December.

USDA + FDA Funding

In September, the President signed a broad spending package, H.R. 6157 (115), including a continuing resolution to keep the USDA and FDA open after September 30 and making the new deadline for the outstanding agencies December 7.

Public Charge Rule

The Trump administration released a proposed rule that could bar legal immigrants from getting green cards if they use a broad range of benefits, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Of note, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) was dropped from the list of programs that would count against an applicant. The proposal has received a lot of pushback from many public health advocates, groups that represent immigrants, and anti-hunger groups that are concerned that low-income families will be discouraged from accessing SNAP, which could also affect product sales in these programs.

Nutrition Science

NASEM Food Waste Meeting

On October 17th, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine's Science and Technology for Sustainability Program hosted a public event, Reducing Food Loss and Waste: A Workshop on Impacts. The workshop focused on addressing the impacts of reducing food loss and waste on 1) farmers, 2) food prices, 3) food availability, and 4) the environment.

IFIC Foundation B-to-24 Survey Data

A new survey by the International Food Information Council (IFIC) Foundation reveals key information about parents with children from birth to 24 months (B-to-24). Findings from this report could come into play throughout the upcoming Dietary Guidelines process, which will include this age category for the first time.

Refined Starch Discussion

In late October, Dariush Mozaffarian, dean of the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University, suggested that refined starch is the biggest dietary problem in the food supply right now. He was quoted at a conference in Washington DC sharing his thoughts about refined starch being more harmful than sugar.

CDC Obesity Data

According to new data released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, seven states had an adult obesity rates at or above 35 percent in 2017. From 2012 to 2017, nearly two thirds of states had their adult obesity rate increase; no state had a significant decrease in its rate. However, a report released by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation found that nearly one in six young people in the US were obese in 2017, essentially the same rate as in 2016, suggesting that youth obesity rates may be holding steady around 16%.

Child Nutrition

A new study of parents' fast-food restaurant purchases for their children found that a growing percentage of kids still receive unhealthy drinks and/or side items with their kids' meals when they visit some of the largest restaurant chains despite commitments to offer healthier options with kids' meals. This finding is part of a new report from the Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity at the University of Connecticut.

SNAP Research

A study conducted by researchers at Tufts University and Harvard University modeled three policy scenarios that sought to gauge health and fiscal effects of influencing purchases under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Three scenarios were investigated that included subsidy options, that both restricted and preserved choice. They found that incentives or approaches that mixed incentives with disincentives or restrictions could yield between \$6.8 billion and \$42 billion in health care cost savings.

