

Generated



be faced with higher production and inventory costs or they will have to stop selling their products in one or other of the markets. This would result in less competition and fewer product choices that would be detrimental consumers and business alike. On the other hand, requiring companies to maintain multiple types of packaging increases costs that will either be passed onto consumers or absorbed by the manufacturer. If costs have to be passed onto consumers, manufacturers could be placed at a competitive disadvantage because prices have to be raised to pay for maintaining multiple types of packaging. Importers will be able to provide products to consumers at lower cost if they have the option of metric-only labeling since they would be able to avoid having to pay suppliers to label products with “dual-units.”

Everyday, retailers selling packages of imported foods and other products with only metric units in the Pennsylvania, Maryland and Washington, D.C., risk legal sanctions because the products they offer are not available from European manufacturers with dual-units. These stores are catering to their customers and should not be penalized for providing their customers with metric labeled products at the lowest possible price. This is an important because small retailers can only continue to provide those products at the lowest possible price if they can sell the metric-only products using the same packaging that their suppliers use in their home markets.

Requiring retailers or importers to pay additional fees to have packages relabeled (sometimes by hand) to meet the current “dual-units” requirements of the FPLA inflates the price of the products to consumers who routinely purchase them based on metric units. Another reason to avoid relabeling packages after they are received in retail stores is that it may result in conversion errors and labeling which may not meet other labeling requirements for minimum type size, color contrast, or placement. It is important to note that many of these metric-only products are sitting on store shelves along side domestic products that are required to include metric units, so value comparison is possible because consumers can use the metric units to compare package values if a store does not provide unit pricing shelf labels.

## Consumers

Use of the metric system continues to grow in the United States. Increasing everyday use is helping people to better understand it and become more proficient in its use. Consumers purchase packages labeled with only metric units of measure every day. They have become so accustomed to purchasing soft drinks and other beverages by the liter that today practically everyone can identify a 2 liter bottle without reading its label. A greater understanding of the metric system is crucial in helping consumers understand and relate to the measurements used in health care with prescription and over the counter drugs and with nutritional labeling information provided with recipes and on packages of food products. By using metric units in their everyday activities, people are learning to use and relate to the quantities as easily as they currently do using pounds and ounces and feet and inches.

Metric units are already in use on a wide variety of products that are currently sold in the marketplace. For example, prescription drugs, over-the-counter medicines and vitamins are sold in milligrams and grams, and most tires for our vehicles are sized in millimeters.



