

# Clear Labelling

**The food industry is likely to face calls for a massive overhaul of labelling standards after the report said descriptions like “pure” were seen to be misused by some manufacturers.**

The two-year study by the Food Advisory Committee found that consumers were being misled by “meaningless descriptions” on food labels.

Terms like “traditional”, “homemade”, “original”, “farmhouse”, and “authentic” were all studied after a consumer survey found **75% of customers find them confusing.**

Manufacturers flouting the standards, once they are in place, could face a maximum penalty on conviction of £5,000, the FAC said.

The report said the use of pictures on food labels and advertising should be governed by the same guidance as terms and phrases.

Restaurant menus will also be governed by the standards.

The report also found there was “no place” in food labelling for the term “country style” and the term “farmhouse” should be used sparingly.

Detailed recommendations were set out in the report, which will be used as the basis for a consultation process to be carried out by the **Food Standards Agency** over the next three months, to create industry-wide standards.

They will be enforced across the board for food manufactured both in the UK and elsewhere, the FSA said.

Food Standards Agency deputy chairman Suzi Leather said: “This is an important study which takes forward the rights of consumers and doesn’t pull any punches.

“People have a basic right to **clear** and **meaningful labels** so that they know what they are really buying – this goes to the very heart of consumer choice.

“Terms such as fresh, pure or authentic can be misused and, to quote from the report, ‘labellers have a tendency to be economical with the truth.’

“This is a timely review of labelling in what is a fast-changing market. The Agency will use this report to set clear standards that protect consumers and honest traders.”

This latest report comes after an FSA study published earlier this year found that **59% of shoppers regularly check food labelling**.

The FSA also announced last year that it was to press for far-reaching changes in European food labelling rules to provide clearer information, including legally-binding standards on nutrition claims.

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