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ALERTS

FDA Defines “Gluten-Free”

August 2, 2013

On Friday, Aug. 2, 2013, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) published a new regulation defining the term “gluten-free” for voluntary food labeling. In order to be labeled as “gluten-free,” “no gluten,” “free of gluten” or “without gluten,” the food must contain less than 20 parts per million of gluten.

The term “gluten” refers to proteins that occur naturally in wheat, rye, barley and cross-bred hybrids of these grains. For individuals with the autoimmune digestive condition celiac disease, the gluten in food triggers the production of antibodies that attack and damage the lining of the small intestine and limits their ability to absorb nutrients. Celiac disease can be effectively managed only by eating a gluten free diet.

FDA deputy commissioner, Michael R. Taylor, stated: “We encourage the food industry to come into compliance with the new definition as soon as possible and help make it as easy as possible for people with celiac disease to identify foods that meet the federal definition of ‘gluten-free.’”

Food manufactures will have one year after the rule is published to bring their labels into compliance with this new requirement.

For more information, please contact the Barnes & Thornburg LLP attorney with whom you work or Joan Long (312-214-4576) of the firm’s Advertising and Marketing group.

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