

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

What Does “Product of Canada” Mean, Anyway?

Health Unit Kicks Off National Nutrition Month By Promoting Benefits of Foods Produced Close to Home

Monday, March 1, 2010, Peterborough



As National Nutrition Month gets underway today with the theme “Celebrate food...from field to table”, the Peterborough County-City Health Unit wants to end the confusion surrounding “Product of Canada” and “Made in Canada” food labels.

“We hope to encourage community residents to purchase local foods labelled ‘Product of Canada’ because it supports our regional economy and can even be more nutritious in some cases,” explained Erica Diamond, a Registered Dietitian at the Health Unit. Ms. Diamond noted that studies show some fresh fruits and vegetables like broccoli, green beans, kale, tomatoes and delicate fruits like peaches lose nutrients when they travel long distances.

Ms. Diamond has heard the frustrations from many community members seeking clearer labels on food, especially since Canada’s food supply is increasingly global in nature. “Local residents want credible, meaningful information about the foods they buy. Many want to purchase food products that are made and processed using Canadian standards, which they trust with good reason. Some simply want assurance that a significant amount of the product contains Canadian ingredients,” said Ms. Diamond.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency created new labelling guidelines for “Product of Canada” and “Made in Canada” claims which came into effect on December 31, 2008. The use of these claims is voluntary, however, when applied they are assessed based on the following criteria:

If **Product of Canada** appears on the label, all major ingredients, and labour used to make the food product must come from Canada. Ingredients that are present in a food at very low levels (i.e. less than 2%) and not generally produced in Canada, including spices, food additives, vitamins, minerals, and flavouring preparations, may be used without disqualifying the claim.

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Communications Office

Peterborough County-City Health Unit
10 Hospital Drive
Peterborough, ON K9J 8M1
(705) 743-1000, ext. 391
www.pcchu.ca



Also, ingredients not grown in Canada, such as oranges, cane sugar or coffee, when present at very low levels, may be considered minor ingredients.

The **Made in Canada** label may be used when a food product is manufactured or processed in Canada regardless of whether the ingredients are imported or domestic or both. The last substantial transformation of the product must have happened in Canada, even if some ingredients are sourced from other countries. The claim may be modified to state “Made in Canada from imported ingredients”, or “Made in Canada from domestic and imported ingredients”.

Supermarket Tour – March 10

To show residents how to spot local products in area grocery stores and understand food labels, Ms. Diamond will lead a supermarket tour of Ken’s No Frills on Lansdowne Street West on Wednesday, March 10 at 10:00 a.m. This tour is open to all - please call the Canadian Diabetes Association Office at 742-2733 to register.

For a full list of National Nutrition Month activities and resources at the Health Unit, click on the “Nutrition Month 2010” icon at www.pcchu.ca.

To learn more about food labelling, visit:

<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/fssa/labeti/inform/prodcane.shtml>

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For further information, please contact:

Erica Diamond, RD
Public Health Nutritionist
(705) 743-1000, ext. 261