processed low-acid or acidified foods.

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

All beer and ale, distilled spirits and wine with an alcohol content of 7 percent and greater must obtain label approval from the **Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms** (BATF). Companies aspiring to act as their own importer must first obtain an import permit. The following office can be contacted for the proper forms for import permits and label approvals:

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms
650 Massachusetts Avenue
N.W. Washington, D.C. 20226
Tel: 202-927-8500

Food and Drug Administration

Food products in general come under the authority of the **United States Food and Drug Administration**. The FDA is a regulatory agency and will not examine pre-entry samples. And, unlike the BATF and the USDA, it does not approve labels or packaging. In an effort to prevent delays or rejections at the border, it does, however, offer informal comments as work loads permit.

When a shipment of food products enters the U.S., it is only then subject to FDA sampling and examination. Although shipments are free to proceed in most cases to the consignee or customer, the shipment must remain intact until samples (if drawn) are examined. You would be well advised to ensure that the consignee is familiar with this requirement. Normally, you can allow 8 to 10 working days for this process to take place. If the FDA happens to be at the border, the shipment could be released immediately. However, depending on the laboratory work required, this process can take upward of 3 to 4 weeks. If the FDA does not wish to examine the shipment, a "may proceed notice" will be issued.

The FDA is currently planning the introduction of new food labelling guidelines which will alter existing labelling requirements to ones that provide information on nutrition that is easier to understand.

The FDA has proposed voluntary guidelines for the labelling of raw produce and fish. If the guidelines are not complied with by 1993, it is possible that these products will be subject to the mandatory legislation that covers most processed foods. The legislation will likely take effect in May 1993 and the FDA has estimated that compliance with the labelling changes will cost $1.5 billion.

Low-acid or acidified products require the manufacturing facility to be registered and the manufacturing process to be filed (F.C.E.#) with the United States Food and Drug Administration. Forms are available from the national FDA office:

United States Food and Drug Administration
200 C St. S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20204
Tel: 202-485-0112

Trademarks

A trademark is a word, symbol, design or slogan (or combination of these) which identifies or distinguishes your product and which can (with renewal) last indefinitely. The rights to a trademark can result either from usage or filing an application with the U.S. Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks. Canadian companies wanting to register a trademark must designate some person residing in the U.S. to receive all official communications. For further information concerning trademarks, contact the following address:

The Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks
Washington, D.C. 20231
(703) 557-4636

Universal Product Code

With new electronic scanning systems, most major retail grocers require that products exhibit a UPC symbol. It is recommended that manufacturers obtain UPC numbers for their company and products prior to exporting to the