

FOOD LAW IN VIETNAM

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GLOSSARY

In this book, we define and abbreviate terms the first time that we use them. To make it easier to follow the text, we have prepared this Glossary.

BRCGS	Global Standard for Food Safety
CFS	Certificate of Free Sale
DOC	Department of Construction
DOH	Department of Health
DOIC	Department of Information and Communications
FBO	Food Business Operator
FHSA	Food Hygiene and Safety Administration
FSSC	Food Safety System Certificate
GDSMQ	General Department of Standards, Measurements and Quality
GMP	Good Manufacturing Practices
HACCP	Hazard Analysis, Critical Control Point
HC	Health Certificate
IFS	International Food Standard
ISMU	International System of Measuring Units
ISO	International Standardization Organization
LoFS	Law on Food Safety
LoQPG	Law on Quality of Products and Goods
LoSTS	Law on Standards and Technical Specifications
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MCST	Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism
MOC	Ministry of Construction
MOCI	Ministry of Culture and Information
MOH	Ministry of Health

MOIC	Ministry of Information and Communications
MOIT	Ministry of Industry and Trade
MONRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
MOST	Ministry of Science and Technology
TCCS	Voluntary Standards
TCVN	National Standards

FOOD LAW IN VIETNAM*

INTRODUCTION

Understanding Vietnamese laws and regulations concerning food can be a challenge. The government relies on general laws to regulate the quality of goods, including food. There are also specific regulations which apply to food products. This means that there are two sets of rules--one covering goods in general and another covering food products--and they often overlap.

The major laws on the subject are the Law on the Quality of Products and Goods¹ (“**LoQPG**”) and the Law on Food Safety² (“**LoFS**”). The former states that “the State shall implement a uniform system to control the quality of goods.”³ However, “in cases where international treaties, to which the Socialist Republic of Vietnam is a party, contain provisions which differ from the Law, the international treaties shall prevail.”⁴

The LoQPG came into effect on 1 July 2008 and replaced the Ordinance on the Quality of Goods. It provides that manufacturers and traders must take responsibility for the quality of the goods or products that they manufacture or trade, in order to ensure safety for humans, animals, plants, property, and the environment, and to enhance the productivity, quality, and competitiveness of Vietnamese goods and products.⁵ It further defines ‘goods’ and ‘products’, which essentially cover food.

The LoFS, with effect from 1 July 2011, replaced the Ordinance on the Hygiene and Safety of Foods. Mainly, it describes the rights and obligations of organizations and individuals with respect to food safety; conditions to ensure the safety of food for manufacturing, doing business in food, and importing or exporting food; advertising and labelling food; testing food; analyzing threats to food safety; and protecting, preventing, and overcoming breakdowns in food safety.⁶

The LoQPG gives the Ministry of Science and Technology (“**MOST**”) overall responsibility for the quality of goods, including foods, while the LoFS assigns responsibility for the safety of food to the Ministry of Health (“**MOH**”), Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (“**MARD**”), and the Ministry of Industry and Trade (“**MOIT**”).

* This book has been written and updated by lawyers from Russin & Vecchi. It is current though June 2022.

¹ Law No. 05/2007/QH12 adopted by the National Assembly on 21 November 2007 on the quality of products and goods.

² Law No. 55/2010/QH12 adopted by the National Assembly on 17 June 2010 on food safety

³ LoQPG, art 68.1

⁴ *Id.*, art 4.3.

⁵ *Id.*, art 5.2.

⁶ LoFS, art 1.

WHAT IS FOOD?

The LoFS defines “foods” as follows: “Foods are products which human beings eat and drink in their fresh, raw, processed or preserved forms. Foods do not include cosmetics, tobacco, and medicinal products.”⁷ There are sub-definitions of different types of food, including fresh and raw food, micronutrient-fortified food, functional food, genetically modified food, irradiated food, street food, and packaged food.

These categories are defined further as follows:

“Fresh and raw food” is unprocessed food including fresh meat, eggs, fish, aquatic products, vegetables, tubers, fruits, and other unprocessed foods.⁸

“Micronutrient-fortified food” is food supplemented with vitamins, mineral substances, and serum antioxidant micro-minerals in order to prevent the community or a particular group in the community from a shortage of vitamins, substances, and microminerals.⁹

“Functional food” is food used to support the operation of body organs, creates comfort for the body, increases resistance, and reduces pathogenic dangers. It consists of food supplements, health protective food, and medically nutritious food.¹⁰ Detailed regulations on functional foods are provided in the MOH’s Circular 43/2014/TT-BYT dated 24 November 2014.

“Genetically modified food” is food which consists of one or more materials which have been genetically modified.¹¹

“Irradiated food” is food radiated by a form of radioactivity to preserve and prevent food from degenerating.¹² Detailed regulations on irradiated foods are provided in the MOH’s Decision 3616/2004/QĐ-BYT dated 14 October 2004.

“Street food” is a ready-to-eat food or beverage. It is obtained from a vendor, sold on street sides, in public, or in similar places.¹³

“Packaged food” is completely packaged and labeled food, which may be eaten or processed further.¹⁴

⁷ LoFS, art 2.20.

⁸ *Id.*, art 2.21.

⁹ *Id.*, art 2.22.

¹⁰ *Id.*, art 2.23.

¹¹ *Id.*, art 2.24.

¹² *Id.*, art 2.25.

¹³ *Id.*, art 2.26.

¹⁴ *Id.*, art 2.27.

FOOD SAFETY

All individuals and entities that want to produce and to trade foods must assure that their foods are safe. In other words, the foods must conform to the relevant technical specifications and meet limit requirements for pathogenic microorganisms, residues of plant protection drugs or veterinary drugs, heavy metals, contaminants, and other substances in food that may cause harm to human life and health. In addition, subject to the type of food, food must comply with one or more of the regulations on (i) use of food additives and processing aids in food production and trading; (ii) food packaging and labeling; and (iii) food preservation.¹⁵

The quality of goods and products is managed on the basis of applicable announcement standards and technical specifications.¹⁶ The system of Vietnamese standards includes national standards (“**TCVN**”) and standards applied voluntarily by businesses and individuals (“**TCCS**”).¹⁷ Vietnamese standards are based on international, regional, and foreign standards. Also included are the outcomes of scientific and technological research projects, technical progress, factual experience, and the results of evaluations, tests, experiments, inspections, and appraisals.¹⁸

At one time, all goods were subject to quality “registration”. That is, the State required individuals and organizations that produced and traded goods to follow certain quality standards. Foods were no exception. Foods had to be registered with the MOH. The registration included information such as: a list of standards with which the food products must comply; a chart showing the stages of food product processing from storage of raw materials through the processing stage and ultimately to storage and delivery of the finished product; a final or draft version of the label; instructions and warranties; test results for the food product issued by an authorized government test centre; and a list of all raw materials used to process a food product, including additives and packing materials. The MOH had the power to reject an application for registration.

However, under the LoQPG, individuals and organizations that produce and trade in goods, including foods, are required only to “announce”, rather than “register”, their own quality standards. Under the LoFS, producers and traders must decide and announce the standards of their foods. That is, they are able, themselves, to decide the standard of their goods.¹⁹ Of course, such standards must satisfy applicable Vietnamese standards or industry standards. Accordingly, the prior authoritarian role of the State regarding the quality standards of goods, including food, has been changed into voluntary commitments by entities to set and to comply with their own standards.

¹⁵ LoFS, art 10.

¹⁶ LoQPG, art 5.1.

¹⁷ Law on Standards and Technical Specifications 68/2006/QH11 dated 29 June 2006 (“**LoSTS**”), art 10.

¹⁸ *Id.*, art 13.

¹⁹ LoFS, art. 7

Producers and traders of packaged food, additives, food process supporting substances, packing materials, and food containers (“**Products**” for short) are required to announce that their Products conform to relevant technical specifications. Previously, under Decree 38²⁰, the announcement had to be registered with a competent authority, ie, the MOH or the DOH before production and trade of the Products could be initiated. While this may seem like a reasonable approach in terms of food safety, this regulation usually hindered producers and traders from getting their Products into the market as it could take up to four weeks before their announcement was approved.

With the replacement of Decree 38 by Decree 15²¹, procedures to announce Products have been greatly streamlined. Producers and traders of Products²² are now only required to self-announce their Products on public media and with the appropriate authority under the local People’s Committee. Self-announcement of Products in Decree 15 is significantly different from the announcement of the Products under Decree 38. Whereas Decree 38 required approval from the authorities, Decree 15 does not. After Products are self-announced, they can be immediately produced and/or circulated into the market. Producers and traders are totally responsible for the safety of self-announced Products²³. Some products, however, do require an additional registration step, called Registration of the Self-announcement of Products²⁴. Decree 15 has significantly decreased the gap between announcement and production/trade of a Product while it still holds producers and traders responsible for dealing in Products that conform with technical specifications and food safety regulations. As a result, Decree 15 has considerably decreased the administrative registration process when compared with Decree 38.

Self-Announcement of Products

The dossier to self-announce Products includes one self-announcement using Form 01 provided in Annex I of Decree 15 and a valid food safety evaluation report (“**Evaluation Report**”). The report must be no more than 12 months old and have been issued by an ISO 17025 accredited laboratory. The report must test either (i) the criteria provided by the MOH in accordance with internationally compatible risk management principles or (ii) safety criteria in accordance with equivalent standards, specifications provided by an organization or individual, in case there are no regulations from the MOH. This Evaluation Report is also required for Registration of the Self-announcement of Products mentioned below.

²⁰ Government Decree 38/2012/ND-CP dated 25 April 2012, providing detailed regulations implementing some articles of the LoFS (“**Decree 38**”), as replaced by Decree 15 on 2 February 2018.

²¹ Government Decree 15/2018/ND-CP dated 2 February 2018, providing detailed regulations implementing some articles of the LoFS (“**Decree 15**”), art 4.

²² Except for products, ingredients, which are produced or imported especially for the production, processing of for goods export or for internal production by an organization or individuals without entering the market.

²³ Decree 15, art 5.2.b.

²⁴ See “**Registration of the Self-announcement of Products**” on page 5.

The dossier must be published on public media or on the website of the producer or trader, which website announces the product. Then, the dossier is made public by the competent authorities' food safety data system. If there is no food safety data system at that moment, the dossier must be submitted to the authority designated by the provincial People's Committee.²⁵ The name of the traders, producers and their products must be published on the website of the receiving authority.

Registration of Self-announcement of Products

The registration of self-announced of products is required for products in one of the following categories:

- (i) health protective foods²⁶;
- (ii) medical nutrition foods²⁷, foods for special dietary use²⁸;
- (iii) nutritious products for children under-36-months; and
- (iv) mixed food additives²⁹ with new functions, and food additives which are not on a list of allowed food additives³⁰ or are not regulated by the MOH.

Producers and traders of products in categories (i) and (iv) must register their self-announcement with the MOH. Producers and traders of products in categories (ii) and (iii) must register their self-announcement with the authority designated by the provincial People's Committee. A complete dossier to self-announce a product includes the following documents:

- (i) Announcement of products following Form 02 Annex I of Decree 15;
- (ii) Certificate of Free Sale or Certificate of Exportation or Health Certificate issued by a competent authority of the country of origin/exporting country, which assures the safety of users or permits free sale of the products in the country of origin/exporting country;
- (iii) An Evaluation Report;
- (iv) Published scientific evidence proving the effects or the ingredients of the products;

²⁵ Government Decree 155/2018/ND-CP dated 12 November 2018, amending some articles related to business conditions under state management of the Ministry of Health ("Decree 155"), art 3.

²⁶ Article 3.1 of Decree 15 defines "health protective food" as a supplement to the daily diet to improve the user's health and immunity.

²⁷ Article 3.2 of Decree 15 defines "medical nutrition food" as a food item which can be consumed orally or by tube feeding, prescribed to regulate the patient's diet, the use of which has to be supervised by medical personnel.

²⁸ Article 3.3. of Decree 15 defines "food for special diet" as food for people on a diet, elderly people and other users defined by the Codex Alimentarius, processed or formulated to satisfy particular dietary requirements which exist because of a particular physical or physiological condition and/or specific disease and disorder of the user, as defined.

²⁹ The LoFS defines a "food additive" as a substance with or without nutritious value, which is intentionally added to food in the process of production in order to retain or improve particular characteristics of food.

³⁰ The list of allowed food additives is provided in the MOH's Circular 28/2021/TT-BYT dated 20 December 2021.

- (v) Certificate of satisfaction of food safety conditions as required by Good Manufacturing Practices ("**GMP**"). An equivalent certificate may be substituted if the product is an imported health protective food. This requirement took effect on 1 July 2019; and
- (vi) Certificate of satisfaction of food safety conditions, if the product is manufactured domestically.

Within 21 days of submission of the dossier for health protective foods and 7 days for certain mixed food additives, the authorities will examine the dossier and issue the appropriate receipt.

LABELING

Decree 43/2017/ND-CP of the Government dated 14 April 2017 on the Labeling of Goods (“**Decree 43**”) and Decree No.111/2021/ND-CP of the Government amending certain articles of Decree 43 on goods labels (“**Decree 111**”) made some significant changes to the previous legislation on good labels. Decree 43 and Decree 113 applies to goods circulated in Vietnam, including imported, exported and domestically manufactured products.³¹

Labels are defined as “inscriptions, prints, drawings, images, or signs that are imprinted or embossed directly on or affixed, stuck, or pinned firmly to goods or their packaging to display necessary and principal information about such goods.”³² In addition, goods labeling is defined as the “inscription of necessary and principal information about the goods in order for consumers to identify goods, and have a basis to select, consume and use goods. Producers and traders may use the labels to provide information about and to advertise their goods. Labels also permit functional bodies to conduct inspections and supervision.”³³

Decree 43 requires domestically circulated foods, including imported foods, to bear labels, except for unpacked fresh and raw foodstuffs and processed foodstuffs that are sold directly to consumers.³⁴ Labels may include both compulsory and non-compulsory information. The compulsory contents are mandatory and contain the most important information. Regulations on compulsory contents for all domestically circulated goods labels, whether manufactured in Vietnam or imported into Vietnam, are provided in Decree 43. In addition, the MOST issued Circular 05/2019/TT-BKHCN dated 26 June 2019 which guided implementation of Decree 43 (“**Circular 05**”) and which specified requirements how to indicate compulsory contents of some particular goods labels. See the attached Schedule.

The general compulsory contents of a label for all goods include:

- Name of the goods: manufacturers or traders of goods may choose a name provided that the name does not mislead consumers as to the nature and use of the goods. Manufacturers or traders are liable for the name they choose. The name of the products or goods must be legibly and prominently placed on the label and must be larger than the other compulsory contents on the label.³⁵
- Names and addresses of the entities which produced, imported, assembled, or finished the goods;³⁶

³¹ Decree 111, art 1.1.

³² Decree 43, art 3.1.

³³ Decree 43, art 3.2.

³⁴ Decree 111, art 1.1 (dd).

³⁵ Decree 43, art 11.

³⁶ Decree 43, art 11.3 and Decree 111, art 1.6.

- Country of origin (applicable to both imported and domestically produced goods);³⁷

Labels of foods are required to have the following additional contents:

- Quantity³⁸ measured in units recognized by Vietnamese law. These units are described in Schedule II of Decree 111;
- List of ingredients in descending order of weight.³⁹ If an ingredient contains preservatives, which must be used in a prescribed dosage, which may cause allergens, or which may be harmful to humans, animals, or the environment, the names of the preservatives must be included together with the names of the ingredients.⁴⁰
- Specifications and warnings: If foodstuffs are labeled with nutritional value, the labels must indicate the range of nutritional value according to relevant regulations and applied standards. An average value may be used instead.⁴¹
- Production date, expiration date, and shelf-life of goods;⁴² and
- Storage and usage instructions.⁴³

Decree 43 requires that all letters, numerals, drawings, images, signs, and/or marks that appear on the label must be clear and must accurately reflect the properties of the goods. They must not be ambiguous or cause confusion with other products. Labels that are not clearly visible may be seen as an administrative violation. Circular 05 provides detailed guidelines regarding compulsory contents of a label. Particularly, compulsory contents of a label need not be fully presented on a label and can appear at other places on the products, provided that compulsory contents can be recognized easily without having to disassemble any parts of the products. Compulsory contents create an integral part of the label.

The color of the text of compulsory contents must contrast with the background color of the label.⁴⁴ Goods distributed in Vietnam must be labeled in the Vietnamese language, except for contents that are presented in their Latin origin.⁴⁵ However, depending on the requirements of each type of goods, a foreign language may be added in equal or smaller print.⁴⁶ The Vietnamese language must appear on imported goods either on the original label or on a

³⁷ Decree 43, art 11.3 and Decree 111, art 1.6

³⁸ Decree 111, Schedule I, items 1-11, excluding item 8.

³⁹ Decree 111, art 1.8.

⁴⁰ Decree 43, art 17.6.

⁴¹ Decree 43, art 17.5.

⁴² Decree 43, art 14 and Schedule III.

⁴³ Decree 113, Schedule I, item 2.e, 3.dd, 6.e, 7.d, 9.dd, 10.d, 11.dd.

⁴⁴ Decree 43, art 6.

⁴⁵ Decree 43, art 7.

⁴⁶ Decree 43, art 7.2.

secondary label. A Vietnamese language label must be attached to the goods before they are put on sale or distributed.⁴⁷

The individual or organization responsible for labeling the goods determines the size of the label and the size of the font. They must be large enough for all compulsory contents to be clearly visible.

According to Decree 43, Decree 15 and Decree 111, in addition to the compulsory contents listed above, specific foods must have particular information on their labels:

- Health protective food: Labels must indicate any risk warnings; the phrase “health protective food” and the disclaimer “This foodstuff is not medicine and cannot replace medicine.”⁴⁸
- Irradiated food: Warnings and the phrase “Irradiated food” must appear.⁴⁹
- Genetically modified food: Labeling “Genetically modified food” or “genetically modified” beside the name of the genetically modified ingredients, enclosed with their contents.⁵⁰
- Liquor: Labels must indicate alcohol content (ethanol) and any lot number (if any).⁵¹
- Food additives, processing aids: Labels must specify their categories, names and International Numbering System (INS) Code (if there is one); additives which are flavorings, sweeteners or colorings must be additionally clarified to indicate whether they are “natural”, “nature-identical”, “synthetic”, or “artificial”.⁵² The phrase “Food additive” and appropriate warnings must also appear for food additives. Further, the phrase “Food processing aids and appropriate warnings must appear for food processing aids.”⁵³
- Micronutrients: labels must indicate “Used for food”.⁵⁴
- Medical nutrition foods: labels must indicate “Medical nutrition food” and “Used for patients with supervision by medical personnel”.⁵⁵

⁴⁷ Decree 43, art 7.3.

⁴⁸ Decree 111, Schedule I, item 3.

⁴⁹ Decree 111, Schedule I, item 4.

⁵⁰ Decree 111, Schedule I, item 5.

⁵¹ Decree 111, Schedule I, item 7.

⁵² Decree 43, art 16.3 (a).

⁵³ Decree 111, Schedule I, item 9.

⁵⁴ Decree 111, Schedule I, item 10.

⁵⁵ Decree 15, art. 3.3 and art. 24

- Food for special diet: labels must indicate “Nutritious product (for specific subjects, such as for people on a diet, elderly people and other users defined by Codex Alimentarius)”.⁵⁶

Non-compulsory contents may appear on food labels, but they must not be contrary to the compulsory labeling requirements referred to above. Non-compulsory contents may be: number and barcodes granted by national number and barcode organizations; protected trademarks; medals; certificates of the product’s international quality standards; serial number of the production batch; international markings used for transport, use, and storage; foreign language information; and information that promotes the product.

Changes made to a registered food label or to the expiration date without the approval of the competent authority are strictly prohibited.

⁵⁶ Id

ADVERTISING

The Law on Advertisement No. 16/2012/QH13 of the National Assembly dated 21 June 2012 (“**Law on Advertisement**”), Decree 181/2013/ND-CP of the Government dated 14 November 2013 (“**Decree 181**”)⁵⁷; and Circular 10/2013/TT-BVHTTDL of the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism (“**MCST**”) dated 6 December 2013 (“**Circular 10**”)⁵⁸ cover advertising in general. The contents of an advertisement of any goods, including food products, must be accurate and truthful, and must correctly reflect the form, quality, usage, label, design, classification, packing, origin, use date, preservation period, and warranty period of the goods. The advertisement must be in accordance with food labels and quality standards that the producer has announced to or registered with the relevant state agencies.⁵⁹

Advertisements of tobacco, alcohol (concentration of alcohol being 15 percent or more); milk products replacing breast milk for under-24-month old children, supplemental nutrition products for under-6-month old children, and feeding bottles and artificial teats; prescribed or non-prescribed medicine of which the usage must be restricted or be under supervision of a doctor; sexually stimulating products, sport guns and cartridges, sport rifles and violently stimulating products are prohibited.⁶⁰ In this regard, advertisements of some products, such as sanitary pads and condoms, which may constitute an inappropriate subject matter for public advertisement, will not be approved. Furthermore, advertisements which incorrectly state or mislead the business capacity or ability to provide products of another organization/individual conducting business, or about the quantity, quality, price, usage, design, package, trademark, origin, type, method of serving or warranty period of products, goods or services which has been registered or declared, are prohibited.⁶¹

An offshore producer with no establishment in Vietnam can advertise only through a Vietnamese advertising agency.⁶²

Furthermore, under Articles 5 and 12 of Decree 181, the advertising content of all foods and all food additives must be certified by competent authorities, ie, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, and the Ministry of Industry and Trade depending on each type of product. Within 10 working days from the day on which a complete and valid application for certification of advertisement contents is received, the competent authorities must issue a written certification of advertisement contents. Conditions and procedures for the certification of advertisement content must comply with Circular

⁵⁷ Decree 181 provides detailed regulations implementing some articles of the Law on Advertising, as amended by Decree 70/2021/ND-CP dated 20 July 2021.

⁵⁸ Circular 10 provides detailed regulations implementing the Law on Advertisement and Decree 181 on legitimate documents, the organization and operation of the Appraisal Council of Advertised Products and the assignment of state management on advertisement.

⁵⁹ Law on Advertisement, art 8.9.

⁶⁰ Law on Advertisement, art 7.

⁶¹ *Id.*, art 8.9.

⁶² *Id.*, art 39.

09/2015/TT-BYT of the MOH dated 25 May 2015. Decree 15 requires that producers and traders must register with the appropriate authority, the advertisement contents for health protective foods, medical nutrition foods, foods for special diet and nutritional products for under-36-month-old children (provided that the nutritional products for under-36-month-old children are not prohibited for advertisement).⁶³

In addition, Circular 10 and in Article 8.11 of the Law on Advertisement, an advertising piece which contains a word/phrase such as “the only”, “the best”, “best”, “number one” or the like must be verified by a legitimate document. It can be a market research report prepared by a qualified market research organization or a certificate or the like, granted by a regional or national competition/exhibition organization which recognizes that the product in the advertising piece is “the only”, “the best”, “best”, “number one” or the like. The document is valid for only one year from its date of issue.

On March 29, 2021, the Government issued Decree 38/2021/ND-CP prescribing penalties for administrative violations involving culture and advertisement activities (“**Decree 38**”). Decree 38 stipulates administrative penalties from VND 5 million to VND 30 million for violations against regulations regarding advertising foods and food additives. Additional to the monetary penalties, certain supplementary remedies may be applied⁶⁴.

⁶³ Decree 15, Chapter VIII

⁶⁴ Decree 38, art. 52.

RECALL

Under Decree 119/2017/ND-CP of the Government dated 1 November 2017 (“**Decree 119**”) on Administrative Sanctions against Violations in Standards, Measurements, and Quality of Products and Goods, as amended by Decree 126/2021/ND-CP of the Government dated 30 December 2021 (“**Decree 126**”), the following goods are subject to recall:

- Imported or manufactured goods whose quality does not conform with a standard conformity certification, or circulating goods that are unsafe for consumers;⁶⁵
- Goods that violate applicable technical regulations;⁶⁶
- Goods in circulation that violate any quality standard;⁶⁷
- Goods that violate labeling laws.⁶⁸
- Goods whose codes and barcodes contain Vietnam’s code (893), but the use of such code is not permitted; goods using recalled codes; and goods using codes purchased from another entity.⁶⁹
- Goods with foreign codes which are produced, processed, packaged, extracted in Vietnam only for export if the use of such codes has not yet been allowed by competent foreign agencies or their foreign owners; goods with markings that may be confused with codes or barcodes of competent authorities of Vietnam and GS1 (International code and barcode organization).⁷⁰

Article 55 of the LoFS requires recall of the following foods:

- Expired foods that are in circulation;
- Foods that do not conform to applicable technical regulations;
- Foods created from new technology, the circulation of which is not allowed;
- Spoiled foods;
- Foods made of a prohibited substance or foods that contain polluting agents which exceed applicable limits;

⁶⁵ Decree 119, art 18.5 (as amended by Article 2.32.c of Decree 126).

⁶⁶ Decree 119, art 19.6 (as amended by Article 2.33.a and Article 2.33.d of Decree 126).

⁶⁷ Decree 119, art 20.9 (as amended by Article 2.37 of Decree 126).

⁶⁸ Decree 119, art. 30.3. (as amended by Article 2.47 of Decree 126).

⁶⁹ Decree 119, art 32.6 (as amended by Article 2.59 of Decree 126).

⁷⁰ Decree 119, art 32.6 (as amended by Article 2.59 of Decree 126).

- Imported foods that contain polluting agents which can cause personal injury and which have been identified publicly as harmful by the exporting country, by another country, or by any international organization.

Article 55 also provides forms of recall, the handling of recalled foods, and the responsibilities of certain individuals, organizations, and competent State bodies in connection with the recall.

Under Article 22 of the Law on Consumer Protection,⁷¹ in case of a defective product, the business organization or individual with responsibility must publicly announce the recall of the defective product in five successive issues of a central daily newspapers or have the news of the recall broadcast on a central radio station or a central television station on five successive days. The announcement must include the following:

- Description of the product to be recalled;
- Reason for the recall and warnings of injury which may be caused by the defective product;
- Time, location, and form of the recall;
- Time and method to repair the defect; and
- Measures which should be taken to ensure that consumer interests are protected.

The result of the recall must be reported to the appropriate provincial or central authorities.

⁷¹ Law No. 59/2010/QH12 dated 17 November 2010 of the National Assembly on Consumer Protection.

INSPECTIONS

Under Decree 15, inspection of food is conducted by the MOH, the MARD, and the MOIT. The Government assigns certain governmental authorities the obligation to conduct safety inspections. The State has issued Decree 122⁷²; it provides that the MOH is responsible for inspection of food products.

In general, food safety inspection is conducted by an inspection team or an individual inspector. The team or individual is tasked with: (1) investigating compliance with legislation on technical standards, food safety, advertisements and labeling, and certification of conformity, (2) imposing sanctions, and (3) applying or proposing, in accordance with its authority, measures to prevent or end a violation. Furthermore, the MOH may conduct an extraordinary inspection on the entire process of food production, import and export, and trading of food in certain cases as provided in Article 16 of Decree 122.⁷³

The contents and conclusions of the inspection and all recommendations are made in an inspection report. The inspection report is central to resolving problems. The LoQPG states that organizations and individuals may lodge complaints with state agencies against an administrative decision or an act of an agency or officer which act they consider to be illegal and/or which infringes on their rights and interests.⁷⁴

⁷² Decree 122/2014/ND-CP of the MOH dated 25 December 2014 on health inspection (“**Decree 122**”), art 2 and art 16.2.

⁷³ *Id.*, art 16.

⁷⁴ LoQPG, art 64.1.

IMPORT REQUIREMENTS

All imported goods are subject to the regulations described above. Food imported into Vietnam must meet the following additional safety assurance conditions:⁷⁵

- a technical regulation conformity announcement must be registered at a competent state agency before the food is imported;
- the food importer must obtain a notice of satisfaction of import requirements issued by a designated inspection agency for each goods lot as prescribed by the relevant ministry;

In addition to these conditions, imported functional food, micronutrient-fortified food, genetically modified food, and irradiated food must be accompanied by a certificate of free sale or a health certificate.

Imported foods are exempt from State inspection for safety purposes in the following cases:⁷⁶

- Products that have received a Receipt of Registration of Announcement of Product;
- Gifts within the import duty exemption threshold;
- Foods for private consumption by a person who has diplomatic privileges;
- Foods in transit and trans-shipment; foods for temporary import, re-export; foods stored in a bonded warehouse;
- Foods to be used as a subject for experiments and research in a reasonable amount for the purpose of the experiment and research, with appropriate confirmation from the organization and individual;
- Foods to be used as samples displayed in fairs or exhibitions;
- Products, ingredients, which are produced or imported especially for the production, processing of export goods or for the internal production of the organization or individuals without entering the domestic market;
- Temporarily imported food to be sold in duty-free stores;
- Imported goods to satisfy an emergency request of the Government, Prime Minister.

⁷⁵ LoFS, art 38.

⁷⁶ Decree 15, art 13, as amended by Decree 85/2019/ND-CP of the Government dated 14 November 2019.

A reduced level of inspection (“**Simplified Inspection**”) is applied to the following products⁷⁷:

- Foods imported from countries which have concluded treaties on mutual recognition of food safety certification with Vietnam are eligible to receive a reduced level of inspection;
- Foods that satisfy the importation requirements in accordance with the regular level of inspection on three consecutive occasions within 12 months; or
- Foods that are manufactured in facilities, which apply one of the quality control systems: GMP, HACCP, ISO 22000, IFS, BRCGS, FSSC 22000 or equivalent.

An increased level of inspection (“**Tightened Inspection**”) is applied in the following circumstances⁷⁸:

- Foods that have failed a previous inspection;
- Foods that have failed any State inspection; or
- There is a warning from the MOH, MARD, MOIT, provincial People’s Committee or an offshore competent authority or from the manufacturer.

Inspection

Decree 15 revises existing inspection methods for imported food. An imported shipment, as defined in Article 3 of Decree 15, may consist of one or several different food products. If the shipment contains different food products, the inspections will be carried out for each food product separately and not for the shipment as a whole.⁷⁹

Simplified Inspection

During the customs process, the owner of a shipment must submit a dossier, which includes the following documents⁸⁰:

- (i) Self-announcement of the product;
- (ii) Three consecutive notices that the product being imported has satisfied importation requirements under regular inspection, or a legalized copy of a valid GMP, HACCP, ISO 22000, IFS, BRCGS, FSSC 22000 Certificate or equivalent; and

⁷⁷ Decree 15, art 17.1.

⁷⁸ Decree 15, art 17.3.

⁷⁹ Official Letter No. 114/ATTP-PCTTR of the FHSA dated 10 January 2019, answering inquiries in relation to Decree 15.

⁸⁰ Decree 15, art 18.1.

(iii) Certificate of satisfaction of food safety regulations, issued by a competent authority of the exporting country.

Customs may randomly inspect 5% of a shipment.

Regular Inspection

After a shipment arrives at customs, the owner of the shipment must submit a dossier either to the state inspector or online. The dossier must include the following documents⁸¹:

- (i) Self-announcement of the product;
- (ii) Inspection application using the form provided in Decree 15;
- (iii) Packing list;
- (iv) Three consecutive notices that the product being imported has satisfied importation requirements under tightened inspection, for those products that are switching from tightened inspection to regular inspection.

Within three business days, the state inspector will examine the dossier and issue a notice that the foods satisfy or do not satisfy the importation requirements. The owner of the qualifying shipments will submit a notice to customs that the foods satisfy importation requirements.

Tightened Inspection

Tightened inspection requires the same dossier as regular inspection but the inspection period is seven days instead of three days⁸². During the inspection period, the state inspector will sample and inspect the samples in accordance with the food safety criteria.

Foods that fail to meet importation requirements must be handled using the methods provided in Decree 15, namely re-export, disposal or repurposing with the buyer. The result of handling such shipments must be submitted to the state inspector.

The competent authority in Vietnam may plan and co-operate with the competent authority of the exporting country in order to inspect the food safety control system in the exporting country and local facilities which manufacture and export foods to Vietnam.

⁸¹ Decree 15, art 18.2.

⁸² Decree 15, art 18.2, art 19.2 and art 19.3.

EXPORT REQUIREMENTS

In general, there are no specific export requirements for food products. In principle, it is the overseas buyer of a food product that sets the quality, safety, or hygienic standards with which the food products must comply.

In practice, an overseas buyer usually asks whether the food exporter is in compliance with International Standardization Organization (“ISO”) provisions. Further, the food products must follow HACCP which embodies international standards on hygiene and safety. The principle of HACCP is to define and isolate critical points in the process that may pose a food safety hazard. Processors are responsible for producing safe, marketable food, and food exporters are responsible to provide safe food in accordance with HACCP.

In addition, an overseas buyer may require a Certificate of Free Sale (“CFS”), Health Certificate (“HC”)⁸³ for food products intended for export, based on the requirements of the country of import. If so, the food exporter must apply for the CFS from the MOH or MARD or MOIT; and an HC from the MOH, depending on the exported products.

The conditions to obtain a CFS are provided in Decree 69/2018/ND-CP guiding the Law on Foreign Trade Management (“Decree 69”)⁸⁴. A CFS is issued to an exporter three business days following receipt of the completed dossier. If a CFS is denied, a written response with the reason for denial must be issued. If an importing country requires the exporter to submit a CFS using a form regulated by its regulations and laws, the CFS issuing authority will issue the CFS according to such required form. A CFS is effective for two years from the date of issuance.

The conditions to obtain an HC are provided in Circular 52.⁸⁵ An exporter must submit an application dossier to the MOH. The application dossier includes an application using the forms provided in Annex 8 and Annex 10 of Circular 52 and the Receipt of Product Announcement.⁸⁶ The HC is issued to the exporter after five business days following receipt of the completed dossier. If the HC is denied, a written response with the reason for denial must be issued. An HC is effective for two years from the date of issuance. It cannot exceed the expiration date of the receipt of the announcement of products. Export requirements that relate to foods are generally the same as those discussed in the section entitled “**IMPORT REQUIREMENTS.**”

⁸³ LoFS, art. 42.

⁸⁴ Decree 69, art. 11.

⁸⁵ The MOH’s Circular 52/2015/TT-BYT dated December 21, 2015 (“Circular 52”).

⁸⁶ See “Food Safety” section, pg. 6

AQUATIC PRODUCTS

Under the Law on Fisheries No. 18/2017/QH14 dated November 21, 2017 (“**Law on Fisheries**”) and Government Decree 26/2019/ND-CP detailing the implementation of the Law on Fisheries dated 8 March 2019 (“**Decree 26**”), the term, “Aquatic products” includes aquatic animals and plants, aquatic animal and plant products, feed for aquatic and marine life, aquatic plant protection products (e.g. chemicals), veterinary medicines for aquatic life, fishing nets, and other gear.

Entities involved in trading or producing aquatic products under the MARD’s⁸⁷ management are subject to regulations on inspection and certification to assure compliance with standards of food safety and hygiene, except the following entities/businesses:⁸⁸

- Small-scale initial production businesses;
- Food production and trading businesses that do not have a fixed location or fishing vessels with a maximum length of 15 meters;
- Small-scale food processing businesses; small-scale food trading businesses;
- Ready-to-eat food trading businesses;
- Agro-forestry-fishery production and trading businesses that have already been awarded one of the following certificates: Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP), Hazard Analysis, Critical Control Point (HACCP) System, Food Safety Management System ISO 22000, International Food Standard (IFS), Global Standard for Food Safety (BRCGS), Food Safety System Certificate (FSSC 22000) or equivalent, all of which must remain valid;
- Agro-forestry-fishery production and trading businesses that export their products to countries and territories imposing requirements for health certification (food safety certification) granted by competent authorities under the management of the MARD in accordance with its regulations.

Inspection and Certification of Fishery Aquatic Establishments

Local inspection and certification bodies, along with the National Agro-Forestry-Aquatic Quality Assurance Department are responsible for inspecting and

⁸⁷ The MARD is responsible to coordinate state management of aquatic products and certain other products listed in Annex III of Decree 15. See Decree 15, Chapter XII, art. 38.

⁸⁸ Circular 38/2018/TT-BNNPTNT dated 25 December 2018 prescribing assessment and certification of compliance with food safety regulations of Agro-forestry-fishery food manufacturing and trading business under the management of the MARD (“**Circular 38**”), art 2. Circular 38 replaces MARD’s Circular 45/2014/TT-BNNPTNT dated 3 December 2014 on Inspection of Manufacturing and Trading Establishments of Agricultural Commodities, and Inspection and Certification of Satisfaction on Food Safety Conditions of Manufacturing and Trading Establishments of Agriculture, Forestry and Aquatic Products.

certifying establishments.⁸⁹ There are two types of inspection for Fishery Aquatic Establishments: inspection for classification and periodic inspection.⁹⁰ With respect to manufacturing and trading premises of aquatic products for export, there is an examination process for certification and there are periodic inspections to check food safety requirements.⁹¹ Every separate fishery aquatic establishment that is approved for food hygiene and safety standards under inspection for classification is entitled to a certificate of food safety with a 3-year-term.⁹² A manufacturing and trading premise of aquatic products for export that is approved for hygiene and safety standards under the examination process is entitled to an approval code attached to a certificate of food safety with a 3-year-term.⁹³

A Fishery Aquatic Establishment which satisfies all food hygiene and safety standards, but which has several minor failures not seriously affecting food safety and quality will be given a “pass”.⁹⁴ An establishment that does not satisfy food hygiene and safety standards will be given a “fail” grade.⁹⁵ A failed Fishery Aquatic Establishment will be re-inspected. A certificate on satisfaction of food hygiene and safety standards and a business registration certificate may be withdrawn, and the establishment may receive an administrative penalty if it fails to satisfy conditions upon re-inspection.

Grades of A, B, or C are given to establishments under Article 8 of Circular 38. Grade A means that the establishment satisfies all food hygiene and safety standards. Grade B establishments satisfy food hygiene and safety standards, but have some minor failures. Grade C establishments do not satisfy food hygiene and safety standards. Only grade A or grade B establishments meet food hygiene and safety standards.⁹⁶

State Inspection and Certification of Aquatic Products Quality

Aquatic products, whether produced for domestic consumption, export, or import, are subject to regulations which apply to inspection and certification of food hygiene and safety.⁹⁷ This inspection is made per lot of aquatic products and a certificate of aquatic products quality will be granted per lot. A single Health Certificate is granted to each lot of aquatic products for export.⁹⁸ There are no regulations on the quantity and size of containers for aquatic products.

⁸⁹ Circular 38, art 5; and Circular 16/2018/TT-BNNPTNT dated 29 October 2018 amending and supplementing certain articles of Circular 48/2013/TT-BNNPTNT dated 12 November 2013 and Circular 02/2017/TT-BNNPTNT dated 13 February 2017 (“**Circular 16**”), art. 1.3.

⁹⁰ Circular 38, art 6.

⁹¹ Circular 16, art. 2.4

⁹² Circular 38, arts 17.2.

⁹³ Circular 16, art 2.5.

⁹⁴ Circular 38, art 8.1(b).

⁹⁵ Circular 38, art 8.1(c).

⁹⁶ Circular 38, arts 8.1(a) and 8.1(b).

⁹⁷ The MARD’s Circular No. 08/2016/TT-BNNPTNT dated June 1, 2016, on the Control of Hygiene and Safety of Agricultural Products, Forest Products and Aquatic Products (“**Circular 08**”), art.1, Circular 48, art. 2.1 (b), and Circular 16, art. 1.23.(a).

⁹⁸ Circular 48, art 25.

Grounds for inspection and certification of aquatic products are as follows:

- The inspection and certification of aquatic products produced for domestic consumption are based on technical regulations on food hygiene and safety issued by the MARD and other ministries and offices; and are also based on the quality announcement of food business operators (“**FBOs**”).
- The inspection and certification of aquatic products for export to certain markets that MARD monitors and so require periodic inspection for management purposes; the inspection and certification of aquatic products imported for processing, and of aquatic products recalled or returned from foreign countries are based on technical regulations on food hygiene and safety issued by MARD and other ministries and offices.
- The inspection and certification of aquatic products for export to markets which require food hygiene and safety inspection and certification conducted by competent authorities are based on food hygiene and safety regulations issued or approved by importing countries.

Under Circular 48, the following authorities are responsible for the hygiene, safety inspection, and certification of aquatic products:

- Division on Agro-Forestry-Fisheries Quality Assurance or authorities which are assigned by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development to control the quality, hygiene, and safety of aquatic products before the products are put into circulation for domestic consumption. In addition, the Agro-Forestry-Fisheries Quality Assurance Department may conduct unannounced inspections as assigned by the MARD.⁹⁹
- Authorities under the control of the National Agro-Forestry-Fisheries Quality Assurance Department inspect and certify the quality, hygiene, and safety of aquatic products for export and aquatic products recalled or returned from foreign countries. In the case of aquatic products imported for processing, these tasks are carried out by authorized persons of the Department of Animal Health.¹⁰⁰

However, under Circular 16 which amends Circular 48, the authority which handles the inspection, issuance of certificates on food safety as well as inspection and issuance of certificates on fishery food products for export is the National Agro-Forestry-Fisheries Quality Assurance Department.¹⁰¹

With respect to aquatic products for export, the FBOs must register for inspection by sending a dossier for food hygiene and safety inspection registration to inspecting bodies in person, via postal mail, email, fax (and then filing a dossier with originals afterward), or online via the national one-door management

⁹⁹ Circular 48, art 5, as amended by Circular 16.

¹⁰⁰ Circular 48, art 5.2, as amended by Circular 16.

¹⁰¹ Circular 16, art. 1.3.

system.¹⁰² After on-site inspection, the inspectors grant a health certificate for each lot of the FBOs that fulfills compulsory requirements.

Announcement of Quality Standards of Aquatic Products

The Law on Fisheries and Circular 26/2018/TT-BNNPTNT dated 15 November 2018 prescribing management of aquatic breeds, aquatic feed and aqua environmental remediation products requires producers to announce quality standards of locally-produced aquatic breeds¹⁰³. Importers or distributors must register for inspection of the quality of imported aquatic breeds¹⁰⁴.

Safety and Quality Requirements for Aquatic Products for Export

The value of aquatic products exported by Vietnam has risen steadily. Vietnam is a prominent supplier. The Government believes it is important that proper standards be maintained to ensure confidence in aquatic products that come from Vietnam.

In fact, establishments that export aquatic products must strictly comply with Vietnamese regulations on food hygiene safety and specific standards applicable to aquatic products. They must also comply with the requirements of the importing countries.¹⁰⁵

Like any food products, aquatic products should conform to HACCP. In addition, exported aquatic products must be sanitary. This requires an exporter to follow GMP, which is the basic regime for food manufacturers. The principles are straightforward and aim to prevent contamination of food through unsanitary practices. There is a close relationship between HACCP and GMP, inasmuch as GMP is considered to be a prerequisite to HACCP. Without GMP, the risks are greater.

Vietnamese exporters must also establish their own quality control system to conform to international criteria and the requirements of the importing countries. Aquatic products for export are subject to Circular 48.¹⁰⁶ The Government has taken that step to encourage aquatic products exporters voluntarily to adopt HACCP, GMP, and other international criteria.

¹⁰² Circular 48, art. 28.1 (b), as amended by Circular 16, art. 1.14.

¹⁰³ Law on Aquatic Products, art 26.2

¹⁰⁴ *Id.*, art 27

¹⁰⁵ Circular 48, arts 2.1 (b) and 2.2.

¹⁰⁶ *Id.*, art 2.

ENFORCEMENT

All organizations and individuals have the right to file a complaint regarding any violation that relates to the quality of food products.¹⁰⁷ They may make a complaint regarding food safety, such as wrong-doing by a government official responsible for implementing or enforcing the laws and regulations on the quality of food products.¹⁰⁸ The authorities must respond to such complaints.¹⁰⁹

All individuals and organizations, including foreign individuals and organizations, that commit an administrative violation that relates to the quality of goods will be sanctioned.¹¹⁰ The Civil Code states that: “individuals, legal persons, etc. that are producers or that do business without ensuring the quality standards of goods and that injure any consumer must compensate” the consumer.¹¹¹ Inspectors who specialize in technology and science [such as inspectors (persons who are assigned the inspection task and are on duty), Chief Inspectors and Head of a delegation of inspection of the Department of Science and Technology, Head of a delegation of inspection of the General Department of Standards, Metrology and Quality, Chief Inspectors and Head of a delegation of inspection of the MOST, Manager of the General Department of Standards, Metrology and Quality], presidents of People’s Committees, the police, the Customs Department, market management agencies, the border guards, coast guards and certain specific inspection agencies have the right to deal with administrative violations.¹¹² Once a violation has been discovered, the law gives the government much flexibility in the form and scale of punishment.¹¹³

Depending on the nature and severity of violations which involve standards, measurements, and quality, an organization or individual may be subject to one or more specific types of sanctions. One such sanction is cancellation of the right to use certificates of conforming technical specifications; certificates on satisfaction of business conditions; inspection certificates; and so on.¹¹⁴

Administrative violators may be subject to the following remedies: recovery of sums of money illegally gained from the commission of administrative violations, recall of products or goods or recall of measuring devices that violate standards, and so on.¹¹⁵ Also, products or goods must be destroyed if they are not safe for humans, animals, plants, and the environment.¹¹⁶

Enforcement agencies are given guidance on which sanctions to impose and on how large a fine should be.¹¹⁷ Generally, the maximum fine for violation of

¹⁰⁷ LoQPG, art 64.

¹⁰⁸ LoFS, arts 7.1 (dd), 8.1 (d) and 9.1 (d).

¹⁰⁹ LoQPG, art 46.4.

¹¹⁰ Decree 119, art 2.

¹¹¹ Civil Code, art 608.

¹¹² Decree 119, arts 34 to 41.

¹¹³ *Id*, arts 2 & 3.

¹¹⁴ Decree 126/2021/ND-CP of the Government dated 30 December 2021, art 2.2.

¹¹⁵ *Id*, art 2.3.

¹¹⁶ *Id*, art 20.

¹¹⁷ *Id*, Chapter II.

measurements is VND100 million for an individual and VND200 million for an organization. The maximum fine for violation of standards or quality of products and goods is VND150 million for an individual, and VND300 million for an organization¹¹⁸. There are some exceptions.

The regulations do list extenuating and aggravating circumstances, as well as situations where sanctions are not to be applied. Such regulations are general and refer to violations of many laws, not just to violations related to food.

Extenuating circumstances include:¹¹⁹

- The offender attempts to mitigate the damage caused by the breach or to deal voluntarily with the consequences and to compensate the injured;
- The offender voluntarily declares his violation or repents of the violation;
- The violation is committed in a state of nervous excitement caused by the illegal acts of other persons;
- The violation is committed beyond the legitimate defense limit or beyond requirements of an urgent circumstance;
- The violation is caused by coercion or force;
- The violating party is a pregnant woman, an old or sick person, a diseased person or a disabled person which limits his awareness or control over his actions;
- The violation is committed in especially difficult circumstances not brought about by the offender; or
- The breach was committed as a result of backwardness.

Aggravating circumstances include:¹²⁰

- Organized violations;
- Repeated and/or extensive violations;
- Enticement by the offender of underage persons to commit a violation, or forcing dependent persons to commit a violation;
- Utilizing someone who is mentally ill or who has impaired cognitive abilities, or impaired ability to control his or her behavior;
- Abusive conduct and defamatory actions toward a person who is on duty;

¹¹⁸ Decree 119, art 3.

¹¹⁹ Law No. 15/2012/QH13 dated 20 June 2012 on Dealing with Administrative Violations, art 9.

¹²⁰ *Id.*, art 10.

- Undertakes administrative violations with hooligans;
- The offender abuses a position of power in committing the violation;
- The offender takes advantage of wartime conditions, natural disasters, or other social difficulties in order to commit the violation;
- An offender persists in the violation despite the request of an authorized person to cease;
- The violation is committed while the offender is serving a criminal sentence or is subject to an administrative penalty;
- The offender attempts to evade responsibility or conceals the violation;
- Violations are large in scale or in value; and
- Violations affect a large number of people, children, the elderly, the disabled, or pregnant women.

Situations where no sanction should be applied include:¹²¹

- Where the offender committed a violation due to urgent circumstances, legitimate defense purposes, unexpected events, unforeseen contingencies;
- The offender suffers from a mental or other disease that is confirmed by a medical agency and which causes him or her to lose awareness or behavioral control; or he is under 14 years old so that he has not attained the age for being administratively sanctioned.¹²²

Within seven days (or 30 days for complicated cases) the relevant government agency will issue a decision on how to handle the violation.¹²³

An injured party may demand compensation by filing suit with the Civil Division of the People's Court under the Civil Procedure Code.

Moreover, individuals who violate regulations on food safety and hygiene may have penal liability. Crimes related to food safety and hygiene, under the Penal Code, are diverse and include the use of banned substances to manufacture or preserve food products; sale of food products with the knowledge that they contain banned substances; manufacturing and trading chemicals, anti-bodies, veterinary medicines, plant protection preparations that are banned from use in

¹²¹ Law No. 15/2012/QH13 dated 20 June 2012 on Dealing with Administrative Violations, art 11.

¹²² *Id.*, art 11. A person who is between 14 and under 16 years old may be administratively sanctioned for an intentional administrative violation. A person who is 16 years old or older may be administratively sanctioned for administrative violations.

¹²³ *Id.*, art 66.1.

producing salt and in the preliminary processing of agricultural, forestall, aquatic products; manufacturing and trading fake goods that are food products or food additives, etc. The penalty for each crime may be five years' imprisonment, 10 years' imprisonment or a life sentence. Fines may range from VND20 million to VND100 million, depending largely on the level of seriousness of the offence.

There are crimes involving manufacturing and banned trading of chemicals, anti-bodies, veterinary medicines, plant protection preparations or which involve manufacturing and trading fake goods that are food products or food additives. In such cases, traders that are entities (not only individuals) may have penal liability. Those companies can have criminal liability for breaches of regulations on food safety and hygiene.

CONCLUSION

Regulations on foods have been improved and simplified. A good example is the replacement of the complex rules regarding registration of food quality, hygiene, and safety. A regime of announced food quality, hygiene, and safety now applies. This change provides a shortened and simplified system.

The rules on food continue to develop in a way that recognizes the greater sophistication of the Vietnamese food industry, consumer needs, and import, export, and processing standards. The reality is that the laws must continue to evolve. Rules that were intended to regulate the quality of goods in general have correctly been determined not to be adequate to regulate the quality of food products. There is a clear recognition of this, but the process of change and implementation is measured, deliberate, and time-consuming.

SCHEDULE

List of cited Laws, Ordinances, Decrees, Circulars and Regulations classified by subject and by chronological order

Subject	Pages ¹²⁴	Name of legal documents	Issued by	Issued on
<i>Food Safety</i>	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law on Standards and Technical Specifications 68/2006/QH11 	National Assembly	29 June 2006
	1, 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law on the Quality of Products and Goods 05/2007/QH12 	National Assembly	21 November 2007
	1, 2, 3, 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law on Food Safety 55/2010/QH12 	National Assembly	17 June 2010
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circular 43/2014/TT-BYT on management of functional foods 	MOH	24 November 2014
	4, 5, 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decree 15/2018/ND-CP provides detailed regulations implementing some articles of the Law on Food Safety 	Government	2 February 2018

¹²⁴ Reference is to pages in this book

	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circular 28/2021/TT-BYT on the introduction of nomenclature of foods, food additives, food processing aids and food packaging materials and containers according to HS codes specified in the import-export tariff schedule under administration by the MOH 	MOH	20 December 2021
<i>Labeling</i>	7, 8, 9, 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decree 43/2017/ND-CP on the Labeling of Goods 	Government	14 April 2017
	7, 8, 9, 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decree 111/2021/ND-CP amending Decree 43/2017/ND-CP on the Labeling of Goods 	Government	9 December 2021
	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circular 05/2019/TT-BKHCN detailing the implementation of Decree 43/2017/ND-CP on the Labeling of Goods 	MOST	26 June 2019
<i>Advertising</i>	11, 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law on Advertisement No. 16/2012/QH13 	National Assembly	21 June 2012
	11, 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decree 181/2013/ND-CP provides detailed regulations implementing some articles of the Law on Advertising (as amended by Decree 54/2017/ND-CP dated 8 May 2017 and Decree 70/2021/ND-CP dated 20 July 2021) 	Government	14 November 2013
	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circular 10/2013/TT-BVHTTDL provides detailed regulations implementing the Law on Advertisement and Decree 181 on legitimate 	MCST	6 December 2013

		documents, the organization and operation of Appraisal Council of Advertised Products and the assignment of state management on advertisement		
	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circular 09/2015/TT-BYT on certification of advertising contents for special products, goods, and services managed by the MOH 	MOH	25 May 2015
	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decree 38/2021/ND-CP prescribing penalties for administrative violations involving culture and advertisement activities 	Government	29 March 2021
<i>Recall</i>	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law on Food Safety 55/2010/QH12 	National Assembly	17 June 2010
	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law on Consumer Protection 59/2010/QH12 	National Assembly	17 November 2010
	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decree 119/2017/ND-CP on Administrative Sanctions against Violations of Standards, Measurements and Quality of Products and Goods 	Government	1 November 2017
	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decree 126/2021/ND-CP amending Administrative Sanctions against Violations of Standards, Measurements and Quality of Products and Goods 	Government	30 December 2021
<i>Inspections</i>	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law on the Quality of Products and Goods 05/2007/QH12 	National Assembly	21 November 2007

	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decree 15/2018/ND-CP providing detailed regulations implementing some articles of the Law on Food Safety 	Government	2 February 2018
	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decree 122/2014/ND-CP on Organization and Operation of Health Inspectorate 	Government	25 December 2014
<i>Import Requirements</i>	16, 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decree 15/2018/ND-CP providing detailed regulations implementing some articles of the Law on Food Safety 	Government	2 February 2018
	17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Official Letter No. 114/ATTP-PCTTR of the FHSA answering inquiries in relation to Decree 15 	MOH	10 January 2019
	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decree 85/2019/ND-CP prescribing handling of administrative procedures via national single window and Asean single window and specialized inspection for exports and imports 	Government	14 November 2019
	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Law on Food Safety 55/2010/QH12 	National Assembly	17 June 2010
<i>Export Requirements</i>	19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circular 52/2015/TT-BYT regulating State safety inspection on imported foods, and application, procedure to grant a certificate of export for exported foods under administration of the Ministry of Health 	MOH	21 December 2015

	19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decree 69/2018/ND-CP guiding the Law on Foreign Trade Management 	Government	15 May 2018
<i>Aquatic Products</i>	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Law on Fisheries No. 18/2017/QH14 	National Assembly	21 November 2017
	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decree 26/2019/ND-CP detailing for the implementation of the Law on Fisheries 	Government	8 March 2019
	21, 22, 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circular 48/2013/TT-BNNPTNT on Inspection and Certification of Food Safety of Exported Aquatic Products (as amended by Circular 02/2017/TT-BNNPTNT dated 13 February 2017) 	MARD	12 November 2013
	21, 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circular 16/2018/TT-BNNPTNT dated 29 October 2018 amending and supplementing certain articles of Circular 48/2013/TT-BNNPTNT dated 12 November 2013 and Circular 02/2017/TT-BNNPTNT dated 13 February 2017 	MARD	29 October 2018
	20, 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circular 38/2018/TT-BNNPTNT dated 25 December 2018 prescribing Assessment and Certification of compliance with food safety regulation of Agro-forestry-fishery food manufacturing and trading business under the management of the MARD 	MARD	25 December 2018

	23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circular 26/2018/TT-BNNPTNT dated 15 November 2018 prescribing management of aquatic breeds, aquatic feeds and aqua environmental remediation products 	MARD	15 November 2018
	21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circular 08/2016/TT-BNNPTNT on the Control of Hygiene and Safety of Agricultural Products, Forest Products, Aquatic Products 	MARD	1 June 2016
<i>Enforcement</i>	24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil Code 91/2015/QH13 	National Assembly	24 November 2015
	24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law on the Quality of Products and Goods 05/2007/QH12 	National Assembly	21 November 2007
	24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law on Food Safety 55/2010/QH12 	National Assembly	17 June 2010
	25, 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law on Dealing with Administrative Violations 15/2012/QH13 	National Assembly	20 June 2012
	24, 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decree 119/2017/ND-CP on Administrative Sanctions against Violations on Standards, Measurements and Quality of Products and Goods 	Government	1 November 2017
	24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decree 126/2021/ND-CP amending Administrative Sanctions against Violations of Standards, Measurements and Quality of Products and Goods 	Government	30 December 2021