

➤ FOOD LABELING: RISKS AND MODERNIZATION

FOOD LABELS SHOULD EMPOWER AMERICANS TO MAKE INFORMED CHOICES ABOUT THEIR DIETS.

But new state-specific food labeling laws move in the opposite direction. These laws create different rules for different states—even for the same product, that will confuse consumers, disrupt food supply chains, and raise grocery prices without clear evidence of making food safer or more nutritious. This means the same food and beverages, which contain the same ingredients could need one label for Texas, another for Louisiana, and another for the rest of the country.

Manufacturers across the U.S. food and beverage supply chain—who play a vital role in ensuring Americans have access to safe, nutritious, and affordable food—support smart, transparent labeling requirements that are science-based and implemented with proper and robust stakeholder input at the federal level.

How Food Labeling Affects Consumers

Food and beverage manufacturers do not make food on a state-by-state basis. Rather, food is produced at scale and shipped nationwide.

State-specific labeling laws force manufacturers to redesign packaging, manage multiple versions of the same product, and maintain separate inventory and distribution systems that do not exist today. **All of this adds cost and complexity, and small and mid-sized food companies are hit hardest.** Many may decide it is no longer feasible to sell certain products in certain states, which can reduce product availability and increase costs for both consumers and manufacturers.

For consumers, these laws can result in confusing messages about food safety with the same product regarded as “safe” in one state and labeled with a “warning” in another. Such warning labels—which often are not grounded in sound, consensus-driven science—can scare people away from choosing foods that are safe, affordable, and commonly used, including shelf-stable foods on which many American families rely.

Consumers also face higher prices when costs are passed along and fewer choices when options are limited on store shelves.

A Better Approach

Manufacturers support a uniform national standard for food labeling grounded in sound science and nutrition, with policy approaches such as:

- Front-of-pack labeling frameworks that are standardized nationwide in order to help consumers quickly understand nutrient profiles; any such labels should be backed by rigorous consumer research and consistent criteria that complement existing Nutrition Facts Panels
- Use of QR codes and other digital tools, standardized nationwide, to provide consumers with additional, easily accessible information about ingredients, nutrition, and safety that can link to trusted sources, including FDA resources, to help consumers learn more without cluttering packaging

› THE BOTTOM LINE

Food labeling plays an essential role in helping consumers make informed choices. Manufacturers support modern tools that, when thoughtfully designed at the national level, can improve clarity and transparency while avoiding a fragmented marketplace. Good labeling builds trust in the manufacturers who work hard every day to protect consumers and keep food accessible for all American families.