

Health and nutrition labelling

The AWRI helpdesk regularly receives questions about health and nutrition labelling for wine and wine products. Broadly the questions can be divided into the areas of alcohol, allergens, preservatives and health and nutrition statements, which all fall under the auspices of the Australia and New Zealand Food Standards Code (www.foodstandards.gov.au). Some of the most common questions are outlined below.

HOW DO I EXPRESS ALCOHOL CONTENT?

An alcohol statement is mandatory in foods containing more than 1.15% alcohol by volume. The statement must be expressed as X% alcohol by volume either numerically or in words. The tolerance for the labelling of wine and sparkling wine is +/-1.5% while fortified wine must be within a tolerance of +/-0.5%. An alcoholic beverage which contains more than 1.15% alcohol must not be represented as a low alcohol beverage.

WHICH ALLERGENS DO I NEED TO LABEL FOR?

The following legal additives and processing aids for wine and wine products are listed as allergenic substances under Standard 1.2.3 of the Food Standards Code. As such, a statement to the effect that the substance is in the product, or has been used in its manufacture must be included on labels:

- Added sulfites in concentrations of 10 mg/kg or more (preservative);
- Casein and potassium caseinate (fining agent);
- Egg white (fining agent) and lysozyme (additive); and
- Milk and evaporated milk (fining agent).

For added sulfites in concentrations of 10 mg/kg or more, allergens labelling requirements are met by the statement 'contains sulfites', without necessarily having to name the actual sulfites used. Alternatively, code numbers can be used if they are listed in Standard 1.3.1. The following examples are considered acceptable for the other allergens:

- Produced with egg/milk;
- Contains/produced with egg/milk product;
- Produced with egg/milk. Traces may remain; and
- Produced with egg/milk products. Traces may remain.

Words such as 'casein' or 'lysozyme' on their own are not considered appropriate for use on labels as few consumers would know what they are without clarification. Links to further information about allergens can be found on the Wine Allergen Portal page of the AWRI website (www.awri.com.au).

DO I NEED TO LABEL FOR PRESERVATIVES?

Even if no sulfur dioxide has been added during winemaking, care must be taken in claiming that the wine is 'sulfur or preservative free', as sulfur dioxide is produced by yeast. The words 'preservative free' should only be claimed if there are no

quantifiable levels of sulfur dioxide in the wine. An alternative statement would be that no sulfites have been added.

HOW DO I CALCULATE STANDARD DRINKS?

According to Standard 2.7.1 of the Food Standards Code, a standard drink is the amount of beverage which contains 10 grams of ethanol, measured at 20°C. The label statement should be worded 'Contains approximately X standard drinks'. Alternatively, the approved standard drinks logo may be used. A standard drinks calculator is accessible from the Winemaking Calculators page on the AWRI website. Alternatively, the AWRI Winemaking Calculator app is available for free download from the Apple App store or Google Play.

AM I PERMITTED TO MAKE HEALTH AND NUTRITION STATEMENTS?

Health claims and nutrition content claims, other than nutrition content claims about energy content or carbohydrate content, are prohibited on beverages that contain more than 1.15% alcohol by volume. The requirements for nutritional information panels are provided in Standard 1.2.8.


The Winemakers' Federation of Australia (WFA), however, strongly recommends that all Australian winemakers include a voluntary pregnancy warning on labels of wine sold in Australia. Further information about the pregnancy logo can be found in the resources section of the WFA website (www.wfa.org.au).

WHAT ARE THE RULES FOR CLEANSKINS?

Regarding cleanskins, within Australia unlabelled bottles cannot be sold at retail to the public, but unbroken cartons can be sold if the mandatory information appears on the carton in an acceptable form.

Mandatory warning declarations including allergens, however, must appear on every bottle.

OTHER ADVICE AND INFORMATION

Additional advice and information on labelling can be found in *Food Standards Australia New Zealand's Labelling of Alcoholic Beverages User Guide and Wine Australia's Compliance Guide*. Questions can also be submitted to the AWRI helpdesk via phone 08 8313 6600 or email helpdesk@awri.com.au. 



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