

Meat products

Advice on the labelling and composition of meat products.

This guide gives the requirements for meat product in the Meat Product (England) Regulations 2003 and the Food Labelling Regulations 1996.

If you make or sell meat products which are intended for consumers or caterers (that include pubs, restaurants and take-aways) then the regulations apply to you.

What meat products this guide covers

Any food which consists of meat or which contains meat, mechanically recovered meat, heart, tongue, muscles of the head, the corpus, the tarsus or the tail.

The following are NOT included; raw meat with no added ingredients (except proteolytic enzymes), poultry meat which complies with the EC marketing regulations, and products containing fat but no other meat.

What is 'meat' in a meat product?

Only skeletal muscle with maximum permitted amounts of fat and connective tissue (ie rind, tendon, sinew, skin, gristle etc) can count as 'meat' when determining the meat content in a meat product.

	Pork	Birds and rabbits	Beef, lamb and other species
Fat	30%	15%	25%
Connective tissue	25%	10%	25%

The following **MUST** be excluded from the meat content: any fat and connective tissue which is in excess of the maximum amounts stated above, mechanically recovered meat, feet, trotters, tail, head meat (but cheeks - masseters - can be included), heart, tongue, liver, kidney, etc. Products are still allowed to contain these ingredients, but they may need to be described differently and they cannot count towards the declared meat content.

If you manufacture meat products, tables of typical values for the fat and connective tissue for different cuts of meat are available. Please contact the Trading Standards Service.

Labelling

Meat products which are not prepacked or are prepacked for direct sale (that is prepacked on the same premises as they are sold to the consumer) must be labelled with the following information:

- The true name of the food
- The quantity of any ingredient which satisfies the definition of 'meat', eg the amounts of pork and beef in a pork and beef sausage or the amount of beef in a cornish pasty.
- the 'quantity' is the weight of raw meat used as an ingredient expressed as a percentage of the weight of the product as sold. The following do not have to state this quantity: sandwiches, filled rolls (excluding burgers which must be labelled), pizza and similar products, broth, gravy, soup and ready to eat single portion foods assembled from two or more ingredients eg salad.
- a statement of the following categories of additives if they are present: antioxidant, sweetener, colour, flavour enhancer, flavouring or preservative.
- the name used for Meat products which **LOOK LIKE** a cut, joint, slice or portion of meat - eg chicken portion or ham - must include a statement of any added ingredient of animal origin from a species different to the meat in the product, eg chicken containing added pork protein.

- any other added ingredients except additives, curing salt, garnish or decorative coating, seasoning, starch or protein which is only added for a technological purpose, sugar and any ingredient which is added only to give it odour and/or taste.
- added water in meat (raw and cooked) and cooked cured meat if it is more than 5 per cent, and in uncooked cured meat if it is more than 10 per cent.
- any significant processes the product has been subjected to eg if it is reformed or formed from cuts from different animals.

Examples of labels

PORK and BEEF SAUSAGES

25% pork. 12% Beef.

Contain preservative

Reformed ham with added water and gelatine

70% Pork

Contains antioxidant and preservative

Position and clarity of labelling

The information should appear either on a label attached to the food, or on a ticket or notice that is readily seen by an intending purchaser where they choose the food.

The information must be easy to understand, clearly legible, indelible, and in a conspicuous place so it is easily visible.

Supplies from manufacturers, packers and wholesalers

If you are a retailer then to minimise the risk of incorrect labelling you should obtain the necessary information from your supplier or use that provided on labels or in trade documents.

You are strongly advised not to amend details of meat products relating to their names, the percentage meat contents and additive. If you do alter any of

this information it may place you as the retailer at risk of prosecution if errors are found, eg product supplied as 'cooked and flash roasted beef' should not be re-labelled as 'roast beef', 'Reformed ham with added water and gelatine' should not be labelled as 'Ham', 'Economy Beefburgers' should not be labelled 'Beefburgers'.

Meat products prepacked other than for direct sale

(They will be sold to the consumer or caterer on different premises from those on which they were packed.)

The full labelling requirements apply including:

- name of the food
- list of ingredients
- quantitative ingredient declaration
- name and address
- date mark
- storage instructions
- instructions for use
- origin if failure to state could mislead

If you are prepacking under these circumstances please contact us - we will be pleased to give you further advice and more detailed guidance.

Composition standards

Meat products for which the names burger, corned meat, luncheon meat, meat pie or pudding, pasty, sausage roll, sausage or sausage meat etc are used must contain a minimum percentage of meat. Full details of the names covered and the minimum amounts of meat are given in the table below.

Compositional requirements for certain meat products

Name of product	Pork only	Birds and rabbits only	Beef, lamb and other species, or other mixtures of meat	Type of meat used
Burger	67%	55%	62%	If described as an 'X' burger, the amount of 'X' must be at least equal to the minimum required meat content
Economy Burger	50%	41%	47%	If described as an 'X' economy burger, the amount of 'X' must be at least equal to the minimum required meat content
Hamburger	67%		62%	All pork, all beef or a mixture of pork and beef
Chopped 'X'	75%	62%	70%	
Corned meat, Corned 'X'	120%	120%	120%	All the meat must be 'X'. Total fat content must not exceed 15%
Luncheon meat, Luncheon 'X'	67%	55%	62%	
Meat Pie, Meat Pudding, 'X' Pie, 'X' Pudding, Melton	12.5%	12.5%	12.5%	NOTE: Only pork can be

Mowbray Pie				used in a Melton Mowbray pie
Meat Pie, Meat Pudding, 'X' Pie, 'X' Pudding, Melton Mowbray Pie, weighing not more than 200g and not less than 100g	11%	11%	11%	
Meat Pie, Meat Pudding, 'X' Pie, 'X' Pudding, Melton Mowbray Pie, weighing less than 100g	10%	10%	10%	
Scottish Pie, Scotch Pie	10%	10%	10%	
Meat and Something else Pie, Meat and Something else Pudding, 'X and Something else' Pie, 'X' and Something else Pudding	7%	7%	7%	
Something else and Meat Pie, Something else and Meat Pudding, Something else and 'X' Pie, Something else and 'X' Pudding	6%	6%	6%	
Pasty, Pastie, Bridie, Sausage Roll	6%	6%	6%	
Pork Sausage (but not pork liver sausage or pork tongue sausage), Pork Link, Pork Chipolata, Pork Sausage meat	42%			
Sausage (but not liver sausage or tongue sausage), Link, Chipolata, Sausage Meat	32%	26%	30%	

Further help and guidance

There are other labelling requirements under other regulations, these include:

- price marking

- weight marking
- genetically modified ingredients
- irradiated ingredients.

If you need advice on these matters please contact us.

