

# 2021 Confectionery Industry Regulatory Update

***Pandemic recovery and the new administration have created a challenging first quarter for regulatory affairs, with governments and organizations planning a bevy of new food regulations and policies.***

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The COVID-19 pandemic has made the past year unlike any other year for all of us personally and professionally. We began 2020 with ambitious plans for the year's slate of regulatory issues, but were quickly diverted to COVID-19 protocols and communications. As we have ushered in 2021, many governments and non-governmental organizations have regrouped from COVID-19. That regrouping, coupled with the change in U.S. administration to a more regulatory-oriented Biden administration, has created a tremendously challenging first quarter of 2021 for regulatory affairs.

We have also seen state and local governments take up the mantle on food policies and regulations, as well as more regulatory challenges outside U.S. borders (e.g., front-of-pack nutrition labeling, sales restrictions and ingredient bans) that affect our industry in foreign markets. Such regulations and policies are also of concern as similar initiatives may be considered domestically under the new administration.

This article will discuss recent developments in food regulation and policy to help prepare the industry and provide insight for the future on the regulatory front. Details herein represent the current status of these issues as of final draft in April, 2021.

## **NEW ADMINISTRATION PRIORITIES**

The Biden administration is assuredly more regulatory-friendly than the previous administration. The administration has indicated it will have a major early focus on providing support to farmers and addressing food insecurity, especially due to COVID-19's economic impact. During the campaign, there were also discussions early-on of naming a "Nutrition Czar," who would oversee health and wellness initiatives among all federal agencies.

Food insecurity has continued to increase under COVID-19, and the administration is working on creating electronic access to both Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits and other nutrition information. The world has also learned that obesity, hypertension and diabetes are co-morbidities of COVID-19, and as a result, it is likely we may see legacy items from the Obama administration become nutrition priorities. These priorities could include front-of-pack labeling; advertisement regulation; nutrition issues relating to sugar, sodium and fat in foods; food taxes and end-cap legislation.

An emphasis on worker safety, which should be largely focused on meat plants and large farms, will continue, and the food ➤



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