



Government
of Canada

Canadian Food
Inspection Agency

Gouvernement
du Canada

Agence canadienne
d'inspection des aliments

March 16, 2001

COMMUNIQUÉ

TO: PROCESSORS, DISTRIBUTORS AND IMPORTERS OF FISH OILS AND
MARINE ANIMAL OILS IN CANADA

SUBJECT: LABELLING OF FISH OILS AND MARINE ANIMAL OILS IN CANADA

As a result of an investigation related to a consumer complaint, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) has identified fish oils and marine animal oils marketed in Canada that have been labelled in a manner that does not comply with Canadian regulatory requirements.

All foods in Canada must be labelled according to the requirements of the Food and Drug Regulations, the Consumer Packaging and Labelling Regulations and, in the case of fish and fish products, the Fish Inspection Regulations. Fish as defined in the Fish Inspection Act includes crustaceans, shellfish and marine animals.

The common name for “fish” as prescribed by the Food and Drug Regulations [B.01.006.(1)] is “the name of the fish”. If the product contains more than one ingredient, an ingredients list is required on the label declaring the components of the product in descending order [FDR, B.01.008.(1)(b); B.01.008(3)].

The requirements stated above should be approached as follows:

If the oil has been extracted from a single species of fish or marine animal, the common name of the product should be the common name of the species, e.g. “halibut oil” or “seal oil”.

If the oil is a mixture of oils extracted from various species, the name of the product must include all the common names of the species eg, “salmon, sardine and seal oil” and the common names of the species must be repeated in the list of ingredients. The common names must be declared in the ingredients list in descending order by their content in the product.

OR

If the oil has been extracted from multiple marine animal species, and not from fish species, a generic common name “**Marine oil**” can be used. The common names of the marine species must be included in the list of ingredients in descending order by their content in the product.

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OR

If the oil has been extracted from multiple fish species, but not from other marine animals such as seals, a generic common name “**Fish oil**” can be used, and common names of the fish species must be included in the list of ingredients in descending order by their content in the product.

The CFIA will take action where there is non-compliance to labelling requirements for marine and fish oil produced domestically or imported into Canada.

If you have any questions related to these requirements, please contact your local CFIA office, or for general information on food labelling visit the CFIA website at:
www.cfia-acia.agr.ca.

Original signed by

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(for)

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