



To whom it may concern

General statement 'Shelf life of products'

Concerning product(s): **food and feed products**

The Codex Alimentarius defines shelf life as the period during which a food product maintains its microbiological safety and suitability at a specified storage temperature and, where appropriate, specified storage and handling conditions.

In legislative terms, the term "date of minimum durability" will describe a food product's shelf life and is the date until which a food product retains its specific properties when properly stored. The date of minimum durability must be indicated by a 'best before date' or a 'use by date'.

Shelf life means either the period corresponding to the period preceding the 'best before date' or the 'use by date'.

General information on shelf life of our products, including guidelines on recommended storage conditions, is reported on the technical specification sheets.

Specific information on the shelf life period for a batch or delivery is printed on the packaging and/or reported on the certificate of analysis/conformity or transport documents.

For the products manufactured by Belgosuc, we specify the shelf life as a 'best before date' and it is defined as the minimum shelf life period after the product has been put into its final packaging.

The 'best before date' will reflect the quality e.g. taste, flavour, appearance rather than safety of a product. A product which is past its 'best before date' may not necessarily be unsafe to consume but it may no longer be of optimum quality.

The 'best before date' is based on the best of our knowledge and it is determined by:

- food & feed safety aspects and acceptable sensorial aspects;
- own experience including shelf life testing and historical evidence.

The nature of our products does not encourage a chemical breakdown or change over time and in general our products are functionally stable. Under good storage conditions, our products are not prone to a change in the food safety aspects. Other quality aspects might have undergone some change.

Unlike products with a 'use-by date', there is no legal requirement against packaged foods being offered for sale or being used on or after their 'best before date', provided that the product is still of acceptable safety and quality.

We cannot judge on the acceptability of the quality of a product past its 'best before date' and we believe that our customers are able to evaluate the quality aspect and take their decision accordingly taking in account the application of our products.

Exceptions are made for the following products:

1. Solid sugars are exempted from the indication of a durability date, such as that in the EU Regulation 1169/2011 it is described concerning the labelling, presentation and advertising of foodstuffs (Article 24 – Annex X (1d)).
2. Product syrups in bulk delivered material have no durability date because it depends on the situation of bacteriological cleanliness in which the product will be stored by our customer. However, an optimum temperature for storage conditions is indicated on the technical product specification.

Without the presence of a specific mutual agreement, Belgosuc commits itself to a shelf life upon delivery of at least 2/3 of the total shelf life.

The shelf life is only valid for closed packing. Once the packaging is opened, the product has a restricted durability. (see statement 'Shelf life after opening IBC')

This statement supersedes previously issued statements and is valid until the issuance of a new statement.

Yours sincerely,



Roeland Leman
Quality Manager

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