

Meat Product Formulation & Labeling in Wisconsin

FORMULATION

Before a meat product can be marketed in Wisconsin, its formula must be approved by the Division of Food Safety. The DFS also requires formulas for custom/not-for-sale products. Custom products made from wild game do not require formulas.

A DFS inspector will give meat processors a form to fill out that provides information needed for review and approval of product formulas. That information includes:

- The name of the product
- The size of the batch
- The weight of each ingredient (**in pounds** (e.g., “4.7 lbs.” or “0.75 lbs.”); Not in “cups, teaspoons, pinches” or other non-specific measurements. Because some ingredients are restricted by law and the standard of identity for some products is based on the percentages of the meat *based on the weight of the whole batch*, it is important to provide actual weights and not measurements of volume (quarts, etc.).
- A short description of how the product is made and the HACCP plan for the product. Information on cooking times and temperatures (smokehouse cycles) as well as the final internal temperature and procedure for cooling must be included.
- An ingredient statement that lists the components of the product in order from the most to the least. The DFS can provide assistance with this task.
- The “true product name” based on the standards in the USDA’s **Standards and Labeling Policy Book**. Again, the DFS can help with this.

Submit the completed form to a DFS inspector who will review it and send it to a DFS Meat Safety Consultant for approval. The division strive to approve or ask for revision of formulas within two weeks. Meat processors who are developing new products should estimate sufficient “lead time” for formula approval before the start of production.

LABELING

Products offered for sale must have a label. The Division of Food Safety will be glad to discuss labels with a new meat processor. The basic features of a label are:

- The true product name – from the approved formula
- An ingredients statement – from the approved formula
- A handling statement such as “Keep Frozen” or “Keep Refrigerated”
- Either the name and address of the producer (including the zip code) or the name and address of the firm the product was manufactured for or distributed by preceded with the words “manufactured for” or “distributed by”

- The state inspection legend with the establishment number for wholesale products (as illustrated in **Wisconsin Administrative Code Chapter 55**).
- A net weight statement that should be in the lower third of the label panel. If the weight of the product is between one and four pounds, the weight should be given in dual form, for example: **1 lb. 4 oz. (20 oz.)**.

The division will audit all plant labels at least once per year. Labels that deal with specific nutritional claims, game animals or products with no specific Standard of Identity *still need prior approval from the Department.*

Products that are shipped out for sale at another location need labels with all the features. Products that are sold at a processing facility at a self-service counter need to be fully labeled *except* for the Inspection Legend and the Net Weight Statement – *if they are weighed at the time of sale.* If the products are sold at a full-service counter, they need “counter cards” which may be 3 x 5 cards with the product names and ingredients statements. These cards need to be posted where they can be seen and read by consumers.

Raw, partially cooked and uncooked, breaded products also need a generic Safe Handling Statement.

For more information about product formulation or labeling requirements, contact your Division of Food Safety inspector or a DFS meat consultant in your area.

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