Food Labelling
Why is food labelling necessary?

• It is a source of information for consumers

• It allows the consumer to make informed decisions

• It gives important dietary advice
Labels should:

✓ Be clear and legible

✓ Be written in English or Irish (if sold in Ireland)

✓ Have easy to understand information

✓ Be clearly visible. Labels should not be hidden by pictures etc

✓ Be impossible to remove

✓ Not mislead the consumer
Food labelling comes under the following laws:

- Consumer Information Act 1978
- EU Directives

The Food Safety Authority of Ireland has responsibility for making sure food labelling laws are enforced in this country.
Pre-packaged food labels must show:

- Storage instructions
- List of ingredients in descending order of weight
- Country of origin
- Name of Food
- Net quantity (amount in numbers or weight)
Pre-packaged Food labels must show

- Brand
- Manufacturer
- Quality Seal
- Country of origin
- Best Before date (long shelf life) or use by date (perishable)
Mandatory Information

Information must also be displayed on a label if:

• Irradiation (a type of preservation) has been used

• Alcoholic strength is over 1.2%

• Modified atmospheric packaging has been used

• It contains GM ingredients
Non-Packaged Food Labels

Non-packaged foods must show on a nearby label:

• Name of the food
• Origin
• Class
• Variety
• Price per kilo
Nutritional Labelling

Nutrient Content must be stated per 100g/100ml.

Some nutritional information on labels is not compulsory but it benefits the consumer in lots of ways.

Nutritional Labels usually contain:

- Energy value in kcal and kj
- Protein content
- Sugar Content
- Fat content
- Fibre content
- Sodium/salt content
Claims on Foods

Some foods ‘claim’ they contain specific ingredients or offer the consumer benefits.

- Claims must be truthful and cannot mislead the consumer
- Claims that a food treats, prevents or cures illness are illegal

Some foods may make claims such as:

- Low fat
- Fat-free
- Low in salt
- Sugar free
- Naturally fat free

ALL CLAIMS MUST BE FAITHFUL
Other Claims on Labels

- Gluten Free
- Suitable for Vegetarians
- High Fibre
- Free from artificial flavourings and colourings
  - Low fat butter = Less than 39% fat
  - Low fat cheese = Less than 40% fat
When reading labels, be aware that:

- Salt can be labelled as Sodium, NaCl or monosodium glutamate

- Sugar can be listed as dextrose or maltose

- Natural or artificial colourings, flavourings and sweeteners may be used
Labelling on Fortified Foods

• Fortified foods are those to which nutrients have been added

• Examples include Super milk, some breakfast cereals and some fruit juices

• Claims on these products must be proven by the manufacturer and cannot mislead the consumer
Labelling on Functional Foods

Functional Foods are those which have an added health benefit.

Examples include foods which have ‘cholesterol lowering properties’ or ‘immune system boosting properties.’

It is very important that consumers are aware that such statements are only claims. They usually contain phrases such as:

• ‘May help lower cholesterol’

• ‘Studies show that...’ etc

EU Labelling Laws are constantly being updated. However, they struggle to keep up with constant innovation, leading to some loop holes in food labelling laws.