



# GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES PROPOSED CHANGES TO CANADA'S BEER STANDARD

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), with the support of Beer Canada and several provincial brewer associations, is preparing to amend the *Food and Drug Regulations* to make changes to the beer compositional standards (the Beer Standard) to clarify the regulations and to support innovation and market developments in the brewing industry.

On Saturday, June 17th, the CFIA published a [Notice of Intent](#) to update the Beer Standard in *Canada Gazette*, Part I. Publication of this notice gives stakeholders 60 days to provide their comments on the proposed changes. The CFIA anticipates pre-publishing the regulatory proposal in spring 2018.

## WHAT IS THE BEER STANDARD?

The Beer Standard is one of many food standards in the Food and Drug Regulations. For brewers, it sets out what ingredients a product labelled, packaged, sold, or advertised as beer

in Canada must contain, what ingredients such a product may contain, and any requirements of manufacturing, specifically that beer be the product of fermentation.

## WHY MAKE CHANGES TO THE BEER STANDARD?

The Beer Standard in its current form does not include objective criteria to preserve beer's unique attributes that distinguish it from other beverage alcohol categories. The absence of objectivity in the current Beer Standard is a threat to beer's reputation as a beverage alcohol product that is made with barley or wheat and is relatively low in residual sugars. **The proposed changes will bring in objective measures to preserve beer's integrity.**

**The proposed changes will also remove regulatory overlap and points of confusion that have developed in the Beer Standard over time.** This includes moving the additives permitted in beer from the Beer Standard to [Health Canada's Lists of Permitted Additives](#), where they will be updated and maintained moving forward. The Standard for Ale, Stout, Porter and Malt Liquor, which is identical to the Beer Standard will also be repealed. These two changes will eliminate duplicate sources of information and will allow brewers to freely market the style of their products, so long as the common name beer appears on the label.

**The proposed changes to the Beer Standard would clearly specify that herbs and spices can be added to beer at any time during manufacturing.** Herbs and spices are permitted under the existing compositional standard as carbohydrate matter; this proposed change would provide additional clarity.

**The proposed changes to the Beer Standard would allow the use of flavouring preparations in beer to support innovation.** It is proposed that the use of a flavouring preparation would trigger an additional requirement for a mandatory declaration on the label as part of the common name (e.g., Beer with blueberry flavour). This would clearly identify to consumers that flavouring preparations were added to a beer without hindering product innovation for brewers.

## BEER'S ALLERGEN AND GLUTEN LABELLING EXEMPTION

Currently standardized beer is exempt from the allergen, gluten and sulphite labelling requirements of the *Food and Drug Regulations*. **The proposed changes to the Beer Standard allows for the introduction of ingredients that may contain allergens.** As part of the consultation, Health Canada will review beer's allergen and gluten labelling exemption to determine if amendments are required as a result of the changes to the Beer Standard.



# WHO SUPPORTS THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE BEER STANDARD?



## THE FOLLOWING GROUPS HAVE ISSUED LETTERS OF SUPPORT TO CFIA:

- Alberta Small Brewers Association
- Barley Council of Canada
- Beer Canada
- British Columbia Craft Brewers Guild
- New Brunswick Craft Brewers Association
- Nova Scotia Craft Brewers Association
- Ontario Craft Brewers

## WHAT'S NEXT?

**Beer Canada and other provincial brewer associations believe that the proposed changes to the Beer Standard will be of benefit to all brewers through enhanced innovation opportunities, clarification of regulations and the introduction of objective measures to preserve some of beer's traditional characteristics that make it Canada's most popular alcoholic beverage!**

The next page contains a Beer Canada draft of the proposed modern Beer Standard, with each proposed change from the current Beer Standard highlighted in yellow, along with an explanation. We encourage stakeholders to review and understand the proposed changes and their purpose. Should any clarification be needed please contact Luke Chapman, Senior Manager, Economic and Technical Affairs [lchapman@beercanada.com](mailto:lchapman@beercanada.com).

After review, we ask that interested stakeholders provide a letter of written support for the proposed changes to [labelling\\_consultation\\_etiquetage@inspection.gc.ca](mailto:labelling_consultation_etiquetage@inspection.gc.ca). A template for such a letter was included with this document.

In the coming weeks, we also ask Canadian brewers to be on the lookout for a survey from the CFIA that will help them to better understand the economic impact of the proposed changes to the Beer Standard on the brewing community. Once the survey is made available, Beer Canada will distribute guidance to support brewers in completing the survey.

# DRAFT OF THE PROPOSED MODERN BEER STANDARD

## BEER

- (a) shall be the product of the alcoholic fermentation by yeast or a mixture of yeast and **other micro-organisms**, of an infusion of barley malt or wheat malt, and hops or hop extract in potable water; and
- (b) **shall contain not more than 4 per cent by weight of residual sugars** ;
- (c) may have added to it, at any time during the manufacturing process, any of the following ingredients:
- (i) any source of carbohydrates,
  - (ii) **herbs and spices** ,
  - (iii) salt,
  - (iv) **flavouring preparations** ,
  - (v) pre-isomerized hop extract,
  - (vi) reduced isomerized hop extract, and
  - (vii) permitted food additives.

Where a flavouring preparation is added to a beer, the name of the flavouring preparation, consistent with Part B, Division 10, shall form part of the common name shown on the label.

Note: **HIGHLIGHT** = change from current Beer Standard

### WHY MAKE THE CHANGE?

This change would support innovation by allowing for the use of other micro-organisms (e.g. bacteria) in addition to yeast in the fermentation starter culture.

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This proposed change would preserve beer's traditional reputation as a beverage alcohol product relatively low in residual sugars. This, in part, would replace the current requirement for beer to "possess the aroma, taste and character commonly attributed to beer", which is subjective and fails to recognize that different beer styles have different attributes. Many different beer styles were analyzed to validate the 4% clause.

### WHY MAKE THE CHANGE?

This change will support clarity and innovation by clearly specifying the use of herbs and spices in beer.

**WHY MAKE THE CHANGE?** This proposed change would support innovation by allowing for the use of flavouring preparations in beer. Many brewers, from large to small, are using flavouring preparations. Flavouring preparations allow for and encourage flavour development and represents an area of growth in the beer category.

**WHY MAKE THE CHANGE?** This amendment introduces a requirement to declare flavouring preparations, when used in beer. This will allow consumers to distinguish between products that use flavours and those that are using ingredients contributing to the flavour profile.