

# Ag and Food NEWSLETTER

## **Bread Emulsifier Hit**

THE ORDER WHICH PRECLUDED the Food and Drug Administration from enforcing its ban on marketing of polyoxyethylene monostearate bread emulsifier was vacated last week by a ruling of the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals (St. Louis). The court still hasn't ruled on the question of the emulsifier itself. Manufacturers are Atlas Powder, Glyco Products, and Research Products. Early last month the Supreme Court refused to review a decision of the Third Circuit Court of Appeals (Philadelphia) which had denied requests of Atlas and Glyco to order the FDA to reopen the Bread Standard hearing to take additional evidence concerning the safety of these products. In the meantime, the National Research Council is studying this type of emulsifier. Should NCR's report be favorable, it is possible that the Bread Standard hearings could be reopened to consider new evidence.

## **Imitation Ice Cream**

CALIFORNIA, a strong dairy state, is in the midst of hot controversy over "imitation" ice cream products. Existing state law sets up standards for such a product, but prohibits manufacturing, distribution, or sale by same units handling ice cream. This has discouraged substitutes. Two bills to alleviate the situation for the vegetable fat product have been introduced in the legislature and defeated. A plant for imitation product is reported near completion near Los Angeles. Jersey Maid and Pictsweet companies were denied licenses for retailers to sell on basis that some stores sell "genuine" ice cream. Stores now have filed with the Agriculture Department for writ of mandate allowing them to sell imitation product in some stores with ice cream. Indications are that if the courts act fast enough the imitation ice cream may be on sale soon.

## **New Urea Process**

CHEMICAL CONSTRUCTION COMPANY's new urea synthesis process, a complete recycle method, can give 76% conversion of ammonium carbamate to urea—nearly twice that of other commercial processes—they say. Excess ammonia is separated from the autoclave product, condensed without compression, and recycled. Unconverted carbamate is decomposed to give ammonia-carbon dioxide mixture, which is separated to recover ammonia gas for recycle. Over-all ammonia efficiency of 97% is claimed. Many of these principles are in the plant designed for Sumimoto in Japan.

## **Wheat Standards**

THE QUESTION of sanitary standards for wheat appears to be no nearer solution than it was a month ago. At that time the FDA and Department of Agriculture, in response to an appeal from the grain industry, signed a "memorandum of understanding" which, in effect, set aside the grain sanitation inspection and seizure program previously announced by the FDA. The two departments have now announced a new program: This time they have invited representatives of the grain industry to participate as members of a committee to study the problem of sanitary standards. As things now stand it seems there are no sanitary standards for grain and the FDA has taken no action to inspect possibly contaminated grain since early April. Until the committee reports with its recommendations, the question of sanitary standards will remain unanswered and could even be postponed again in 1954.

## **Food Standards Too**

ON THE BASIS of study by a committee, the Food and Nutrition Board of the National Research Council has gone on record as favoring exclusion from food standards hearings matters relating to the determination of safety of new intentional chemical additives for use in food, provided that other adequate procedure is first established for testing and prior approval. Also recommended is a provision for issuance or amendment of food standards without hearings in cases in which no protest arises following due public announcement of such proposals. The board has expressed the view that determination of safety of new chemical additives should be made initially independent of standards hearings by a scientific body using scientific methods.

## **Cheap Butter**

THE MARGARINE MANUFACTURERS are complaining about the reported plan of the Department of Agriculture to sell 50 million pounds of butter to the Army at 15 cents a pound. They fear that such a price would take away the Defense Department's margarine orders, which totaled 34 million pounds last year. Furthermore, if the dumping of the mounting butter stockpile at low prices spreads to the open market, margarine might be in for a hard time.

## **Toward Better Labels**

NEW CONCERN has been injected into the consideration of warning labels by the decision of the Virginia Supreme Court against CalSpray (page 343, this issue) because the labels didn't give sufficient specific warning. Valuable help in this may come from the work of the Labeling and Precautionary Information Committee of the Manufacturing Chemists' Association, which has contributed a great deal in the past. A new revision of the committee's manual on warning labels is expected soon.