



# Agri-News

May 18, 2009

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## Food Labels Made Easy

Labelling food products is probably one of the most contentious issues facing farmers' market vendors and on-farm retailers. There are so many common misconceptions about food labelling that sometimes it's difficult to know what to do and what not to do.

"At the recent Step It Up conference, Bill Zurawell with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency shed some light on the food labelling issue for farm direct marketers," says Eileen Kotowich, farmers' market specialist with Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development, Vermilion. "He discussed some of the main misconceptions surrounding labelling."

Four of the most common misconceptions about labelling are:

**Products sold at farmers' markets are exempt from labelling requirements** – no products are exempt from federal labelling requirements. All vendors must label food products as described in the *Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act* and the *Food and Drug Act Food Regulation*.

**Having an ingredient list available is acceptable** – some public health inspectors tell market managers and vendors that having an ingredient list at the vendor's table is acceptable. From the public health perspective that may be a requirement, however, the *Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act* is federal legislation and supersedes the jurisdiction of the local public health inspector. Labels which include a complete ingredient listing must be attached to each food product sold. The ingredients must be listed in descending order of proportion.

Other information that must appear on a food label includes:

- common name
- net quantity
- dealer identity and principal place of business
- list of ingredients in descending order of proportion

- durable life date if product has shelf life of 90 days or less
- allergen labelling
- nutrition labelling - unless exempt
- bilingual labelling – unless exempt

Before creating a food label, refer to the 2003 Guide to Food Labelling and Advertising which can be viewed online at [www.inspection.gc.ca/english/fssa/labeti/guide/toce.shtml](http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/fssa/labeti/guide/toce.shtml)

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The specific chapters that producers and vendors should refer to are:

- Chapter 2: Basic Labelling Requirements
- Chapter 4: Composition, Quality, Quantity, and Origin Claims and in particular, Section 4.19: Product of Canada, Made in Canada
- Chapter 5: Nutrition Labelling
- Chapter 7: Nutrient Content Claims
- Chapter 8: Diet-Related Health Claims

**Products sold at farmers' markets or farm direct are exempt from nutrition labelling** - foods sold only at a roadside stand, craft show, flea market, fair, farmers' market or sugar bush by the individual who prepared and processed the product are exempt from nutrition labelling.

The exemption does not apply and a Nutrition Facts table is required when:

- a vitamin or mineral nutrient is added to the product or is declared as a component of an ingredient
- labels or advertisements carry a nutritional reference or nutrient content claim, a biological role claim, a health claim, or the phrase "nutrition facts"
- the product is ground meat, ground meat by-product, ground poultry meat or ground poultry meat by-product

**Vendors can make verbal statements about the health benefits of their product** - unless the vendor has the research to back it up, making health statements or claims should be avoided.

A verbal statement is treated the same as a written statement. If a vendor does not have the science to back up the claim or the permission to make the claim, they should not make either verbal or written health claims about a product.

"Labels do not have to be professionally created or cost a lot of money," says Kotowich. "They can be done on a home computer, but they must contain all the required information. It is each vendor's responsibility to ensure full compliance with the legislation."

The *Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act* is enforced by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. Any questions regarding labelling should be directed to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's Fair Labelling Practices Program, 780-495-7023 in Edmonton.

Contact: Eileen Kotowich  
780-853-8223

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## Commercial Horticulture - Ways of Building Your Knowledge

Life is a constant series of events and experiences, with the eventual outcome being a net increase in knowledge. This applies to all aspects of our lives, personal and professional.

"A wise person seeks out chances to learn, rather than waiting for a chance experience to teach them," says Robert Spencer, commercial horticulture specialist with Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development, Stettler. "At the same time, in my opinion, when you pour off a little bit of your own knowledge, you increase your capacity for knowledge, to your net benefit."

When it comes to increasing their knowledge or experience, producers may wonder where they can get helpful information. "There are lots of possible sources available," says Spencer. "The first thing to look at is targeted courses. Every year, there are courses, information sessions, workshops and conferences offered by government, industry associations and organizations, or combinations of the above. Whatever the event, each offers a chance for producers to increase their individual knowledge and network with other producers."

Many events are offered annually, at or near the same time of year. For example, the **Berry (& Vegetable) School** has been held at the beginning of March for many years.

The second information gathering option is reading. There are many useful reference books, factsheets, newsletters and websites from different sources. In Alberta, one such information source is **Hort Snacks**, a monthly e-newsletter targeted at direct market horticulture crop producers that started in January 2009. Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development also has many free and paid publications available by calling toll-free at 1-800-292-5697 or searching the website at [www.agriculture.alberta.ca](http://www.agriculture.alberta.ca)

"The third, and perhaps the best method for producers to gain information is through networking with their peers," says Spencer. "Many experienced growers will tell you that they spent some time visiting and learning from other operations when they got started. Most producers in this industry are open to sharing and exchanging knowledge and experiences with others."

"Whether you decide to take the time to arrange a visit with someone in the industry or attend workshops, field days or other courses, you will come out with more knowledge than you started with. Whatever information gathering method you use, you won't regret the time you spend gathering and exchanging knowledge with others."

A field day for fruit and vegetable producers is being organized in the Innisfail/Olds area on June 13, 2009. Further details are being posted to the Alberta Farm Fresh website at [www.albertafarmfresh.com](http://www.albertafarmfresh.com)

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## What Horse Transportation Documents Do You Need?

The *Livestock Identification and Commerce Act* (LICA) came into effect on January 1, 2009, and governs the transportation of horses and other livestock within Alberta and to destinations outside Alberta's borders. Depending on the type and purpose of transportation and the destination, a horse may be transported without any paper work or may need to be accompanied with either a livestock manifest or one of four types of permits.

**Within Alberta** – when transporting or driving horses within Alberta, a Livestock Manifest is no longer needed, unless the horse is being transported for sale or slaughter or to an inspection site. This includes transport to a country sale, auction market, livestock assembling station or abattoir.

**Transportation within Canada** – horses being transported or driven to another province must be inspected and must have one of four required permits. These permits have specific expiry dates.

- **Livestock Permit** – allows the transport of one or more horses out of Alberta one time only. This permit expires on the earliest of the following: seven days from the date of issue; when the horse is delivered to its destination; or, when an inspection is required. Cost of this permit is \$2 per horse.
- **Annual Horse Permit** – allows the transport of one or more horse out of Alberta more than once in a calendar year. This permit expires on December 31 of the year in which the permit was issued or if there is a change of ownership within the same calendar year. Cost of this permit is \$10 per horse.
- **Rodeo and Exhibition Permit** – allows the transport of a rodeo or exhibition horse out of Alberta more than once in a calendar year. As with the Annual Horse Permit, this permit expires on December 31 of the year in which it was issued or if there is a change of ownership within the same calendar year. Cost of this permit is \$10 per horse.
- **Lifetime Horse Permit** – allows the transport of one horse out of Alberta more than once during the lifetime of the horse or the time the person who is issued the permit owns the horse. This permit is valid for the life of the horse under the possession of the owner who purchased the permit. The permit is not valid if the horse changes ownership or dies. Cost of this permit is \$30 per horse.

Copies of these permits can be viewed on the Livestock Identification Services (LIS) website at [www.lis-alberta.com](http://www.lis-alberta.com) and click on *Alberta Horse Transportation Documents*.

**Transporting horses into Alberta from another jurisdiction** – the sections of LICA regarding livestock permits and livestock manifests do not apply to persons who transport horses into or through Alberta from an originating point outside of Alberta if

the originating jurisdiction requires the horse to be accompanied with documentation to be transported out of that jurisdiction to the horse's destination, and the horse is accompanied with the documentation.

This exemption which allows the horse to be transported into or through Alberta on its out of province documentation expires when the horse stops in Alberta for a purpose other than rest, or is required to be inspected in Alberta.

If a horse from out-of-province stops in Alberta for a purpose other than rest, the location where the horse stops is considered to be its originating point for the purpose of having to be accompanied with a livestock permit or a Livestock Manifest to be transported within or outside of Alberta.

For more information, contact Leslie Van Solkema with LIS at 403-509-2088 or e-mail: [info@lis-alberta.com](mailto:info@lis-alberta.com)

Contact: *Leslie Van Solkema*  
403-509-2088

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## Alberta Environmental Stewardship Calendar Photo Contest

Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development is asking Albertans to send in their photos that capture the beauty and diversity of environmental stewardship in Alberta. Not only will winning photos be published in the 2009 edition of the Alberta Environmental Stewardship Calendar, but winning photographers will receive an 8" X 10" mounted print of their photo and have a chance at winning other fabulous prizes.

The 2010 Alberta Environmental Stewardship Calendar will again be published as a day-timer-style, coil bound desk calendar that will feature colour photos, tips, facts and information promoting environmentally sustainable agriculture and the conservation of soil, water, air and biodiversity.

Photo entries should capture the beauty and diversity of environmental stewardship in Alberta in the following categories:

- woodlots and forest
- waterbodies and riparian management
- watershed stewardship
- wildlife and habitat conservation
- agriculture stewardship
- rural landscapes
- winter
- stewards in motion

The prizes being offered include an Olympus™ digital camera, a limited edition framed wildlife print and Alberta-made gift baskets.

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An early bird draw will be made from entries received before June 19, 2009. **The final deadline for photo submissions is July 20, 2009.**

Full contest rules are posted on Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development's website at [www.agriculture.alberta.ca](http://www.agriculture.alberta.ca), search *Alberta Environmental Stewardship Contest 2010*, or contact Delaney Anderson at 780-826-4297 or e-mail [delaney.anderson@gov.ab.ca](mailto:delaney.anderson@gov.ab.ca)

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780-826-4297*

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## **Alberta 2009 Crop Reports Provide Timely Information**

As of May 12, 2009, Alberta's agriculture industry has been able to access updated information related to the crop production year, including soil moisture and crop conditions.

The Alberta 2009 crop report schedule includes 12 bi-weekly reports to be released between May and October, as well as a Crop Season in Review report in March 2010.

The crop reports capture valuable information related to crop production in Alberta during the current crop season. The information is collected primarily through surveys and focuses on soil moisture and crop conditions, including seeding and

harvesting progress, pasture conditions, as well as insect and disease situations. In addition to a provincial overview, the crop reports will provide summaries for five regions, namely the southern, central, northeast, northwest, and Peace River regions.

The crop reporting program is delivered through the partnership of Agriculture and Rural Development, Agriculture Financial Services Corporation and the Alberta Association of Agricultural Fieldmen.

The crop reports are widely used by government, industry, and other stakeholders to monitor drought conditions, forecast production insurance payments, and assess needs for agriculture related businesses.

The 2009 Alberta crop reporting schedule and series is made available on Ropin' the Web at [www.agriculture.alberta.ca](http://www.agriculture.alberta.ca) by clicking on the information tab, statistics, and crops. Scroll down to Alberta 2009 Crop Reporting Program.

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310-0000*

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## Agri-News Briefs

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### ***Insect and Disease Conference in Saskatoon***

A ***Forest Insect and Disease Conference*** is being hosted by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment. The conference is being held in Saskatoon on June 18 and 19, 2009. The workshop and seminar portions of the conference will cover numerous invasive insect species concerns, such as emerald ash borer, gypsy moth, banded elm bark beetle, mountain pine beetle and Asian longhorned beetle. Participants will have the opportunity to learn about management options, participate in workshops on early detection and identification, conduct pathway analyses and risk assessments, learn about the National Forest Pest Strategy and earn continuing education units to maintain ISA certification. A large registration for this event is expected. Be sure to register early by contacting Geoff McLeod at 306-975-2537 or Jeff Boone at 306-975-3466. More information and online registration are available on the Prairie Urban Forest Alliance website at [www.forestalliance.ca](http://www.forestalliance.ca)

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### ***2009 Great Kids Award***

“Great Kids” are children and youth between the ages of 5 and 18 who demonstrate determination, generosity, compassion, courage and a strong spirit. Every year, the Government of Alberta recognizes the outstanding contributions of children and youth at home, at school and in the community. To nominate a Great Kid for the 2009 Great Kids Award:

- **Step 1:** download the Nomination Form: 2009 Great Kids Nomination Form
- **Step 2:** read and fill out form completely (including signatures) – nominees must be residents of Alberta and be between the ages of 5 and 18 on June 5, 2009
- **Step 3:** write a 1-2 page letter describing why you are nominating the young person.
- **Step 4:** contact 2 people (family, friends, coaches, neighbours, teachers, etc) who will also provide a 1 page letter of support
- **Step 5:** send in the completed package (Nomination Form, 3 letters of support) to the Youth Strategies Branch by **June 5, 2009** at 4:00 p.m. (mailing address and fax number are on the form)

Feel free to send in only copies of the letters, and give the originals to the young person as a gift! The 16 winners (four from each age category) will be notified by phone in August 2009 and will be invited to attend the event in October 2009 at the Fantasyland Hotel.

Celebrate the Great Kids in your community.....nominate one today!