

Labelling: Retailers 'need time'

SUPERMARKETS and other food sellers are pleading for more time to comply with the new food labelling law.

Through the Chamber of Commerce, retailers have approached the States and asked for an extra 18 months because they are finding the task of checking the labels on every item both exhausting and costly.

The law, which came into force in January, was adopted from an EU ruling and governs what information should be printed on wrapped foods.

It was this law which the French traders fell foul of during their visit to the Foire de Jersey at the Royal Showground in Trinity earlier in the year. They were told to print the list of ingredients on their wrapped foods or remove the items from sale.

In their newsletter, the Chamber of Commerce say: 'While it is understood that members are making every effort to comply, for many involved with food manu-

Supermarkets and shops are having problems complying with law, say Chamber of Commerce

By consumer correspondent Carl Walker

cwalker@jerseyeveningpost.com

facturing, packaging has to be ordered in significant volumes which, due to the small scale, takes months, if not years, to exhaust.

Suppliers

'From a retailer and wholesaler perspective, it can also take time to agree and implement any necessary labelling changes with their suppliers, many of which are large manufacturers for whom Jersey does not represent a significant, or indeed important, market.

'The cost to business should not be underesti-

mated. At a time when food businesses are under extreme government pressure to contain price increases, these additional legislative costs should not be forgotten, particularly when such measures have a greater impact in a small jurisdiction due to the lack of scale of economies, and there must become a point where the costs outweigh any benefit.

'The priority must be to ensure that the consumer is appropriately informed, while ensuring that the expectation placed upon retailers and suppliers is reasonable and achievable.'