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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food Safety and Inspection Service

9 CFR Parts 317 and 381

[Docket No. FSIS-2020-0032]

RIN [0583-AD77]

Uniform Compliance Date for Food Labeling Regulations

AGENCY: Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Final Rule.

SUMMARY: The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is establishing January 1, 2024, as the uniform compliance date for new meat and poultry product labeling regulations that will be issued between January 1, 2021, and December 31, 2022. FSIS periodically announces uniform compliance dates for new meat and poultry product labeling regulations to minimize the economic impact of label changes.

DATES: *Effective date:* This rule is effective [INSERT DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

Compliance date: The uniform compliance date for new meat and poultry product labeling regulations that will be issued between January 1, 2021, and December 31, 2022 is January 1, 2024.

Comments due date: Comments on this final rule must be received on or before [INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

ADDRESSES: FSIS invites interested persons to submit

comments on this rule. Comments may be submitted by one of the following methods:

- **Federal eRulemaking Portal:** This website provides the ability to type short comments directly into the comment field on this Web page or attach a file for lengthier comments. Go to <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the on-line instructions at that site for submitting comments.

- **Mail, including CD-ROMs, etc.:** Send to Docket Clerk, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Mailstop 3758, Washington, DC 20250-3700.

- **Hand- or courier-delivered submittals:** Deliver to 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Jamie L. Whitten Building, Room 350-E, Washington, DC 20250-3700.

Instructions: All items submitted by mail or electronic mail must include the Agency name and docket number FSIS-2016-0026. Comments received in response to this docket will be made available for public inspection and posted without change, including any personal information, to <http://www.regulations.gov>.

Docket: For access to background documents or comments received, call (202)720-5627 to schedule a time to visit the FSIS Docket Room at 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250-3700.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Contact Rosalyn Murphy-

Jenkins, Director, Labeling and Program Delivery Staff,
Office of Policy and Program Development, Food Safety and
Inspection Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture,
Telephone: 301-504-0879.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

On December 14, 2004, FSIS issued a final rule establishing January 1, 2008, as the uniform compliance date for new meat and poultry labeling regulations issued between January 1, 2005, and December 31, 2006 (69 FR 74405). The 2004 final rule also provided that the Agency would set uniform compliance dates for new labeling regulations in 2-year increments and periodically issue final rules announcing those dates. Consistent with the 2004 final rule, the Agency has since published six rules establishing the uniform compliance dates of January 1, 2010, January 1, 2012, January 1, 2014, January 1, 2016, January 1, 2018, January 1, 2020, and January 1, 2022 (72 FR 9651, 73 FR 75564, 75 FR 71344, 77 FR 76824, 79 FR 71007, 81 FR 91670, and 83 FR 63052).

The Final Rule

The new uniform compliance date will apply only to final FSIS regulations that require changes in the labeling of meat and poultry products and that are published after January 1, 2021, and before December 31, 2022. For each final rule that requires changes in labeling, FSIS will

specifically identify January 1, 2024, as the compliance date. All meat and poultry food products that are subject to labeling regulations issued between January 1, 2021, and December 31, 2022, will be required to comply with these regulations on products introduced into commerce on or after January 1, 2024. If any food labeling regulation involves special circumstances that justify a compliance date other than January 1, 2024, the Agency will determine an appropriate compliance date and will publish that compliance date in the rulemaking.

Two-year increments increase industry's ability to make orderly adjustments to new labeling requirements without exposing consumers to outdated labels. This approach allows meat and poultry producers to plan for the use of label inventories and to develop new labeling materials that meet the new requirements. It also serves to reduce the economic impact of changing labels on both producers and consumers.

In the May 4, 2004, proposed rule on uniform compliance dates for labeling requirements, FSIS provided notice and solicited comment (69 FR 24539). In the March 5, 2007, final rule, FSIS received only four comments in response to the proposal, all in support. In the March 5, 2007, final rule, FSIS determined that further rulemaking for uniform compliance dates for labeling requirements is unnecessary (72 FR 9651). The Agency received no comments

on the 2007 final rule, the comments FSIS received on the 2012 final rule were outside the scope (77 FR 76824), and FSIS received no comments on the 2014 final rule (79 FR 71007) or the 2016 final rule (81 FR 91670). The Agency received four comments on the 2018 final rule, all in support. One commenter requested that if a food labeling change warrants a different compliance date, federal agencies should coordinate and harmonize compliance and enforcement expectations. The Agency agrees and currently partners with the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) when developing any food labeling regulation that may impact FDA regulated products. Consistent with its statement in 2007, FSIS finds that further rulemaking on this matter is unnecessary. However, FSIS is providing an opportunity for comment on the uniform compliance date established in this final rule.

Paperwork Reduction Act

FSIS has reviewed this rule under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501-3520) and has determined that there is no new information collection related to this final rule. Under this final rule, the Agency is establishing January 1, 2024, as the uniform compliance date for new meat and poultry product labeling regulations that will be issued between January 1, 2021, and December 31, 2022. The relevant information collection or record keeping requirements are covered under OMB approval number

0583-0092, Marking, Labeling, and Packaging.

Executive Orders 12866 and 13563, and the Regulatory Flexibility Act

Executive Orders 12866 and 13563 direct agencies to assess all costs and benefits of available regulatory alternatives and, if regulation is necessary, to select regulatory approaches that maximize net benefits (including potential economic, environmental, public health and safety benefits, distributive impacts, and equity). Executive Order (E.O.) 13563 emphasizes the importance of quantifying both costs and benefits, of reducing costs, of harmonizing rules, and of promoting flexibility. This final rule has been designated as a "non-significant" regulatory action under section 3(f) of E.O. 12866. Accordingly, the final rule has not been reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget under E.O. 12866.

This rule does not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities; consequently, a regulatory flexibility analysis is not required (5 U.S.C. 601-612).

Congressional Review Act

Pursuant to the Congressional Review Act at 5 U.S.C. 801 et seq., the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs has determined that this final rule is not a "major rule," as defined by 5 U.S.C. 804(2).

Additional Public Notification

Public awareness of all segments of rulemaking and policy development is important. Consequently, FSIS will announce this **Federal Register** publication on-line through the FSIS Web page located at:

<http://www.fsis.usda.gov/federal-register>.

FSIS will also announce and provide a link to it through the FSIS *Constituent Update*, which is used to provide information regarding FSIS policies, procedures, regulations, **Federal Register** notices, FSIS public meetings, and other types of information that could affect or would be of interest to our constituents and stakeholders. The *Constituent Update* is available on the FSIS Web page. Through the Web page, FSIS is able to provide information to a much broader, more diverse audience. In addition, FSIS offers an e-mail subscription service which provides automatic and customized access to selected food safety news and information. This service is available at: <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/subscribe> . Options range from recalls to export information, regulations, directives, and notices. Customers can add or delete subscriptions themselves and have the option to password protect their accounts.

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http://www.ocio.usda.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2012/Complain_combined_6_8_12.pdf, or write a letter signed by you or your authorized representative.

Send your completed complaint form or letter to USDA by mail, fax, or email:

Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director,
Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue
SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410.

Fax: (202) 690-7442.

E-mail: program.intake@usda.gov.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

Paul Kiecker,
Administrator.

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