

Date Labelling Coalition

Annex X



Proposal to Extend the List of Exempted Food Products from Date Marking Under Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 Annex X

Tackling Food Waste: A Shared Responsibility

Food waste has an enormous impact on global climate change. If food waste were a country, it would be the 3rd in terms of GHG-emissions after the United States and China¹. Every year, households across Europe waste approximately 31 million tonnes of food²—equivalent to billions of euros in wasted groceries. This is not just a waste of resources but a missed opportunity to address pressing global challenges like climate change, food security, and economic strain. Among the causes of this waste is the widespread confusion over date markings on food packaging.

Date labeling—intended to provide clarity and ensure food safety—has unintentionally contributed to waste. Research shows that nearly 10% of consumer-related food waste results from misunderstanding "best before" and "use by" dates³. Also many non-perishable food products require a "best before" date and get, as a result, thrown away by consumers when this date is reached.

The EU can act on this with the first step of extending the list of non-perishable food products exempted from mandatory date marking under Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 Annex X.

The Problem: Misunderstood Date Markings

According to a 2015 Eurobarometer survey⁴, less than half of EU consumers fully understand date marking. Many discard perfectly safe and usable food items with a "best before" label (quality guidance) because they confuse it with a "use by" (safety guidance) label.

Research further reveals that:

- Also non-perishables are often discarded unnecessarily despite their minimal risk of spoilage when stored correctly, because they reached the "best before" date.
- 31% less food is wasted when date labels are removed from non-perishable but only include the text "long shelf life."⁵

This misunderstanding contributes significantly to household food waste, exacerbating environmental and economic challenges.

A First Step Solution: Extending the Exemption List

Under current regulations, certain non-perishable products—like salt, sugar, and vinegar—are already exempt from mandatory date marking. We propose adding extra non-perishable products to this list that:

- Share the same characteristics with already-exempted items, such as low moisture content, shelf stability, and resistance to microbial spoilage.
- Are confirmed by a Dutch advisory bodies, called BuRo⁶, to pose no safety risks when stored correctly.



These products are:

1. Dry pasta
2. Couscous/Semolina
3. Coffee
4. Tea
5. Rice
6. Instant powders (with low-fat content)
7. Dried spices
8. Flour
9. Bottled drinkable water
10. Specific canned products (meeting established safety criteria)*

The Benefits: A Win-Win for All

1. Empowering Consumers and Reducing Waste

Removing date marks from non-perishable items encourages consumers to rely on sensory cues and common sense, reducing unnecessary food disposal. Studies by WRAP⁷ and others^{5,8} demonstrate that this simple change could significantly lower household food waste.

2. Environmental Impact

By preventing millions of kilograms of food waste annually, this measure aligns with the EU's Farm to Fork Strategy goals, including halving food waste by 2030 and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. For example, eliminating date labels on dry pasta alone could save an estimated 3 million kilograms of food each year in the EU**.

3. Economic and Business Advantages

- **For Consumers:** Households save money by using food more efficiently.
- **For Businesses:** Simplified labeling reduces costs and minimizes logistical complexities, reduction of scope 3 CO2 emissions.
- **For Governments:** Lower waste management costs, progress toward binding food waste reduction targets (30% by 2030) and CO2 reduction targets (on average, 1 kg of consumer food waste equals 2.96 kg CO2e)⁹

Extending the Annex X is an Easy, Effective Step Forward

Extending Annex X to include additional non-perishable products is a straightforward, low-risk solution with significant impact. Businesses can still choose to include date marks if preferred, but removing the mandatory requirement creates flexibility and reduces waste.

We urge policymakers, industry leaders, and stakeholders to support this amendment to extend the Annex X of Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 with the before mentioned 10 non-perishable products. Together, we can reduce food waste, protect the environment, and empower consumers to make informed decisions—all while advancing the EU's sustainability goals.

Join us in making this change happen. Support the amendment to Annex X and take a stand for a waste-free future! Do you want to support this amendment? Please reach out to karin@samentegenvoedselverspilling.nl.

List of signatories:

1. FNLI
2. CBL
3. Ministerie van landbouw, Visserij, Voedselzekerheid en Natuur
4. Voedingscentrum
5. Unilever
6. Albert Heijn
7. Friesland Campina
8. Dekamarkt
9. Lidl
10. Jumbo
11. Dirk
12. Ebro Foods Benelux
13. Enrico Food
14. Velder
15. Too Good To Go
16. De Smaakspecialist
17. Food Waste Free United

*Specific criteria for canned products:

- Food sterilized in cans: food safety is guaranteed by the heating step, possibly in combination with the PH, and the impossibility for microorganisms to contaminate the product afterwards.
- Food sterilized in other hermetically sealed packaging
- Water activity (aw) <60
- Acidity (pH) .3-4 (depending on type of acid: organic or inorganic).
- Products with a lower aw and an additional inhibitory factor: aw <0.85 + low pH or use of preservative.
- Storage temperature <-18 garden, provided that the freezer chain is not interrupted.

**In the Netherlands we know from consumer food waste monitoring that 0,31 kg of dry, uncooked pasta is wasted annually. In the research of Holthuysen et al (2017), it is estimated that 13% less dry pasta can be wasted if no date mark was printed on the product. This results in an estimated 0,04kg of dry pasta a person that could be saved if no date label was printed on it, which would result in a reduction of almost 3 million kilo's of pasta a year in the EU.

References

¹ 'How to help UK farming waste less food', Financial Times (2025)

² [Food waste and food waste prevention - estimates - Statistics Explained](#)

³ Market study on date marking and other information provided on food labels and food waste prevention (2018).

⁴ [Standard Eurobarometer 84 - Autumn 2015 - december 2015 - Eurobarometer survey](#)

⁵ The effect of date marking terminology of products with a long shelf life on food discarding behaviour of consumers, Holthuysen et al (2017).

⁶ Advies over mogelijkheden voor uitbreiding van de lijst met producten die uitgezonderd zijn van de verplichting voor een vermelding van een houdbaarheidsdatum, BuRo (2016).

⁷ Consumer insight: Date labels and food waste. WRAP (2011).

⁸ Impact of date labeling on consumer behavior. Food Quality and Preference (2019).

⁹ [Annex Voedselverspilling bij consumenten thuis in Nederland in 2022, Chapter 7 \(2022\).](#)