

PROPER LABELING OF IRRADIATED PRODUCE



Are you properly labeling irradiated fruits and vegetables in your produce department?

FDA requires that irradiated foods not in package form bear the international symbol for irradiation. The *Radura* symbol (shown above) along with the statement "Treated with radiation" or "Treated by irradiation" is to be displayed to the purchaser on the food label with either (i) the labeling of the bulk container "plainly in view" or (ii) on a counter sign, card, or other device bearing the information that the product has been treated with radiation.

Although not required by FDA, individual fruits and vegetables may bear the *Radura* symbol or the statement. If individually labeled, the irradiation disclosure statement must be at least as prominent as the size of an ingredient declaration for a packaged food, *i.e.*, the letters must be at least one-sixteenth of an inch tall. 21 C.F.R. §§ 179.26(b)(2), 101.4, 101.2(c).

Irradiation of fruits and vegetables is approved (except for fresh iceberg lettuce and fresh spinach), only for disinfestation of arthropod pests, not for food safety. It is therefore important to remember that irradiation is not a replacement for proper food-handling practices by producers, processors, and consumers. Irradiated foods need to be stored, handled and cooked in the same way as non-irradiated foods, because they could still become contaminated with disease-causing organisms after irradiation if the rules of basic food safety are not followed.

For more information on food irradiation and what you need to know, visit:
<http://www.fda.gov/Food/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/ucm261680.htm>