

Washington Viewpoint

The U.S. House subcommittee on Agriculture and Related Agencies Appropriations approved a report asking the FDA to require percentage labeling of fats and oils in all foods.

Results of a Harris Survey on "Consumerism at the Crossroads" showed 45 percent of the 1,510 persons participating felt consumer activist groups should concentrate their efforts on food manufacturers. That was the top category reported in the survey, which was unveiled at a May 16 press conference in Washington. Louis Harris said the results do not indicate the public wants more government regulation. Asked who should be responsible for "seeing that consumers get a fair shake," twenty-nine percent said consumer activists, 20% said the individual citizens, 19% said the federal government, 15% said business, 1% opted for a combination, and 16% said they weren't sure. Food stores and supermarkets were ninth of the list of industries that should receive the most attention from the consumer movement, according to survey. The stores and supermarkets were named by 29% of the respondents.

Sentry Insurance, which sponsored the survey, said it provided the funds so the public's opinion could be studied without bias and to provide business with facts about public attitudes.

Dietary guidelines proposed by a Senate Select Subcommittee on Nutrition drew support from several industry associations and some corporations during May. But the dietary guidelines on fats and oils were denounced by Dr. George Mann of Vanderbilt University during a press conference at the AOCS 68th Annual Meeting in New York. Dr. Mann said the guidelines on dietary fats and oils were based on incomplete data and that staff members who prepared the report now realized they had not had complete information. Dr. W.E. Connor, also a participant in the press conference, suggested the staff members may have been inept at asking the right questions, and perhaps didn't know what to ask of each witness to draw out information needed.

Other persons have urged food industry representatives to get more involved in formulating national nutrition policies or education programs to avoid being perceived as isolated from consumers' concerns about food products.

The White House has asked the FDA, USDA and National Institutes of Health to cooperate in analyzing nutrition research problems and to independently prepare lists of what are the gaps and needs in research education.

The USDA and FDA are in a mini-squabble over which agency should officially represent the United States to Codex Alimentarius, the FAO-sponsored effort to establish standard food identities and minimum quality standards. USDA's Carol Foreman argued her agency should be the sole official representative, acting with advice and support of FDA, rather than continuing the present dual representation. FDA officials disagreed, suggesting that if one agency was to have sole responsibility, FDA was the more logical since it is responsible for establishing standards of identity, fill and quality for all foods except milk, poultry and certain fresh or dried fruits and vegetables.

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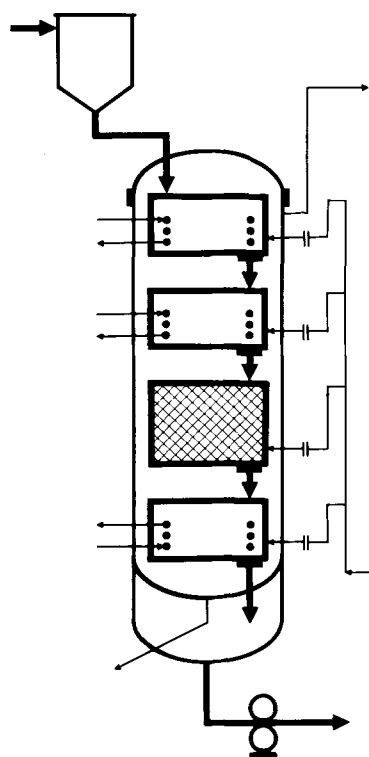
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General Foods has filed a petition with FDA asking that four emulsifiers be approved for use in whipped edible oil topping, rather than just for whipped vegetable oil topping. The four emulsifiers are polysorbates 60, 65, and 80, and sorbitan monostearate.

FDA has dropped a requirement that starchy paste used in salad dressing be "cooked or partly cooked." The agency has confirmed Jan. 1, 1978, as the effective date for compliance for interstate commerce products to meet the mayonnaise, fresh dressing and salad dressing standards.

Ralston Purina has asked Canadian officials to revise regulations on use of plant protein products in meats and meat products, including permitting use of vegetable protein at functional levels with label identification only in the ingredient listing. More visible labeling is now required. The firm also urges use of the term "plant protein products" rather than "Meat/poultry extenders" now required. Canada is viewed as an international trend-setter in developing regulatory policies for vegetable protein. ●

AOAC abstract deadline: Aug. 12

The Association of Official Analytical Chemists will hold its annual meeting Oct. 17-20, 1977, in the Marriott Hotel in Washington, DC. Deadlines for abstracts of papers and for associate referee reports is Aug. 12. Deadline for the general referee reports is Aug. 26. ●

Renderers to convene in San Francisco

San Francisco will be the site of the 1977 National Renderers Association Convention. Dean Specht, executive director of the association, announced that the 44th annual convention will be held at the St. Francis Hotel Nov. 7-11. More than 650 active and associate NRA members, along with their wives and guests, are expected to attend. ●

FAO/WHO to examine role of fats, oils in nutrition

Four AOCS members will be among 16 invited speakers at a joint FAO/WHO Expert Consultation on "The Role of Dietary Fats and Oils in Human Nutrition" to be held Sept. 21-30, 1977, in Rome, Italy. The AOCS participating members are Drs. J. Mead, R.P.A. Sims, J. Beare-Rogers, and W.E.M. Lands.

Subjects to be covered are: fat as a source of energy; essential fatty acids; interaction between other dietary constituents and essential fatty acid activity; role of fat in early development; use of fats and oils in child feeding; cardiovascular diseases, obesity and diabetes; effects of processing on nutritive value; health implications of certain constituents: brassica-derived oils, long-chain fatty acids in marine oils; breeding, its role in modifying the availability and composition of certain edible fats and oils; animal breeding and management, their role in reducing high carcass fat and modifying composition of milk fat; current status on production, trade and consumption of fats and oils, and research.

Other invited participants are: Dr. E.A. Jorgensen, Denmark; Dr. C. Galli, Italy; Dr. K.R. Norum, Norway; Dr. R. Bloomstrand, Sweden; Dr. K.T. Achaya, India; Dr. D.M. Hegsted, USA; Dr. M.A. Crawford, United Kingdom; Dr. A. Vergroesen, The Netherlands; Dr. S.G. Srikantiah, India; Dr. R. Viterik, Guatemala; Prof. Aree Valyasevi, Thailand; and Dr. H. Svaar, Norway.

Reports of the meetings in French, Spanish, and English will be published later and will be available free. English copies should be available by the end of 1977, according to Dr. M. Narayana Rao, nutrition officer for the Food Policy and Nutrition Division of the FAO in Rome.

A four-page provisional agenda has been published for the meeting. Persons desiring copies may write to the FAO, or send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to JAOCS News, 508 S. Sixth St., Champaign, Illinois 61820, requesting a copy of the FAO/WHO agenda on Dietary Fats and Oils in Human Nutrition. ●

Mexican chemical firm expanding

Quimica Michoacana S.A. de C.V. has completed the first phase of an expansion program in Morelia, Mexico.

The firm is a leading producer of fatty acids in Mexico. Emery Industries, Inc., is a major shareholder in the firm. The first phase expansion includes increased capacity in fat splitting, distillation, and glycerine refining. Second stage will include expansion in fractionation, fatty acid finishing, and hydrogenation. ●

DGF to meet Sept. 20-23

The German Society for Research in Fats will meet Sept. 20-23, 1977, in Wurzburg, Germany, with talks scheduled in 15 subject areas along with plenary speakers.

Interest areas for talks include: general and physical chemistry of fats; analysis and uniformity methods; oilseeds; fats as nutrients; soaps and detergents; paints; waxes and wax products; biological and clinical chemistry of lipids; fats in pharmaceuticals and medicines; processing technology, machines and apparatus; ecology and environment in the extraction/production and processing of fats; and proteins from fat materials.

Further information on the program and registration information is available from: DGF-Geschäftsstelle, Soester Strasse 13, 4400 Munster, Germany. ●