



Key Insights on Labelling of Chicken and Chicken Products

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This topic outlines the comprehensive labelling requirements for chicken and chicken products in India, as mandated by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). It highlights key provisions under the Food Safety and Standards (Labelling and Display) Regulations, 2020, including mandatory information such as product name, ingredient list, nutritional data, allergen declarations, and storage instructions. Specific labelling elements like the FSSAI logo, vegetarian/non-vegetarian symbols, and country of origin are also detailed. Emphasis is placed on ensuring consumer safety, transparency, and informed decision-making through accurate and standardized food labelling practices.

Introduction

In India, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) regulates the labelling of chicken and chicken products, setting mandatory guidelines under the Food Safety and Standards (Packaging and Labelling) Regulations, 2011. These regulations aim to ensure that consumers receive clear and accurate information about the products they purchase, promoting safety and transparency. According to the Food Safety and Standards Act (FSSA), a 'label' refers to any tag, brand, mark, pictorial representation, or descriptive content that is written, printed, stamped, embossed, stenciled, marked, perforated, or impressed on a food package or its container, cover, lid, or crown. It also includes product inserts. Labelling encompasses any written, printed, or graphic material found on the label, accompanying the food, or displayed nearby to facilitate its sale or disposal.

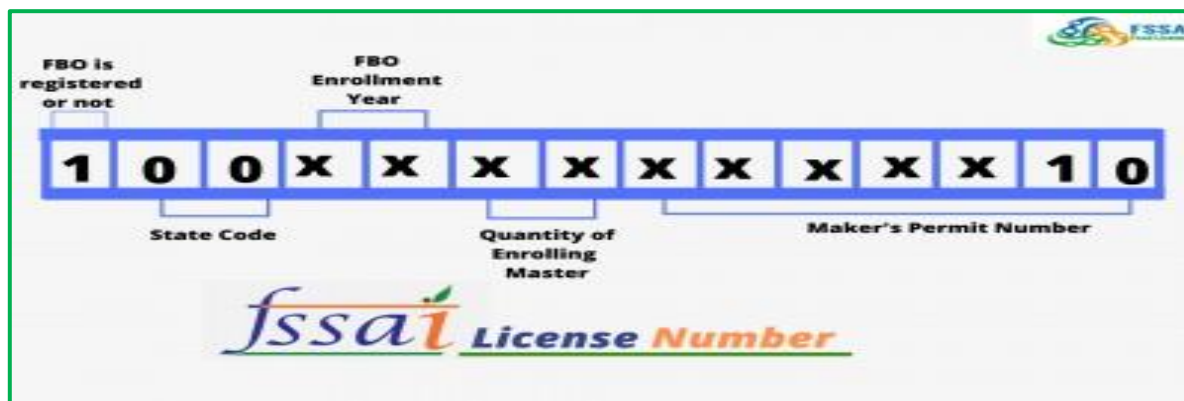
General Labelling Requirements

1. Every prepackaged food must have a label with mandatory information.
2. Labels must be in English or Hindi (Devanagari script), with additional languages permitted.
3. Misleading or deceptive descriptions are prohibited.
4. Labels must be securely attached to the container.
5. Information should be clear, legible, and indelible.
6. If the container has a wrapper, the label must be visible or replicated on the wrapper.
7. A 14-digit license number must be displayed on the principal panel.

Here are the key labelling requirements for chicken and chicken products in India:

1. FSSAI Logo and License Number

All packaged chicken products are required to feature the FSSAI logo along with the 14-digit license number of the food business operator (FBO). This serves as proof that the product adheres to India's food safety regulations, ensuring consumer confidence in its compliance.



- 1 digit - reflects whether the business is registered or not.
- 2 & 3 digit - are for state code.
- 4 & 5 digit - tell the year in which the business was enrolled or enlisted.
- 6, 7 & 8 digit - the quantity of enrolling master is reflected.
- 9 - 14 digit - are the maker's permit number

2. Product Name / Name of Food

The product's name must be clearly stated and specific, such as "Raw Chicken," "Chicken Sausages," or "Chicken Nuggets."

For processed chicken products, appropriate descriptors like "smoked," "spicy," "marinated," or "pre-cooked" should be included as needed.

Additionally, the name of the food should feature either the trade name or a description of the contents within the package.

3. List of Ingredients

For processed chicken products, all ingredients must be listed in descending order by quantity. Any additives, preservatives, or artificial flavors used must also be specified. If an ingredient consists of multiple components, it should be listed as a compound ingredient with its sub-ingredients in brackets, ordered by weight or volume. However, if the compound ingredient makes up less than 5% of the product (excluding additives), its sub-ingredients need not be declared.

4. Nutritional Information

A nutritional label is mandatory, providing details on energy (calories), protein, fat, carbohydrates, and other nutrients per 100g, 100ml, or serving size. It must include:

A. Energy Value (kcal)

B. Macronutrients (up to one decimal place):

- Protein (g)
- Carbohydrates (g), sugars (g), added sugar (g)
- Total fat (g), saturated fat (g), trans fat (g), cholesterol (mg) (*saturated and trans fat can be labeled as "not more than"*)
- Sodium (mg)

C. Vitamins & Minerals (if declared, must be in metric units)

D. Additional Nutrients (if any health or nutrition claim is made, specific details on fatty acids and cholesterol must be provided)

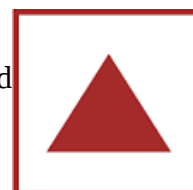
E. Per Serving Declaration (must indicate gram/ml along with serving size)

5. Net Weight / Quantity

The net weight or quantity of the chicken or chicken product must be clearly mentioned on the packaging.

6. Vegetarian / Non-Vegetarian Declaration

As per Indian regulations, a brown triangle inside a square must be displayed on the packaging to indicate that the product is non-vegetarian.



a. **Size of the logo**

Area of principal display panel in cm square	Minimum size of diameter of circle in mm	Minimum size of each triangle in mm	Minimum size of each side of square in mm
Upto 100	3	2.5	6
Above 100 to 500	4	3.5	8
Above 500 to 2500	6	5	12
Above 2500	8	7	16

The brown non-vegetarian symbol must be prominently shown:

1. On the principal display panel with a contrasting background.
2. Near the product's name or brand name.
3. On labels, containers, pamphlets, leaflets, and advertisements in any media.

Certain products, such as carbonated water and liquid milk, are exempt from this requirement and do not need these markings.

7. Lot/Code/Batch Identification

The batch number or code must be clearly mentioned to ensure traceability, which is crucial for product recalls and quality control checks.

8. Date Marking (Manufacturing, Best Before, and Use-By)

1. The **manufacturing date** and **best before date** are mandatory, especially for frozen or processed chicken products.
2. **Use-by date** is required for highly perishable items like fresh or raw chicken.
3. **Freezing date** must be specified for pre-packed frozen chicken.

9. Storage Instructions

Clear storage guidelines must be provided, such as “**Keep Refrigerated**” or “**Keep Frozen**,” along with the required temperature range (e.g., “**Store below -18°C**”).

10. Country of Origin

1. If the chicken or its ingredients are imported, the **country of origin** must be stated.
2. If the product undergoes significant processing in another country, that country is considered the **origin** for labelling.
3. Imported products must have **at least 60% of their shelf life** remaining at the time of arrival at the port.

11. Allergen Information

1. Any allergens (e.g., soy, gluten, milk) in processed chicken products must be clearly stated.
2. Cross-contamination warnings (e.g., “**May contain traces of nuts**” or “**Processed in a facility with wheat**”) should be included if applicable.

12. Manufacturer/Distributor Information

The label must include the **name and full address** of the manufacturer, packer, or importer, along with **contact details** (customer care number or email) for consumer inquiries.

13. Claims and Certifications

Labels must comply with FSSAI regulations for claims like “**Antibiotic-Free**,” “**Organic**,” or “**Free Range**” and be backed by certification.

For **Halal-certified** products, the appropriate **Halal mark** must be displayed.

Organic Certification

Products labeled as **organic** must comply with **National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP)** standards and display the “**India Organic**” logo.

14. Instructions for Use

Ready-to-cook or processed chicken products must include **cooking, preparation, or reheating instructions**.



15. Barcodes & QR Codes

Packaging typically features **barcodes** for retail and may include **QR codes** for additional product information.

16. Fat & Oil Declaration

For processed chicken products, the **source and type of fat or oil** (e.g., vegetable oil, palm oil) must be specified.

17. GM (Genetically Modified) Declaration

If the product or its feed contains **GMOs or GMO-derived ingredients**, it must be clearly stated on the label.

Conclusion

Labelling regulations for chicken and chicken products in India, governed by FSSAI, ensure food safety, transparency, and consumer awareness. These guidelines cover essential aspects such as ingredient disclosure, nutritional information, storage instructions, allergen warnings, and certifications. Compliance with these regulations not only builds consumer trust but also promotes fair trade practices and public health standards. Proper labelling empowers buyers to make informed choices while ensuring businesses meet legal and quality requirements.

References

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