



Disaster Preparedness for Food Businesses

LABELING MISSISSIPPI COTTAGE FOOD PRODUCTS

Cottage food products are low-risk foods that are made in home kitchens. Cottage food is a pathway for new entrepreneurs to start small-scale food businesses from their homes. See MSU Extension *Publication 3286 Mississippi Cottage Food Operations: Regulations and Guidance* for information about laws and products allowed.

For a new food entrepreneur, developing food labels can be confusing, but there are steps to make the process easier. The Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) has outlined *specific requirements* for components of a cottage food label. This publication reviews required labeling components and offers tips to make the label-development process and recordkeeping easier for cottage food operators.

Mississippi law and regulations require seven components on cottage food labels:

1. The name and address of the cottage food operation.
2. The name of the cottage food product.
3. The ingredients of the cottage food product, in descending order of predominance by weight.
4. Allergen information as specified by federal labeling requirements.
5. The net weight or volume of the cottage food product.
6. If any nutritional claim is made, appropriate nutritional information as specified by federal labeling requirements.
7. The following statement printed in at least 10-point type in a color that provides a clear contrast to the background of the label: **Made in a cottage food operation that is not subject to Mississippi's food safety regulations.**

The following example shows the breakdown of each component of the label using a *strawberry jelly recipe* from the *National Center for Home Food Preservation*.

The name and address of the cottage food operation.

Requirements and Tips

- Must be your home address since this is the location where you are making the product.

Examples

Smith Culinary Creations
555 Barnes Crossing Rd.
Tupelo, MS 38801

Jane Smith
555 Barnes Crossing Rd.
Tupelo, MS 38801

The name of the cottage food product.

Requirements and Tips

- Should clearly identify and describe the product.
- Keep it simple.

Examples

Strawberry Jelly

Apple Pie

Pickled Okra



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The ingredients of the cottage food product, in descending order of predominance by weight.

Requirements and Tips

- Ingredients are listed from highest to lowest weight. The ingredient measured and used in largest quantity by weight is listed first.
 - » It is highly recommended to buy and use a high-quality scale for weighing ingredients and finished products.
 - » If you do not wish to purchase a scale, there are online conversion websites for estimating weights.
- Include the major ingredients and their respective sub-ingredients in your ingredient statement.
 - » Reviewing ingredients and sub-ingredients provides an excellent opportunity to look for allergens in recipe ingredients.

Example

Major Ingredient	Recipe	Weight*	Ingredients (with sub-ingredients)
Strawberry Juice	3.5 cups	805 g	Strawberries
Sugar	4.5 cups	700 g	Sugar
Fruit Pectin	1 package	49 g	Fruit Pectin (Dextrose, Citric Acid [Assists Gel], Fruit Pectin)

*In descending order of predominance by weight.

Ingredients:

Strawberries, Sugar, Fruit Pectin (Dextrose, Citric Acid [Assists Gel], Fruit Pectin).

Allergen information as specified by federal labeling requirements.

Requirements and Tips

- Food allergens can cause serious harm, illness, injury, or even death to consumers who are allergic to specific foods and ingredients.
- The United States recognizes eight allergens for food labeling, and you **must** identify if any ingredients are made from one of these groups:
 - » Milk
 - » Wheat
 - » Eggs
 - » Fish*
 - » Crustacean Shellfish*
 - » Tree Nuts*
 - » Peanuts
 - » Soy

* **Food items with an asterisk must be further specified on the label.** In other words, you must indicate what type of tree nut, fish, or shellfish is included. For example:

- **Tree Nuts** – Walnuts, Pecans, Almonds
- **Fish** – Bass, Flounder, Cod
- **Shellfish** – Crab, Shrimp, Lobster

For a more detailed explanation of allergen labeling requirements, see *Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act of 2004 (FALCPA) Questions and Answers.*

Allergen Information as Specified by Federal Labeling Requirements

- FALCPA requires food manufacturers to label food products that contain an ingredient that is or contains protein from a major food allergen in one of two ways.
 - » The first option for food manufacturers is to include the name of the food source in parentheses following the common or usual name of the major food allergen in the list of ingredients in instances when the name of the food source of the major allergen does not appear elsewhere in the ingredient statement.
 - » The second option is to place the word “contains” followed by the name of the food source from which the major food allergen is derived, immediately after or adjacent to the list of ingredients, in type size that is no smaller than the type size used for the list of ingredients.

Note: It is acceptable to use both options on the same label for added clarity.

Examples

- Strawberry Jelly (no allergens present)

Ingredients:

Strawberries, Sugar, Fruit Pectin (Dextrose, Citric Acid [Assists Gel], Fruit Pectin).

- White Bread

OPTION 1

Ingredients:

Whole wheat flour, water, sodium caseinate (milk), salt, yeast.

OPTION 2

Ingredients:

Whole wheat flour, water, sodium caseinate, salt, yeast.
CONTAINS: WHEAT and MILK

The net weight or volume of the cottage food product.

Requirements and Tips

- Food labels must show the net contents in both metric units (grams, kilograms, milliliters, liters) and U.S. customary units (ounces, pounds, fluid ounces).
- For consistency and confidence, measure three products by weight or volume, and take the average for “net weight or volume.” Remember, packaging does not count toward weight.
- Confused with net weight or volume? Look at similar products in the grocery store for marketplace examples.

Examples

- Strawberry Jelly

NET WT 13 oz (370 g)

- Vinegar

32 fl oz (1 qt) 946 mL

- Cookies

NET WT 12.4 oz (351 g)

- Mustard

5 fl oz (148 mL)

- Apple Pie

NET WT 24 oz (1 lb 8 oz) 680 g

If any nutritional claim is made, appropriate nutritional information as specified by federal labeling requirements.

Requirements and Tips

Specific product requirements must be met to use nutritional claims. To make these claims, you must have supportive evidence and use truthful labeling.

- Health claims are limited to claims about disease risk reduction and cannot be claims about the diagnosis, cure, mitigation, or treatment of disease. Health claims are required to be reviewed and evaluated by FDA prior to use. To review the requirements for health claims, see the *FDA Food Labeling Guide*.
 - » Authorized – FDA authorizes these types of health claims based on an extensive review of the scientific literature and using the significant scientific agreement standard to determine whether the substance/disease relationship is well established.
 - Example: “Three grams of soluble fiber from oatmeal daily in a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol may reduce the risk of heart disease. This cereal has 2 grams per serving.”
 - » Authoritative – A new health claim can be authorized by submitting a notification to FDA of a claim based on an “authoritative statement” from certain scientific bodies of the U.S. government or the National Academy of Sciences.
 - Example: Whole grain foods and risk of heart diseases and certain cancers.
 - Required wording of the claim: “Diets rich in whole grain foods and other plant foods and low in total fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol may reduce the risk of heart disease and some cancers.”

- » Qualified – There is emerging evidence of a relationship between a food substance (a food, food component, or dietary ingredient) and reduced risk of a disease or health-related condition, but the evidence is not well-established enough to meet the significant scientific agreement standard required for FDA.
 - Example: Monounsaturated fatty acids from olive oil and coronary heart disease.
- Nutrient content claims (level of nutrient in food) are claims on a food product that directly or by implication characterize the level of a nutrient in the food. These claims must be authorized by FDA and are made in accordance with FDA’s authorizing regulations.
 - » Examples: Low-fat, high in oat bran, contains 100 calories, fat-free, reduced sodium, healthy.
- Structure/ function claims describe a relationship between a substance and a disease or health-related condition.
 - » Example: “Calcium builds strong bones.”
- Product claims generally require an additional certification, proof, and recordkeeping.
 - » Examples: Organic, non-GMO, gluten-free, natural.

Nutrition Facts Statement and Labeling (if interested and/or needed)

There are three options for nutritional analysis and developing nutrition facts for your products:

- Send the product to a company for nutritional analysis.
 - Contact the Mississippi State University Department of Food Science, Nutrition, and Health Promotion for a list of recommendations.
- Develop your own nutrition facts statements.
 - You can develop nutrition facts statements on your own using your supplier information, the *USDA FoodData Central database*, and the requirements of the *FDA Food Labeling Guide*.
- Use a website and/or program that develops a label based on your recipe formulation.
 - Contact the Mississippi State University Department of Food Science, Nutrition, and Health Promotion for a list of recommendations.

The following statement printed in at least 10-point type in a color that provides a clear contrast to the background of the label.

Made in a cottage food operation that is not subject to Mississippi’s food safety regulations.

Final Label Example: Strawberry Jelly

Strawberry Jelly

Ingredients: Strawberries, Sugar, Fruit Pectin (Dextrose, Citric Acid [Assists Gel], Fruit Pectin).

NET WT 13 oz (370 g)

Smith Culinary Creations
 555 Barnes Crossing Rd.
 Tupelo, MS 38801

Made in a cottage food operation that is not subject to Mississippi’s food safety regulations.

Resources and References

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- U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). What nuts are considered “tree nuts?” <https://www.fda.gov/industry/fda-basics-industry/section-201qq-act-defines-term-major-food-allergen-include-tree-nuts-addition-three-examples>

Appendix

Additional Example – Chocolate Chip Cookies

Ingredient	Amount	Weight*	Ingredients (with sub-ingredients)
All-purpose flour	2¼ cups	346 g	Bleached enriched flour (wheat flour, malted barley flour, niacin, reduced iron, thiamine mononitrite, riboflavin, folic acid) CONTAINS: WHEAT
Semi-sweet chocolate chips	2 cups	340 g	Chocolate chips (sugar, chocolate, milkfat, cocoa butter, soy lecithin, natural flavors) CONTAINS: MILK and SOY
Vegetable shortening	1 cup	196 g	Vegetable shortening (soybean oil, fully hydrogenated palm oil, palm oil, mono and diglycerides, TBHQ and citric acid [antioxidants]) CONTAINS: SOY
Brown sugar	¾ cup	176 g	Brown sugar (sugar, molasses)
Granulated sugar	¾ cup	165 g	Sugar
Walnuts (chopped)	1 cup	120 g	Walnuts
Eggs	2 large	98 g	Eggs
Salt	1 tsp	5 g	Salt (salt, calcium silicate [an anticaking agent])
Baking soda	1 tsp	4 g	Baking soda (sodium bicarbonate)
Vanilla extract	1 tsp	3 g	Vanilla extract (vanilla bean extractives in water, alcohol [41%])

*In descending order of predominance by weight.

INGREDIENTS: Bleached Enriched Flour (Wheat Flour, Malted Barley Flour, Niacin, Reduced Iron, Thiamine Mononitrite, Riboflavin, Folic Acid), Chocolate Chips (Sugar, Chocolate, Milkfat, Cocoa Butter, Soy Lecithin, Natural Flavors), Vegetable Shortening (Soybean Oil, Fully Hydrogenated Palm Oil, Palm Oil, Mono and Diglycerides, TBHQ and Citric Acid ([Antioxidants]), Brown Sugar (Sugar, Molasses), Sugar, Walnuts, Eggs, Salt (Salt, Calcium Silicate [an anticaking agent]), Baking Soda (Sodium Bicarbonate), Vanilla Extract (Vanilla Bean Extractives in Water, Alcohol [41%]).

CONTAINS: WHEAT, MILK, SOY, EGGS, and WALNUTS

Label Example – Chocolate Chip Cookies

Chocolate Chip Cookies

INGREDIENTS: Bleached Enriched Flour (Wheat Flour, Malted Barley Flour, Niacin, Reduced Iron, Thiamine Mononitrite, Riboflavin, Folic Acid), Chocolate Chips (Sugar, Chocolate, Milkfat, Cocoa Butter, Soy Lecithin, Natural Flavors), Vegetable Shortening (Soybean Oil, Fully Hydrogenated Palm Oil, Palm Oil, Mono and Diglycerides, TBHQ and Citric Acid ([Antioxidants]), Brown Sugar (Sugar, Molasses), Sugar, Walnuts, Eggs, Salt (Salt, Calcium Silicate [an anticaking agent]), Baking Soda (Sodium Bicarbonate), Vanilla Extract (Vanilla Bean Extractives in Water, Alcohol [41%]).

CONTAINS: WHEAT, MILK, SOY, EGGS, and WALNUTS

NET WT 1.2 oz (34 g)

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