



NO TO FAKE

The counterfeiting in the food sector

Consumer guide

**How you can learn more
to be better prepared.**

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The two types of counterfeiting in the food sector

The counterfeiting in the food sector can take two forms:

1. Food fraud, falsification and adulteration.

These terms refer to products made from substances which differ in quality or quantity from those than are usually found in that type of food (substitutes), or products which are modified by substituting, removing conventional ingredients or adding new ones. **Article 5 of law no. 283/1962** prohibits the use, in the preparation or retail of foods, of foodstuffs which have been combined with substances of lower quality, or processed in a way that alters their natural composition. Adulterating or varying the composition of a food is illegal.

2. Falsification of a brand, protected geographical indication (PGI) or denomination of origin (PDO).

This relates to a false data, either on food or on its packaging, or to an illegal reproduction of the patent according to which the food is made.

This type of counterfeiting is more common abroad and has led to the development of the copycat **"Italian Sounding" market, which relates to the use of labels, symbols, colours or images on the packaging able to suggest the "Made in Italy" of the ingredients, recipes, brands or production processes, when in reality they are made abroad.**

Products are named with brands which sound "Made in Italy", but in reality they are made abroad.

The countries which "falsify" most frequently are the USA, Latin America and Australia. In 2011, the value of the export market for original Italian foods was approximately Euro 23 billion (an increase of 10%). The counterfeiting of Italian foods leads to an annual loss of approximately Euro 6 billion for the exporters, and at the end of 2011 the total exports in the segment had been squeezed by 25% (Euro 23 billion). The counterfeiting of Italian foods combined with the "Italian Sounding" market has a global turnover estimated at Euro 60 billion, a figure which equates to just under half the sales of the original products¹.

¹Source: ICE/FEDERALIMENTARE

The denominations of origin and geographical indications of foods are governed by Regulation (EC) 510/2006.

■ A “**denomination of origin**” refers to the name of a region, a specific area, or, in rare cases, a country, and indicates an agricultural or food product originally found in that area, whose quality or characteristics are essentially or exclusively attributable to the geographical environment, including natural and human factors. The product is produced, processed and packaged only in that geographical area.

■ “**Geographical indication**” means the name of a region, a specific place or in rare cases a country. It indicates that an agricultural or food product originally came from that region, whose specific quality, reputation or other characteristics may be attributed to that region, and that it is made, processed and/or packaged there.



In order to obtain this type of protection, a product must conform to regulations. A denomination of origin or a geographical indication is registered after a complex procedure, which requires a local association to submit an application to the authorities of the State in which its region is located. The State must be satisfied that all the disciplinary requirements have been met, and will then submit the application together with all the related documentation to the European Commission. The European Commission will then check the requirements and, if approved, the denomination will be registered by publication in the Official Journal of the European Union.

Under **Legislative Decree 297/2004**, a penalty of Euro 50,000 is already applied to manufacturers in cases of counterfeiting, unauthorised use of duly-registered PDOs and PGIs, or use of false or misleading information about the source, origin, nature or essential qualities of foods.

Article 15 of **Law no. 99/2009** introduced amendments to articles 473, 474 and 517 of the Penal Code with the addition of articles 474-bis, 474-ter, 474-quater, 517-ter, 517-quater and 517-quinquies. Specifically, the new article 517-quater governs the counterfeiting geographical indications or denominations of origin, an offence which carries a prison sentence of up to 2 years, and a fine of up to Euro 20,000.

The main offences encountered with regard to PDO/PGI foods relate to the unauthorised use of a protected name for identifying a generic product, irregular forms of labelling, the use of prohibited additives (in cheese for example), or the inclusion of seed oils in PDO oils.

The damage caused by counterfeit foods

Counterfeit foods lead to economic damage for the consumer, enterprises, and the State, but they also pose a risk to public health, as foods containing harmful substances are sometimes placed on the market.

In cases where the origin or source of the food is misrepresented, the food itself may not necessarily be toxic. However, in cases of fraud concerning the food quality, and the counterfeiting of the substances used in it, consumers find themselves dealing with potentially harmful substances.

A counterfeit food:

- is made with no regard for safety standards, quality or efficiency;
- may contain the correct ingredients, but an unknown origin;
- may be lacking certain important ingredients, or they may have been replaced by less expensive ones.

Counterfeit food can seriously harm your health.

A counterfeit food is inferior in quality and costs at least one-third less, to the original product. For example, some producers have made Buffalo mozzarella from powdered milk from Bolivia, which is regenerated and blended with whey and milk from Caserta. This is because Bolivian milk costs 0.50 cents per kilo.

Most counterfeit foods are marketed through two different channels: the illegal clandestine circuit, and the conventional commercial one.

- **The clandestine circuit** is, by definition, organised outside the regular one - in other words on the street, in public markets, by mail order and on the Internet.
- **The commercial circuit** is made up of stores and retail outlets selling the original products, in which the fake products are often placed alongside the authentic ones. In this channel, risks for consumers are higher, as consumers believe that the “official” status of the store is a guarantee of the product authenticity. Products marketed with counterfeit or “Italian Sounding” brands are mainly sold through this channel.

Adulterating or contaminating water or substances intended for human consumption is illegal, in the same way as counterfeiting foods intended for retail in a way that makes them dangerous to the public health.

This offence is governed by **article 440 of the Penal Code**, and carries the following punishments:

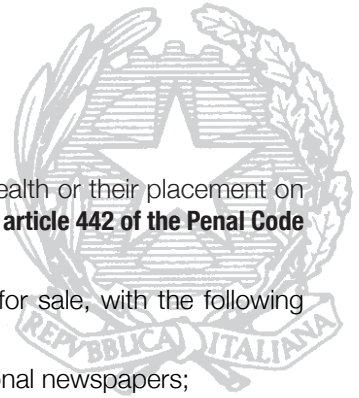
- a prison sentence of 3-10 years;

and the following additional punishments:

- publication of the court order in one or more national newspapers;
- a ban of 5-10 years from the profession, industry, trade or occupation in which the offence was committed.

This type of conduct (**the adulteration or contamination of foods**) is treated in the same way as counterfeiting food to the detriment of public health, if the offence is committed before the food is distributed for consumption. Once the food has been placed on the market, this type of conduct may also be classified as an offence against the individual, and may be subject to the punishments applicable for physical injury and homicide.

As the definition of “food” indicates a substance which is edible or intended to become edible through preparation (cooking, seasoning, conservation etc), after slaughter, the animals reared for human consumption are also considered foods.



The retail sale of products dangerous to the public health or their placement on the market is forbidden: this is an offence governed by **article 442 of the Penal Code** and carries the following punishments:

- imprisonment of 3-10 years, for foods intended for sale, with the following additional punishments:
- publication of the court order in one or more national newspapers;
- a ban of 5-10 years from the profession, industry, trade or occupation in which the offence was committed. In particularly serious cases, the following measures may also be imposed:
- the plant or factory may be closed;
- the licence may be revoked.

Food traceability

Food traceability is intended to guarantee food safety.

Traceability refers to the path followed by a specific ingredient or batch as it passes from one commercial enterprise to another, within the production chain. In practice, the flow of goods is accompanied by a flow of information, which is recorded and conserved at each step.

Regulation (EC) 178/2002, introduced the “traceability procedure”, an instrument which allows consumers to make informed choices. This procedure is defined as “the ability to trace and follow a food, feed, food-producing animal or substance intended to be or expected to be incorporated into a food or feed, through all stages of production, processing and distribution”.

Each time a product moves from one operator in the chain to the next, it must be recorded, or the incoming ingredients must be noted, so that the company which markets the finished product can trace the original ingredients.

The company marketing the finished product is also required to create distinctive codes for each batch of product sold. The code must contain details of the production date and the ingredients used. The allocation of each batch to the final distributor (the supermarket, for example) is also recorded.

From 1 January 2006, with the entry in force of the “Food Law”, the traceability obligation was extended to all agri-food products. The minimum requirements for the application of traceability by food industry operators are set out in the Agreement of 28 July 2005 between the Government, regional governments and autonomous provinces (“Guidelines on the traceability of foods and animal feeds in the interests of the public health”). With the **enacting Regulation (EU) 931/2011** - in force since July 2012 – the Commission stipulated specific requirements with regard to the traceability of animal-origin foods.

EC labelling regulations

An important development in this area was introduced on 22 November 2011, with the publication in the **Official Journal of the European Union of Regulation (EU) 1169/2011** on food information for consumers, introducing the obligation to provide essential nutritional and health information, and highlight the presence of allergens. The regulation also prohibited the inclusion of misleading information, and stipulated the minimum size of label, to make it easier to read. Labels are now also required to state the origin of all pork, lamb and poultry, in a similar way to the measures introduced for beef after the “mad cow” epidemic.

Finally, the Regulation established a multi-stage procedure entrusting the European Commission with the task of verifying the cost and worthwhileness of extending the obligatory information on origin to include meat used as an ingredient (two years), types of meat for which there is at present no obligation to indicate the country of origin, milk and milk derivatives, and other categories of food.

The other new developments include:

- 1. Mandatory nutritional information, energy content and percentage of fat, saturated fats, carbohydrates, sugars, proteins and salt** must be indicated on the packaging, in a friendly table. All the information must be presented together, in the same visual field. It must be expressed as “100 g” or “per 100 ml”, and may also be expressed in terms of portion size.
- 2. Highlighting the presence of allergens:** the new regulation has introduced different rules for indicating allergens, which must be highlighted in the list of ingredients to allow consumers to identify them more easily. The new rules also require information about allergens to be provided for unpackaged foods, for example, those sold in restaurants or canteens.
- 3. Prohibition on misleading information:** the presentation appearance, description or graphics on food packaging must not mislead consumers, but must be easy to understand. With regard to the imitation of foods, the Regulation stipulates that food products which are similar to others but made with different ingredients, such as “imitation cheeses” made with vegetable oils, must be easily identifiable. Fish which appears to be made from a single piece, but in actual fact is made from a combination of various parts, must be described as “reconstituted”.
- 4. Minimum label size for legibility:** the obligatory information on labels must be indicated in a font size of at least 1.2 mm (using the lower-case “x” as a reference), or 0.9 mm if the size of the pack is less than 80 cm². If the size of the packaging is less than 10 cm², the label is only required to give the principal information (trade name, allergens, net weight, use by date etc), arranged in a position as clearest as possible.
- 5. Expiry dates:** the expiry date must also be indicated on individually-packaged products.

Toolkit

How to avoid food fraud:

- 1 **Read the labels carefully**
- 2 **Check the origin**
- 3 **Consider the value for money factor**
- 4 **Help the industry regulators by reporting irregularities.**

The main types of food fraud are listed below:

- Selling meat containing substances such as hormones and pharmaceuticals which are forbidden, or present in larger quantities than those permitted;
- Selling meat of different qualities, cheaper cuts;
- Using species of meat and fish other than those declared;
- Treating products with banned additives;
- Selling farmed fish as freshly-caught;
- Watering-down a product;
- Reconstituting powdered milk;
- Using poor-quality milk or colostrum;
- Adding oxygenated water to milk;
- Using banned additives and flavourings.

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Labels

The following paragraphs give information about the current legislation except as mentioned before on Regulation (EU) 1169 of 22/11/2011, pending the introduction of Regulation 1169 into Italian law.

Mineral water

The main Regulation on the labelling of mineral waters are the **Ministerial Decree 11/09/2003** and **Directive (EC) 2003/40** (which contains the list, the concentration limits and the labelling guidelines for the components of natural mineral waters, and the conditions of the use of the ozone-enriched air used to treat natural and spring waters), and Ministerial Decree 11/09/2003 which introduced Directive 2003/40 into Italian law.

The labels or bottles of natural mineral waters must contain the following mandatory information:

- **the legal denomination** “natural mineral water”, with the following information if applicable: “fully de-carbonated”, “partially de-carbonated”, “fortified with gas from the spring”, “sparkling”, “naturally carbonated” or “naturally effervescent”;
- **the trade description**;
- the name of the **source** and **place** of origin;
- date of minimum **durability**;
- **the batch number**;
- **analytic composition** (in milligrams per litre), the date of testing and the laboratory name;
- **classification based on fixed residue** (minimal mineral content, oligomineral, mineral, rich in mineral salts);
- **pathogen-free** certification of (“microbiologically pure”);
- **nominal content** (net content);
- **environmental** indication (“Dispose of responsibly”);
- indications on correct **storage** and preservation.

Poultry



Following the worldwide epidemic of bird flu (H5N1) in 2004, the Italian Government issued in 2005 a Ministerial Ordinance (“Veterinary Policy Measures on infectious and contagious diseases in poultry”), which contained obligations on product labelling, not only for whole and cut meats, but also for poultry-based products such as cordon bleu, chops, kebabs etc.

With the introduction of the **Ministerial Ordinance 26/8/2005** into Italian law on 17 October 2005, the obligation to state the country of origin on the label was also extended to poultry. For chickens reared in Italy, the butcher is required to include the following information on the label:

- the **initials IT or “Italy”**, followed by the registration number of the **farm** from which the animals came;
- the **date** of slaughter or **batch number**;
- the identification number of the **slaughterhouse**. If the meat has been cut, the label must include the following information:
- the **initials IT or “Italy”**, followed by the initials of the province(s) of the **livestock farms** from which the meat originated;
- the **date** of cutting, or the **batch number**;
- the cutting plant identification number.

The mandatory information required on the label of all meat products is listed below:

- the trade description (for example “chicken legs”), and the net or nominal quantity;
- the origin of the meat (indicating the country and province of origin: for example “Reared in Italy - PC”);
- the name and address of the production plant;
- the code of the livestock farm of origin;
- the date of slaughter or cutting;
- the code identifying the slaughterhouse or production plant;
- the production batch;
- indication of the use-by date.

Beef

The Italian rules on the identification and traceability of beef conform to **Regulation (EC) 1760/2000**. The labelling system is currently determined by the **MIPAF Decree of 30/08/2000**.

- By law, the retail sale of meat must provide the consumer with the following clear information:
- **animal reference code;**
- **“born in:** (animal's country of birth)”;
- **“reared in:** (country in which the animal was reared/fattened)”;
- **“slaughtered in:** (name and address of the slaughterhouse: “Country of slaughter” and “Slaughterhouse approval number”)”;
- **“cut in:** (name and address of meat-cutting plant: “Country of processing” and “Cutting-plant approval number”)”.

The failure of one of the above items on the label is considered an offence liable to prosecution. Cases of incorrect labelling should be reported to the competent authorities.

Other information can also be given: the name of the store and its identification code, the product, batch number, the name and address of the farms where the animals were reared and fattened, the category, gender and breed of the animal. The animal's identification codes can be verified on the website of the Italian Institute of Animal Health (<http://www.anagrafe.izs.it/>) where the “history” of the cow can be traced step-by-step. All this information helps to reconstruct the production chain, so that consumers can make fully informed choices.

Chocolate

The main Regulation on the labelling of chocolate is: **Directive (EC) 2000/36**, introduced into Italian law by **Legislative Decree 12/6/2003, no. 178**.



Chocolate labels must include the following information:

- the trade description, indicating the **exact type** of chocolate you are buying (chocolate bar, praline etc);
- the term “**pure**” can be used to indicate that the product contains no vegetal fats other than cocoa butter;
- the term “**superior**” is an expression relating to quality standards (there are others such as fine, extra-fine, extra, etc.) which may be used when the content of the principal ingredients is higher than the basic recipe;
- the expression “**minimum ...% cocoa solids**” indicates the content of cocoa solids;
- the **list of ingredients** which indicates all the substances used in the product, listed in descending order of weight;
- the name and address of the **manufacturer, packager or retailer** of the product;
- the best method for conserving the product;
- the **date of minimum durability**, in other words, the date until which the product will retain its specific properties, when stored in appropriate conditions;
- the **nutritional table**, providing information about the product’s energy value and nutritional properties;
- the **quantity of product**, net of packaging, for products weighing more than 30 g;
- the **bar code**, providing machine-readable information about the manufacturer and products sold through the retailer.

Confectionery

The main Regulation on confectionery labelling is the **Decree 22/07/2005** of the Ministries of Production, Agricultural Policy and Forestry - which governs the production and sale of certain baked goods: traditional Italian confectionery such as panettoni, pandori, traditional Easter cakes, Savoiardi, soft and hard amaretti biscuits - and the general provisions of **Legislative Decree 109/92** (as amended). Directives 89/395/EEC and 89/396/EEC also govern the labelling, presentation and advertising of food products. Confectionery labels must include:

- the trade **description**;
- a **description** of the product;

- a list of **ingredients**, in decreasing order of weight;
- the name and address of the **manufacturer, packager** or **retailer**;
- optional information about the **best way to conserve** the product;
- the date of minimum durability;
- the net weight.

Products sold directly by chocolate shops may be sold without a label, provided that there is a card on the counter indicating the trade description and the list of ingredients. This information can also be given by means of a list of individual products displayed in the shop, which can be read by customers.

Fresh milk

Fresh milk

The term “milk” refers only to cow’s milk. Other types of milk must contain a reference to the species of origin: goats milk, Buffalo milk etc. Fresh cow’s milk can be sold for human consumption after having been packaged, labelled and if necessary marked with a public health stamp, in accordance with **Presidential Decree 54/97**.

- **Public health marking** is carried out at the dairy, during or immediately after production. The mark must be clearly positioned on the pack and outer wrapping, so that it is perfectly legible and indelible.
- **The expiry date** (indicating the day, month and year, in which case the batch number is not required), must be preceded by the words “Best before”, and must be indicated on the bottle or pack. This is the sixth day after thermal processing (**art. 1 of law no. 204/2004**).
- **An indication of the ingredients** as required under **art. 7 c. 2 of Legislative Decree 109/92** is not required for milk, as it is made up of a single ingredient, and because its trade description is the same as the ingredient itself. However, the nutritional label may be given (in accordance with **Legislative Decree 77/93**) in order to indicate the product’s nutritional values.

In recent years, an obligation has been introduced for fresh milk labels to state the

location of the milking dairy, as well as the packaging plant (**Ministerial Decree 27/5/ 2004**).

With Ministerial Decree **27/5/2004**, the Ministry of Production defined and stipulated rules on milk traceability, in order to guarantee the highest possible level of consumer protection.

From 7 June 2005, fresh milk containers must also contain details of the **milking zone** and/or **origin of the milk**.

The terms “fresh pasteurised milk” and “high quality fresh pasteurized milk” can only be used for milk produced in accordance with **article 4 of law 169/89 which meets the conditions of Presidential Decree 54/97**.

All other milk and dairy products, such as long-life milk, yogurt or cheese, are exempt from this obligation. Indication of origin on the label is at the manufacturer’s discretion.

Honey

In Italy, the production and sale of honey is governed by **Legislative Decree 179/04**, which extends the provisions of legislative decree 109/92 to include honey, and requires the following obligatory information to be given on the label:

- **trade description** (for example “mixed flower honey”);
- **the net or nominal quantity;**
- **the name, trade name or registered trademark;**
- the address of the **manufacturer, packager or retailer;**
- the product’s **country of origin;**
- the production **batch code;**
- the **expiry date.**

The obligation to state the Country of origin derives from the widespread mislabelling, prior to the introduction of the law, of products named “Italian honey”, produced with foreign ingredients. Products containing foreign honeys must be named with this denomination, according to origin, “Blend of EC-origin honeys”, “Blend of non-EC honeys” or “Blend of EC and non-EC honeys”. However there is no obligation to specify the countries of origin on the label.

Any phrases or slogans referring to hypothetical benefits, therapeutic or healing effects are strictly prohibited, because, by attributing characteristics which the product does not possess, they would mislead the consumer.

GMOs (Genetically Modified Organisms)

The European Union has amended **Regulation (EU) 1830/2003**, which contains provisions necessary to guarantee the traceability and labelling of GMOs – not only in respect of the organisms themselves, but also the animal feed and human foods obtained from GMOs.

On the label, the manufacturers must specify that the products contain GMOs or are derived from them; below this wording, the alphanumeric code corresponding to the organism in question must also be given. It should be remembered that some GMOs are permitted within the European Union.

Each one has a unique code so that its potential effects on human health and the environment can be monitored. It is impossible for consumers to make a wrong purchase, as the wording “This product contains genetically modified organisms” or “**This product contains (name of organism)**” must be clearly visible on the pack.

Olive oil

In Italy, the rules on the labelling of oils are set out in **Ministerial Decree 9/10/2007**, however this decree relates exclusively to virgin and extra virgin olive oils. The legislator has decided that for these superior-category products, which have a considerably higher cost, consumers have the right to know the zone of harvesting and production. The labels of virgin and extra-virgin olive oils must indicate the following information:

- **the country (or countries) in which the olives were harvested**, grown and milled: this may be a European Union member state or a non-EU country.

All countries must be clearly listed on the label, in decreasing order depending on the quantities used.

If the olives were grown and milled in different countries, the label must contain the wording “oil composed in (location of oil mill) from olives grown in (country or countries in which the olives were grown)”.

With regard to Italian products, only protected-denomination oils (PDO, PGI) can state the geographical growing area or location of the oil mill on their label.

Tomato sauce

Since 2004, the use of the term “passata di pomodoro” (tomato passata sauce) has been restricted to products obtained from the pulp of fresh tomatoes. Prior to the entry into force of **Legislative Decree 157/2004**, frozen tomatoes could also be used.

Ministerial Decree of 17/02/2006 (“Tomato passata sauce. Origin of fresh tomato”) requires the label to state the area in which the tomatoes were grown; the legal definition of “passata di pomodoro” refers to a “product obtained from the crushing of fresh tomato” and therefore excludes sauces produced from rehydrated tomato concentrate.

The packaging must therefore indicate the zone in which the fresh tomatoes used as an ingredient were grown, thus protecting the consumer against the risks of fraud and adulteration, and simultaneously protecting Italian industry against aggressive competition from low-cost foreign products.

All canned products other than passata sauce, such as sauce mixes and tomato concentrates are exempted from the obligation to state the origin. The advertising is often misleading, as it tends to promote tomato pulp as a higher-quality product than passata sauce. Customers may be encouraged to buy a product which contains tomato pieces, yet there is a clear, unique legal definition for passata, but not for tomato pulp. At present, in Italy there are no rules on the production of this type of conserve, which can also be obtained from frozen (and obviously foreign) tomatoes.



Other important information you should check on a tomato sauce label includes:

- **the dry residue**, which indicates what is left of the solid vegetable matter after all the water has evaporated. Conserves with a higher dry residue generally contain more tomatoes, and are better quality than those with a lower fixed residue. Sometimes, the dry residue is given on the label, even if not obligatory: if it is higher than 7% the sauce can be considered good quality.
- **the production batch**: this is a letter followed by a number from 1-365. The number indicates the day of the year in which the product was made, while the letter stands for the year: e.g. D. 223: D stands for 2005 and 223 is the 223rd day of the year – 11 August – in the middle of the harvesting season. If the batch number is D. 303, the product was produced on 30 October, a little late for the harvesting season.
- **the law prohibits the addition of colorants**, even if not dangerous, to products derived from tomatoes. The colour you see is therefore the actual colour of the tomato. A nice bright red indicates that it was made from good quality tomatoes, processed at the right level of ripeness.

Fish

There are two specific EU regulations governing the labelling of fresh fish: **Regulation (EC) 104/2000** and **Regulation (EC) 2065/2001**. These regulations were introduced into Italian law with **Ministerial Decree 27/3/2002**.

Products on sale must contain the following information on the label:

- **the trade name of the species** (for example “Orata/Sea bream”). Under European regulations, each country must have its own list, which clearly identifies each fish species, not based on the names linked to local tradition;
- **the scientific name of the species** (for example “Sparus aurata”), which is optional;
- **the production method** (“freshly-caught”, “caught in fresh water” or “farmed”);
- **the fishing zone**: for sea-caught fish, reference is made to the “FAO Zones”, available at www.fao.org/fishery/area/search/en; while for fish caught in fresh water, and farmed fish, the country of origin must be specified;
- **public health mark**.

With regard to frozen fish products, the pack must contain the following information, some of which is the same as for fresh fish:

- **the trade or retail description**, and if necessary, the **scientific name**;
- **the production method**;
- **the fishing zone**;
- **the list of ingredients and species contained** in the product (individual if only one product is present, otherwise the full list of the ingredients in fish soups, for example). If particular emphasis is given to one ingredient on the pack (for example: “Lobster risotto mix”), the percentage of lobster compared to the total ingredients must be declared;
- **the net or nominal quantity** (in the case of prepackaged products);
- **the date of minimum durability** (the classic “Best before.....”);
- **how the product should be stored**: (temperature, type of freezer, instructions on use, information on storage (for example “Once thawed do not re-freeze and keep in the fridge for no more than 24 hours”);
- **production batch code**;
- **the manufacturer’s declaration, address, and the address of the production/packaging plant**.

Fruit and vegetables

Under EU law, **Regulation (EC) 2002/1996**, fruit and vegetables sold through wholesale markets must declare the following information, clearly printed and visible on the packaging:

- **identification**: details of the packager and the shipping agent;
- **type of product**: trade name and description;
- **the country of origin** and the production area if applicable;
- **commercial description**: category and calibre (maximum and minimum diameter);
- **the official control stamp** (optional).

Not all this information is visible to the consumer, unless they are shopping at a wholesale market, or in a store where the product is still wrapped in the transport packaging. By law, retailers must display a sign indicating the variety, category, and origin of the products on sale.

Eggs

Eggs are one of the products about which it is easy to obtain information: the shell of each egg must be stamped with an alphanumeric code, which provides full details of:

- **the type of egg farm** (organically-farmed eggs, free-range eggs, semi-free range eggs or battery-farmed eggs);
- **the country, province and municipality of origin;**
- **the egg farm identification code.**

The date of minimum durability must also be stated.

The date of laying is optional: it is only obligatory for “extra” category eggs, which can only be sold as such within nine days of laying.

The freshness of eggs is not expressly indicated but can be deduced from the date of minimum durability: all eggs must have been laid no more than 28 days before the date marked on the pack.





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