

Food Regulatory

The Singapore Food Agency ("SFA"; previously the Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority of Singapore) administers regulatory control of food products including beverages. More information on the SFA is available at <https://www.sfa.gov.sg/>.

The main legislation governing the regulatory regime for food and supplements of food nature in Singapore are the Sale of Food Act and the Sale of Food Act (Food Regulations).

Definition of Food

Under the Act, the definition of "food" includes:

"Drink, chewing gum and other products of a like nature and use, and articles and substances used as ingredients in the preparation of food or drink of such products but does not include:

- i. Live animals or birds;
- ii. Fodder or feeding stuffs for animals, birds or fish; or
- iii. Articles or substances used only as drugs".

It should be noted that products which contain very robust claims in relation to health benefits may be classified as health supplements which fall under the purview of the Health Sciences Authority of Singapore. The classification of products in the food-health product interface is a challenging one as it is dependent on various factors. The correct classification of the product(s) in question is therefore the foremost step to be taken in assessing the relevant regulatory requirements.

Awards & Accolades

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Chambers Asia Pacific 2014 - 2024

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Asian Legal Business Southeast Asia Law Awards 2020 and 2021

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Chambers Global 2009 - 2024

Band 1 for Intellectual Property
Chambers Asia Pacific 2010 - 2024

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Legal 500 Asia Pacific 2010 - 2024

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ALB Asia IP Rankings 2018 - 2024

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Contentious and Trademark Prosecution in
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Ingredients

The Food Regulations set out restrictions on the permitted use of food additives (e.g., anti-caking agents, anti-foaming agents, anti-oxidants, artificial sweetening agents, chemical preservatives, colouring matter, emulsifiers and stabilisers, flavouring agents, flavour enhancers, humectants, nutrient supplements, sequestrants and gaseous packaging agents).

Labelling Requirements

The Food Regulations require all pre-packaged food products for sale in Singapore to be labelled according to the requirements specified.

The following basic information in English are required to be declared on food labels:

- i. Name of food product;
- ii. List of ingredients;
- iii. Net quantity;
- iv. Name and address of manufacturer or importer; and
- v. Country of origin of food.

Certain specified prepacked foods must bear a date-marking to indicate the expiry of the food. These include (amongst others):

- Cultured milk and cultured milk drink;
- Pasteurised fruit juice and pasteurized food juice drink;
- Food which is stored or required to be stored at a chilling temperature to maintain or prolong its durable life, but excluding raw fruits and vegetables;
- Vitaminised vegetable/fruit juice and vitaminised vegetable/fruit juice drink;
- Liquid milk and liquid milk products excluding condensed milk, sweetened condensed milk, evaporated milk, and canned sterilized milk and milk products;
- Chocolate, milk chocolate and chocolate confectionery in which the characteristic ingredient is chocolate or cocoa, with or without the additions of fruits or nuts; and
- Infants' food.

Further, products that are claimed to contain or that are claimed to be a rich source of vitamin(s) and/or minerals are required to bear a statement like "(quantity) of the food contains (quantity) of (name of vitamins/minerals)" to substantiate the claim. These products should also meet the requirements specified under Regulation 11 of the Food Regulations for the respective vitamin and mineral contents of which the claims are made.

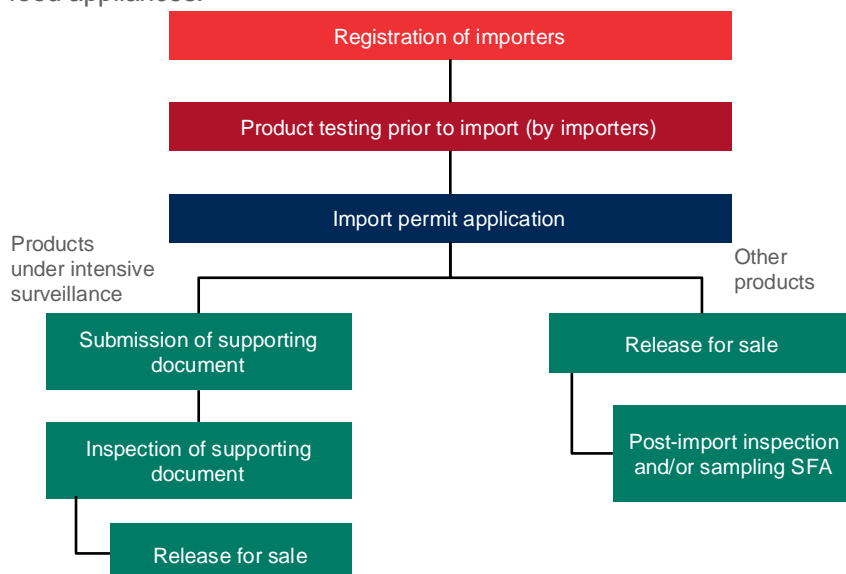
In Singapore, nutrition labelling is required only when a nutrition claim is made. A nutrition label usually takes the form of a nutrition information panel. The information in the panel includes the energy, protein, fat and carbohydrate contents of the food. The declaration of other nutrients is optional but is mandatory when such nutrients are the subject of a nutrition claim. Products which carry nutrition claims should also meet the requirements of the guidelines published by the Health Promotion Board in its "Handbook on Nutrition Labelling". Examples of nutrition claims are "source of energy", "source of protein", "low in calories" and "sugar-free".

Importation of Processed Food and Food Appliances

All imports of processed food and food appliances must comply with prevailing requirements laid down under the Act and the Food Regulations including the labelling requirements above.

Importers of processed food products and food appliances are also required to register with the SFA. Separately, an import permit is required for every import consignment of processed food products or food appliances.

The flowchart below sets out the import process for processed food and food appliances.



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