

# US grocery stores are getting rid of 'sell by' dates on food

WASHINGTON, US: In an effort to cut down on confusion about labels on food items, grocery manufacturers and retailers are being urged to get rid of terms like 'sell by' and 'best before'.



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A voluntary initiative, led by the Food Marketing Institute (FMI) and the Grocery Manufacturers Association (GMA), encourages those in the food industry to get rid of the myriad date labels on consumer product packaging and instead adopt just two standard phrases: "BEST If Used By" and "USE By".

"BEST If Used By" indicates product quality and the fact that a product may not taste as expected but is still safe to consume past a certain date, and "USE By" applies to products that are highly perishable and/or have a food safety concern over time, a statement released by the FMI and GMA explains. The theory behind the new labels is that eliminating customer confusion over when a product is safe to use will lead to more products being consumed instead of being unnecessarily chucked out.

Grocery retailers and manufacturers are encouraged to immediately begin using these two phrases, with the hope of wide industry adoption by the summer of 2018.

"Our product code dating initiative is the latest example of how retailers and manufacturers are stepping up to help consumers and to reduce food waste," Pamela G. Bailey, GMA's president and CEO, said in a statement.

"It's much better that these products stay in the kitchen – and out of landfills," added Jack Jeffers, vice president of quality at Dean Foods (DF, -1.44%), which led GMA's work on this issue.

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