

The most important changes in the proposed rules are requirements for instructions and warranties. The instructions may be on the label or in a separate booklet, and there must be a notice advising the consumer to read the instructions. They must include instructions for use and assembly, if applicable.

Warranties will have to be in accordance with the *Ley Federal de Protección al Consumidor*, Consumer Protection Act. They must also specify the location of service centres in Mexico. During the term of warranties, manufacturers or importers will be required to replace "any damaged piece or component" free of charge.

Instructions, manuals and warranties must be "incorporated to the product" before sale, but they will not be required for customs clearance.

The new regulations will also broaden the range of products excluded from the labelling requirements to include the following:

- products imported by Duty Free Shops;
- imports into border cities and zones;
- live animals; and
- books, magazines and newspapers.

The draft regulations also formalize exemptions for a number of other products, such as courier packages, presently included in "letters of clarification".

## **FOOD AND BEVERAGES**

Food and beverages are presently covered by specific *Normas Oficiales Mexicanas (NOMs)*, official Mexican standards or by other regulations issued by the *Secretaría de Salud (SS)*, Secretariat of Health. Proposed general regulations were published in June 1994, covering all food and beverage products, except those sold in bulk.

The regulations require that the labels be in Spanish and that they be affixed at origin. The product description must reveal the product's basic components. In addition to the present regulations for generic products, food and beverage labels will have to include a list of ingredients, the lot number, the expiry date and special instructions for preservation. A "best before" date is optional, and nutritional information is required only if a particular nutritional quality is claimed or advertised.

Outside packages or wrappers must contain all of the required information, or must allow for the visibility of inside labels.

The new regulations also specify certain claims that may not be made on a food or beverage label. They include claims that a balanced diet does not supply adequate nutrition, claims that cannot be proven, and claims that contravene the Health Act.