



LABELLING REQUIREMENTS FOR IRRADIATED FOODS – INFORMATION FOR FOOD BUSINESSES

In order to sell a food in New Zealand that has been irradiated, or a food that contains irradiated ingredients or components:

- There must be a permission for the food to be irradiated in the Australia and New Zealand Food Standards Code (the Code) **Standard 1.5.3** Irradiation of food.
- The food must meet the labelling requirements of **the Code** (in particular the requirements in **Standard 1.5.3** Irradiation of food).
- For imported fresh produce, that is permitted to be irradiated, there must be a corresponding biosecurity import health standard in place for that food. The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) is responsible for the development of biosecurity import health standards.

WHAT ARE THE LABELLING REQUIREMENTS?

All food that has been irradiated, or food that contains irradiated ingredients or components, must be labelled or have a label displayed on or close to it stating that it has been treated with ionising radiation.

This labelling requirement applies to packaged food at all points in the supply chain from time of importing into New Zealand through to the point where food is sold to the consumer.

If the food is not normally required to be labelled, then the mandatory labelling statement must be displayed on or close to the food at all points of sale.

While there are no safety related reasons to require labelling, the labelling of irradiated food has been required to enable consumer choice.

WHAT WORDING IS REQUIRED?

The wording is not prescribed. Examples are:

- 'treated with ionising irradiation'
- 'irradiated (name of food)'

The international symbol of irradiation known as the radura symbol (below) may be used in addition to the mandatory labelling.



WHAT IF A SUPPLIER DOES NOT LABEL IRRADIATED PRODUCTS?

If you receive product which you suspect is irradiated but is not labelled:

- ask your supplier to confirm the presence/absence of irradiated foods, or food that contains irradiated ingredients or components;
- ask your supplier to correctly label future consignments of irradiated foods, or food that contains irradiated ingredients or components;
- find an alternative supplier and report the breach to MPI - details are over the page.

FALSE OR MISLEADING CLAIMS

Fair Trading legislation prohibits the use of any false, misleading or deceptive claims. In addition the Food Act 1981 prohibits the sale of food with false or misleading statements, words, brands, pictures, labels or marks.

The **mixing together of irradiated and non-irradiated loose produce** (e.g. tomatoes) in a self-serve area with a sign saying 'some of these tomatoes have been irradiated' is unlikely to be sufficient to meet the requirements under the Code and such a practice may be considered false or misleading. The retailer must take steps to ensure that customers can identify irradiated from non-irradiated product.

EXAMPLES OF PRODUCTS THAT WOULD BE LABELLED WITH A STATEMENT THAT THE FOOD, INGREDIENTS OR COMPONENTS HAVE BEEN TREATED WITH IONISING IRRADIATION

Imported irradiated foods or food that contains irradiated ingredients or components.

Packaged irradiated fresh tomatoes or capsicums.

Irradiated herbs and spices sold in a packet.

Processed foods containing irradiated ingredients.

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EXAMPLES OF PRODUCTS NOT NORMALLY LABELLED BUT NEEDING TO BE ACCOMPANIED BY A MANDATORY IRRADIATION STATEMENT

Irradiated whole fruit or vegetables sold loose by supermarkets, greengrocers, markets e.g. mangoes, tomatoes.

Irradiated food sold in a catering establishment.

Takeaway pizza with irradiated herbs as an ingredient.

Irradiated tomato included in a sandwich available in a display cabinet in a café.

Irradiated lychee in a fruit salad in a self service buffet.

Irradiated food included in an item ordered from a menu.

MORE INFORMATION

Further details on food irradiation can be found on the MPI website at:

Food Irradiation Fact Sheet

If you want to report an apparent breach of the Food Standards Code contact MPI by phone: 0800 693721 or by email: info@mpi.govt.nz

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Disclaimer

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