

Under the current regulations, in addition to the generic requirements box, food and beverage labels must include the following:

- product description;
- date of expiration;
- list of ingredients; and
- nutritional content (if nutritional quality is claimed).

The June 1994 decree establishes a new *norma*, standard, *NOM-050-SCFI-1994* which sets out the minimum commercial information that must be provided on all product labels. The new rules will apply to all products not covered by another *NOM* or regulation.

Under the new rules, Spanish-language labels will have to be “included from origin”. This will formally eliminate the practice of affixing Spanish stickers to English labels. The labels may include other languages as well, but they must meet the metric system requirements set out in *NOM-008* and *NOM-030*.

The most important changes in the proposed rules are requirements for product use instructions. 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. The new regulations specifically exclude live animals.

Assuming that the draft regulations become law, there will be a number of additional requirements for food and beverage products. The product description 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.

Under the new rules, outside packages or wrappers will have to contain all of the required information, or 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. These include claims that a balanced diet does not supply adequate nutrition, claims that cannot be proven, and claims that contravene Mexico’s Health Act.

Although these rules are under review, the main requirements are unlikely to change. Exporters would be wise to begin complying with them as soon as possible.