

Do your homework before buying a scale or scale/printer

Many people new to food retail often make the wise decision to buy a scale, but many times they fail to do some basic research before making a purchase.

Depending on what you are planning to do and where you are planning to use or place your scale there are laws and regulations to which you must conform. The agencies creating and enforcing these regulations are your county or state department of weights and measures and the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture.

Weights and measures deal with how the scales operate, the manner in which they are used and if they are accurate.

The Department of Agriculture is primarily interested in labeling and more specifically, they require all prepack foods have the ingredients on the product whether or not it was manufactured or assembled on premises or not.

So, the scale itself has to be classified as legal for trade.

If it is a service scale, like in a deli setting, where customers asked for quantities of product and are waiting on, one of two criteria have to be met. There has to be a customer display on the customer side of the scale so the customer can observe the transaction, or if it is on a back table, it must have an elevated or remote display so the customer can observe.

The scale will have to have a tare feature, which takes off the weight of the packaging material so as to only charge the customer for the net weight of the product.

If you are prepacking, at a minimum you will have to have a scale/printer showing the price per pound, net weight and price of the package. Items in their natural state do not require ingredients, like beef, pork, fruit and vegetables. However prepared items require ingredients; meat loaf, salads, etc.

Its not too complicated if you decide exactly what you are going to do and you get advice. I give free advice.

It is especially important to get advice before you make a purchase online or are thinking of buying a used scale. Many used scales aren't capable of meeting your needs and may end up being worthless.

I wrote this because I am going through this right now with some people who are opening a grocery store and do not know any of this. Being uninformed can be expensive and cause delays.

You have to get the right scale or scale/printer for your needs. You have to get the right label and have the right label types of templates in your scale. Your scale will have to be programmed before use and you will need to know how. I often suggest customers video tape my training so they can refer back, rather than taking notes which may be confusing days later.

