

**Decree of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry**  
**on the Labelling of Beef**  
**(1203/2001)**

Chapter 1  
**General provisions**

Section 1  
*Scope of application*

- (1) This Decree lays down the more detailed provisions concerning the labelling of beef required under the following regulations of the European Community, the related official control and self-supervision as well as the approval of the labelling systems:
- 1) Regulation (EC) No 1760/2000 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 July 2000 establishing a system for the identification and registration of bovine animals and regarding the labelling of beef and beef products and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 820/97, hereinafter referred to as Council Regulation; and
  - 2) Commission Regulation (EC) No 1825/2000 of 25 August 2000 laying down detailed rules for the application of Regulation (EC) No 1760/2000 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the labelling of beef and beef products, hereinafter referred to as Commission Regulation.

Section 2  
*Relationship with other national statutes*

- (1) Provisions on the labelling of beef are also laid down in the Food Act (361/1995) and statutes issued pursuant to the Act.
- (2) Provisions on the health markings for beef and markings showing the time of freezing are laid down in Decree of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry concerning meat hygiene (16/EEO/2001) as well as Decision of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry on the hygiene of minced meats and meat preparations 20/EEO/1998, as amended.
- (3) Provisions on meat inspection of bovines, sheep and goats examined for BSE and the related labelling of beef and meat products are laid down in Decree of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry 22/EEO/2001.

Section 3  
*Definitions*

For the purposes of this Act:

- 1) *beef* means bovine carcass and cut meat obtained from such carcass as well as tails and thick skirts of bovines;
- 2) *minced beef* means beef which has been minced into fragments or passed through a spiral-screw mincer;
- 3) *origin* means information on the country where the bovine animal has been born, reared and slaughtered;

- 4) *labelling* means indication of the information referred to in the Council Regulation and Commission Regulation on a single carcass or parts of carcass or their wrappings or packages as well as in the case of other than prepackaged products provision of the relevant data clearly and in writing to the consumer at the point of sale;
- 5) *control authority* means the National Food Agency, State Provincial Office, municipal control authority or State Veterinary Officer carrying out meat inspections;
- 6) *operator* means
  - a) a retail store or slaughterhouse or place of slaughter referred to in the Act on the Hygiene of Foodstuffs of Animal Origin (1195/1996), hereinafter referred to as the Hygiene Act, as well as other establishment where beef is cut, minced or packed;
  - b) a retail store selling unpacked beef; and
  - c) a group of retail stores referred to in point 7 (*retailing chain*);
- 7) *retailing chain* means a group of retail stores which sell, mince or cut beef or sell unpacked beef; retail stores belonging to a chain share a common business logo;
- 8) *single retail store* means a retail store which does not belong to any retailing chain;
- 9) *other establishment* means a cutting plant, establishment manufacturing minced meat or separate packaging plant;
- 10) *bovine animal identification register* is an official register as set out in the Council Regulation;
- 11) *birth identification code* means a unique identification code given to each bovine animal marked on the ear tag of the animal concerned;
- 12) *batch identification* means an identification code which makes it possible to find out the birth identification codes of animals whose meat is contained in the batch; batch identification code corresponds to the reference number or reference code referred to in the Council Regulation and Commission Regulation;
- 13) *Member State* means a country which belongs to the European Union;
- 14) *third country* means a country which does not belong to the European Union;
- 15) *compulsory beef labelling system* means a labelling system drawn up by the operator and approved by the control authority; labelling system means an identification and registration system referred to in Article 1 of the Commission Regulation;
- 16) *voluntary labelling system* means a labelling system concerning an operator approved by the control authority as set out in Article 16 of the Council Regulation;
- 17) *first destination* means the unit which in Finland first receives the beef coming from another Member State; however, if the beef consignment is transported to the final destination undivided after brief storage in a freezer or other intermediate store, this final destination is to be considered the first destination; and
- 18) *register enquiry* means an enquiry into the bovine animal identification register to find out the origin, registration and date of birth of the animal, requests for testing, restrictive orders and other relevant information.

## Chapter 2

### **Authorities and control procedure**

#### Section 4

#### *Duties of the National Food Agency*

- (1) The National Food Agency acts as the competent authority pursuant to the Council Regulation and Commission Regulation, and steers and supervises the implementation of the said Regulations and this Decree.

- (2) The National Food Agency is responsible for the collection of statistical data as requested by the European Commission as well as drawing up reports and surveys.
- (3) The National Food Agency also supervises the control of the compliance with the labelling systems by the retailing chains.

Section 5  
*Duties of the State Provincial Offices*

- (1) The State Provincial Office steers and controls the control of the labelling of beef pursuant to the Council Regulation and Commission Regulation and this Decree in its own territory in accordance with instructions issued by the National Food Agency.

Section 6  
*Duties of municipal and State Veterinary Officers for meat inspections*

- (1) A municipality carries out the control and inspections pursuant to the Council Regulation and Commission Regulation in its territory as set out in section 11 of the Food Act.
- (2) In slaughterhouses and establishments connected to these, however, the competent State Veterinary Officers for meat inspection carry out the control and inspections.

Section 7  
*Control procedure*

- (1) The control authority must supervise the operators on a regular basis. The beef labelling systems of retail stores must be inspected at least once a year.
- (2) The control authority must check that the labelling of beef meets the requirements set out in the Council Regulation and Commission Regulation as well as this Decree. The controller must keep records of the checks and shortcomings detected in the control, as well as provide the operator a written account of the results of the checks and the suggested measures.
- (3) The labelling systems of slaughterhouses, places of slaughter and other establishments are supervised in connection with the control under the Hygiene Act. The labelling systems undergo a detailed check at least twice a year.

Chapter 3  
**Requirements concerning the operators**

Section 8  
*Compulsory beef labelling system*

- (1) An operator must draw up and implement the compulsory beef labelling system approved by the control authority at his or her own cost.
- (2) Approval for the compulsory labelling system for slaughterhouses is applied for from the State Veterinary Officer for meat inspection. Approval for the compulsory labelling system of a single retail store, place of slaughter and other establishment is applied for from the municipal control authority. An account of the operations and their extent as well as a description of a beef labelling system included in the self-supervision pursuant to section 12 must be attached to the application.
- (3) Provisions on the compulsory labelling system for a retailing chain are laid down in section 10.

Section 9  
*Voluntary beef labelling system*

- (1) An operator using voluntary labelling must draw up and implement a voluntary beef labelling system approved by the control authority. Provisions on the conditions for approving a voluntary labelling system as well as cancelling the approval and setting further conditions are laid down in Articles 16 and 18 of the Council Regulation.
- (2) If beef is exported to other Member States, this must be notified to the municipal control authority specified in section 6 and the National Food Agency before starting the export operations. The notification must contain a full description of the voluntary labelling system and a list of the approved voluntary labels used in the exported beef. The National Food Agency forwards the information to the other Member States and the Commission.
- (3) The Decree of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry concerning the organisation of the control of organic agricultural products, foodstuffs and alcoholic beverages (346/2000) shall apply to the labelling and control of organic products referred to in Council Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91 on organic production of agricultural products and indications referring thereto on agricultural products and foodstuffs.

Section 10  
*Approval of labelling systems of retailing chains*

- (1) A retailing chain must draw up and implement a compulsory beef labelling system at its own cost. Approval for a compulsory labelling system is applied for from the National Food Agency.
- (2) The application must show:
  - 1) name and contact information of a person responsible for the retailing chain;
  - 2) business logo of the chain;
  - 3) names, addresses and telephone numbers of retailing stores belonging to the chain as well as information on the labelling used in each store grouped according to the municipalities;
  - 4) declaration that the retail store belonging to the chain is committed to the labelling system stated in the application;
  - 5) description of the labelling system of the retailing chain;
  - 6) an account of how the chain controls the compliance with the labelling system;
  - 7) measures to be directed at the retail stores belonging to the chain in cases where a retail store fails to comply with the approved labelling system.
- (3) The retailing chain must notify the National Food Agency of any changes in the information given in the application without delay.
- (4) A retailing chain using voluntary labels must apply for the approval of a voluntary labelling system referred to in Article 16 of the Council Regulation from the National Food Agency.
- (5) A retailing chain must apply for the approval of the National Food Agency for each new label to be used in the chain.

Section 11  
*Duties of a retail store belonging to a retailing chain*

- (1) A retail store belonging to a retailing chain must incorporate the compulsory beef labelling system of the chain into its self-supervision system. If the retail store uses voluntary labels, the voluntary labelling system must also be incorporated into the self-supervision system.
- (2) A retail store belonging to a retailing chain must present a description of the type and extent of the operations as well as a description of the beef labelling systems included in the self-

supervision pursuant to sections 10 and 12 to the municipal control authority in connection with the check at the latest.

## Section 12

### *Written description of labelling systems*

- (1) The compulsory beef labelling system must be described in writing. The labelling system must be adjusted to changes in the operations. The operator is responsible for the functioning of the labelling system and keeps records on internal checks. The records must be kept for at least a year, and they must be presented to the control authority upon request. The written description of a labelling system must show the name of the person responsible for the labelling system.
- (2) The main content of the labelling system is as follows:
  - 1) description of the movement of beef as well as how the different batches are kept separate and the related work processes;
  - 2) description of the tracing and labelling of beef;
  - 3) account of the definition of the batch identification and indications used for labelling beef;
  - 4) records of the received and dispatched meat; a slaughterhouse, place of slaughter and other establishment must also keep records of the sold meat; a slaughterhouse and place of slaughter must also keep records of the bovine animals brought in for slaughter;
  - 5) a plan for withdrawing falsely labelled products from the market as well as the related communication plan; and
  - 6) a plan for informing the staff of the beef labelling system.

## Section 13

### *Duties of the first destinations*

- (1) The first destinations must keep records of the quantities and markings of beef coming in and dispatched. Records must be kept for at least a year and they must be presented to the control authority upon request.
- (2) If a beef consignment coming from another Member State does not carry the indications necessary for tracing the beef or the indications are insufficient, the first destination shall follow the provisions laid down in section 24.

## Section 14

### *Traceability*

- (1) All beef on the market must be traceable. The provisions concerning this laid down in Article 1 of the Commission Regulation shall be complied with.

## Section 15

### *Labelling of beef*

- (1) Beef marketed in Finland or exported from Finland to the other Member States must be labelled as set out in Article 13 of the Council Regulation and Articles 2 and 3 of the Commission Regulation.
- (2) The reference number or reference code referred to in Article 13(2a) of the Council Regulation must be indicated by either “Erätunnus/ Batch identification code” or “Erä/Batch”, or the indications must otherwise show the batch identification clearly;
- (3) An operator must provide adequate information on the labelling of beef to other operators as set out in this Decree as well as section 8 of the Food Act.

Section 16  
*Labelling of minced beef*

- (1) Beef marketed in Finland or exported from Finland to the other Member States must be labelled as set out in Articles 13 and 14 of the Council Regulation and Article 5 of the Commission Regulation.
- (2) If minced beef is mixed with meat from other animals, the labels concern the share of minced beef in such mixtures.

Section 17  
*Labelling of beef from third countries when all information is not available*

- (1) Beef imported from third countries for which all information set out in Article 13 of the Council Regulation must be labelled pursuant to Article 15 of the Council Regulation.

Section 18  
*Voluntary labelling of beef and minced beef*

- (1) Beef and minced beef may carry other voluntary labels as laid down in Article 16 of the Council Regulation. Voluntary labels may also be attached to minced beef pursuant to Article 14 of the Council Regulation and Article 5 of the Commission Regulation.

Section 19  
*Size of a group*

- (1) In respect of the size of the group, the provisions laid down in Article 4 of the Commission Regulation shall be complied with.

Section 20  
*Other requirements concerning labelling*

- (1) The day of slaughter and birth identification code of the animal as well as other indications referred to in section 15 must be marked on the carcass and parts of a carcass.
- (2) Slaughterhouses and places of slaughter must check the information on the animals brought in for slaughter needed for the labelling of meat by means of register enquiry.
- (3) If beef is cut, minced or packaged in other establishment or retail store, the meat or its wrapping or package or labels attached to these must clearly show the indications required under section 15.
- (4) Indications required under section 15 must be clearly shown nearby in the case of beef which is sold unpacked.
- (5) An operator who sells beef to consumers must verify the accuracy of the indications as set out in sections 6 and 8 of the Food Act.
- (6) Provisions on labelling in the Finnish and Swedish language are laid down in section 21 of the Decree concerning the labelling of food packages (794/1991).

Chapter 4  
**Duties of the control authority and the National Food Agency**

Section 21  
*Duties of the control authority*

- (1) The control authority must notify the National Food Agency of the approval of a compulsory and voluntary labelling system of a slaughterhouse, place of slaughter, other establishment and a single retail store.
- (2) The notification must include the following information:
  - 1) name, address and line of business of the operator; and
  - 2) for the part of a voluntary labelling system, the voluntary indications approved by the control authority and the date of approval.

Section 22  
*Duties of the National Food Agency*

- (1) The National Food Agency informs the municipal control authority of the approved labelling system of a retailing chain.
- (2) The National Food Agency keeps a national register of the operators and notifies the State Provincial Office of the approval to the register regularly. The National Food Agency keeps the register referred to in Article 10 of the Commission Regulation.
- (3) The National Food Agency keeps a list of operators of the other Member States and third countries which the other Member States or the Commission have notified to it as set out in Article 11 of the Commission Regulation. When necessary the National Food Agency notifies the operators concerned to the State Provincial Offices and control authorities.
- (4) The National Food Agency deals with and makes the decision on applications referred to in Article 6 of the Commission Regulation.
- (5) The National Food Agency must communicate the information referred to in Article 11(c) to the Commission.

Chapter 5  
**Sanctions and payments**

Section 23  
*Penalties and coercive means*

- (1) Provisions concerning the penalties for breaches this Decree or the Commission Regulation are laid down in section 39 of the Food Act and section 8 of the Act on Implementing the Common Agricultural Policy of the European Community (1100/1994).
- (2) Provisions concerning coercive means are laid down in Chapter 8 of the Food Act.

Section 24  
*Incorrectly labelled beef*

- (1) In the case of incorrectly labelled or unlabelled beef or beef which cannot be traced as set out in Article 1 of the Commission Regulation, the provisions laid down in Article 9 of the Commission Regulation shall be complied with.
- (2) In accordance with Chapter 8 of the Food Act, the control authority may take the necessary measures to remove the incorrectly labelled batches of beef from the market.

## Section 25

### *Payments*

- (1) The relevant State authority may collect a payment for control under this Decree as set out in section 25 of the Food Act. The relevant provisions laid down in the Act on the Charge Criteria of the State (150/1992) shall be complied with when establishing the payments.

## Chapter 6

### **Entry into force and transitional provisions**

## Section 26

### *Entry into force*

- (1) This Decree enters into force on 1 January 2002.
- (2) This Decree repeals the Decree of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry concerning the labelling of beef of 7 September 2000 (786/2000). This Act applies to batches of beef packaged prior to 1 January 2002.

Helsinki 11 December 2001