

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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POLICY

Voluntary Public

Date:

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Turkey

Post: Ankara

Turkey Implements Year-End Labelling Requirement

Report Categories:

Agricultural Situation

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Report Highlights:

The government of Turkey will require a product verification monitoring system (UDTS) label on certain food products beginning December 31, 2013. Turkey's courts have not ruled on a challenge by Turkish industry. The label will add 6 Kurus (3 U.S. cents) to the cost of those food products.

Turkey published legislation amending the Turkish Food Codex Labeling Regulation on September 3,

2013 in the official gazette

(<http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/main.aspx?home=http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2013/09/20130903.htm&main=http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2013/09/20130903.htm>) that is meant to eliminate or reduce adulterated food, imitation and fraud. The legislation establishes a product verification monitoring system (UDTS) to verify information about food products through a 19-digit number. Implementing regulations will be determined by the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock (MINFAL) and enters into force on December 31, 2013. The Turkish Food and Beverage Associations Federation has sued to stop the regulation's implementation, but the courts have yet to rule on the case.

MINFAL has targeted seven food categories: alcoholic beverages; food supplements; honey; energy drinks; black tea; vegetable oil; baby food and infant formula and supplements. MINFAL held an information meeting with producers and importers to explain the system September 16-20, 2013.

The new label will contain two numbers. The first will be visible on the exterior of the label and the second will be located under an orange strip. Consumers may verify the product by removing the orange strip and entering the numeric code beneath in an online system, by text message, through a call center or using a cell phone quick response code.



Turkish industry has expressed several concerns about this legislation. The system provides little value to consumers while adding significant cost to producers. The government is implementing this requirement in just three months, without testing and without the year and a half transition period requested by industry. Production of the new label will require new, costly and slower equipment. MINFAL has designated the production of the orange sticker to a single company, raising additional concerns about current and future costs, and industry impact if the company is unable to supply industry with the labels they need. Each label will cost 6 Kurus (3 US cents).

The legislation requires that the new labels be applied to each unit of imported food product. Containers and boxes will have to be opened in warehouses to apply the stickers, raising concerns about costs and food safety. Industry is also concerned with the placement of stickers on imported products that have not incorporated a space for the sticker in their existing labels.