



Ministerie van Landbouw,  
Natuur en Voedselkwaliteit

# Date marking today

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# Date marking practices to help prevent Food Waste at consumer level – recommendations from NL

Confusion and lack of knowledge about the best before and use by dates on food are causes of food waste in households.

- Best Before = Quality - could become less but usually still good for consumption  
check: look, smell, taste
- Use By = Food Safety - after this date not safe for consumption

When appropriately applied to food packaging, it is possible to explain the difference to consumers in a clear way.



- The reference to the “use by” and “**best** before” and date itself must be easy to read and find
- Abbreviations (BB / UB) are not allowed on packaging
- The reference to the date itself must be specific and clear
- Provide a clear description of the storage instructions & storage temperature, also after opening the product. Terms such as 'limited shelf life' are too vague.
- The date must consist of the day, the month, and the year. But it is also possible, where the date:
  - < 3 months: day & month
  - 3 – 18 months: month & year
  - > 18 months: year





- When an indication of the date of minimum durability (date mark) is not required, you can avoid its use →
- List of products for which a date mark is not required: Annex X of Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 on the provision of food information to consumers (FIC).
- For example: sugar, salt, fresh fruit & vegetables that are not peeled or cut
  
- It is allowed to add information (textual or visual) on the packaging to help consumers, as long as this information is true, clear and easy to understand for the consumer
- It must not contradict mandatory information and it is not displayed to the detriment of the space available for mandatory information