

Canada's Fresh Fruit & Vegetable (FFV) Regulatory Updates: Industry FAQ on Labelling Changes

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1) Executive summary: what changed

On October 8, 2025, the Government of Canada published [amendments to the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations \(SFCR\)](#) affecting fresh fruits and vegetables (FFV).

In brief:

- Overly prescriptive labelling rules were removed. Specific exemptions and simplifications now apply to certain small-count packs and products packaged with a confining band, and to items in a clear protective wrapper or bag that are now treated as *unpackaged* for labelling purposes.
- Mandatory grading was removed for FFV destined for manufacturing, processing or preserving (grades remain available/usable but are no longer compulsory for these end-uses).
- Responsibility for maintaining most fresh fruit and vegetable (FFV) grade requirements (other than apples, onions and potatoes) transitions from CFIA to the Fruit and Vegetable Dispute Resolution Corporation (DRC) through a new incorporated-by-reference document titled Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Grade Requirements. CFIA will continue to maintain grade standards for apples, onions and potatoes in the Canadian Grade Compendium: Volume 2, while grade requirements for all other FFV commodities will now be housed in the DRC document.
- Grade specifications were updated for certain commodities (e.g., greenhouse long seedless cucumbers, nectarines, Canada-No1 round-type potatoes).
- Consequential import grade updates occur in Compendium Volume 9 and in the U.S.-import equivalency document.
- No transition period (changes effective immediately). CFIA continues to enforce FFV grades and labelling.

NOTE: This FAQ focuses on the amendments made to fruit and vegetable labelling requirements.

2) What this means for industry

✓ **Labelling flexibility:**

- Net quantity declaration is *not required* for consumer prepackaged FFV when:
 - six (6) or fewer units are in a transparent container, *or*
 - the FFV are packaged using a confining band (with or without a tag, and with no count/quantity limit).
- Net quantity declaration by weight, volume, or count now allowed for ears of fresh sweet corn (both consumer and non-consumer) and for non-consumer prepackaged FFV sold in bags, unless a specific unit is required elsewhere.

- Items in a clear protective wrapper/bag (for protection from handling damage) are now considered unpackaged. Therefore, the mandatory labelling information are no longer required on the package (treat like loose/bulk products at retail).
- Type height for all mandatory information (when required) is harmonized: 1.6 mm minimum for both consumer and non-consumer prepackaged FFV (e.g. shipping containers and bulk bins).
- Size designation statements (for example, “38 mm and up”) are now optional; when used, 1.6 mm minimum type height applies.

3) Frequently Asked Questions

Questions	Answers
Labelling and packaging	
<p>We sell consumer prepackaged asparagus held together with a <i>band</i> and a small tag is attached. Do we still need a net quantity on the tag?</p>	<p>No. Net quantity is no longer required when FFV are packaged using a confining band. This exemption applies regardless of bundle size or diameter, the quantity and the presence or absence of a tag.</p> <p>However, other mandatory labelling information may still be required, such as country of origin and grade (if a grade is used or required for that commodity). Where any mandatory information appears on the tag or band, it must meet the minimum type height of 1.6 mm.</p>
<p>We sell greenhouse English cucumbers individually wrapped in clear plastic to prevent scuffing. Do they need a full label?</p>	<p>No. A cucumber in a clear protective wrapper is now considered unpackaged for FFV labelling purposes. Treat it like bulk produce.</p> <p>Therefore, produce packed in protective transparent wrapper that has a PLU sticker with marketing information will not trigger all the mandatory labelling information such as country of origin, grade, name and address of business operator, etc.</p> <p>However, the requirements for pre-packaged other than consumer pre-packaged produce, such as shipping containers/cases, remain unchanged.</p>

<p>We sell 6-count limes, packaged in transparent clamshells. Do we need a net quantity on our label?</p>	<p>If there are 6 or fewer items and the container is transparent with contents clearly visible, the net quantity declaration is not required.</p> <p>If you include a net quantity voluntarily, keep it truthful; other mandatory items (e.g., country of origin; grade if used) must meet 1.6 mm type height.</p>
<p>Are size designations (e.g., "38 mm and up") still mandatory when a grade is used?</p>	<p>No. Size designations are optional on the label. If you choose to include them, the minimum type height is 1.6 mm and, where applicable, ensure the statement is accurate for the lot.</p> <p>NOTE: The regulatory change only removed the requirement to declare size designations on labels; <u>it did not remove grade standard or standard container size requirements.</u></p>
<p>Do the new labelling updates apply to non-consumer prepackaged items (e.g., shipper cartons, bulk bins)?</p>	<p>Only the change to minimum type height (to 1.6mm) applies to both consumer and non-consumer prepackaged FFV where mandatory info is required.</p>
<p>We use a paper belly band around a tray of asparagus. Is that a "confining band"?</p>	<p>If the band constrains/holds the product together without providing structural protection like a box, it typically qualifies as a confining band. If unsure, verify the design: if the bunch of asparagus would fall apart without the band, and the band does not function as a rigid container, it's generally accepted as a confining band.</p>
<p>Does the net quantity exemption for packages with six (6) or fewer units apply to produce packed in a mesh bag?</p>	<p>Yes, depending on whether the contents are clearly visible. The exemption only applies when the container is transparent, and the consumer can easily see and count the produce without opening the package.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the mesh bag is fully transparent and the fruit or vegetables and their count are clearly visible, the net quantity declaration is not required (e.g.: 4 peppers in a mesh bag or avocados in a mesh bag). • However, if the mesh material, bag colour, branding, or labels obscure the ability to see and count the items, then the product does not qualify for the exemption, and a net quantity declaration is required.
<p>Does my minimum type height still depend on the size of my package/principal display panel (PDP)?</p>	<p>No. The minimum type height for mandatory information on fresh fruit and vegetable labels is now fixed at 1.6 mm, regardless of the size of the package or principal display panel.</p>

	<p>This harmonized standard applies to both consumer prepackaged and non-consumer prepackaged FFV. You may choose to use larger text for visibility or branding, but you are not required to adjust the type height according to package area.</p>
Trade channels and exemptions	
Do these changes affect traceability, food safety or plant health rules?	No. Those obligations remain unchanged. Keep lot code, preventive controls, and phytosanitary documentation as before.
Is there a transition period to use up old packaging?	<p>No transition was provided because the changes remove prescriptive requirements and do not force label changes.</p> <p>You may continue using compliant labels; you may also simplify future labels using the new regulatory flexibility.</p>