
From Washington

Feds unveil food labeling proposals

Three federal agencies have published long-awaited proposals to change U.S. food labeling requirements. If enacted, the proposals would significantly affect how fats and oils content in food is described on labels.

The three agencies involved are the Food and Drug Administration, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Federal Trade Commission. The proposals were published in the Federal Register of Friday, Dec. 21, p. 75989.

With regard to fat content in food, the agencies proposals included first, requiring foods containing 10% or more total fat on a dry weight basis declare on their labels the specific source of the fat or oil. Present regulations permit such labels to use an "and/or" format if more than one vegetable oil may be used, i.e.: "vegetable oil (may contain cottonseed oil, soybean oil and/or palm oil)." The proposed requirement would mean specific source labeling on a substantial number of additional foods, the agency said, including crackers, cookies, imitation meats and cheeses. The "and/or" format could be used on foods with less than 10% fat.

Second, requiring food labels with nutritional claims about either cholesterol or fatty acid content to provide information about both items. In addition, FDA said it would propose definitions for the terms "low cholesterol," "reduced cholesterol" and "cholesterol free." FDA also says it will consider proposals to govern claims about fatty acid content.

Third, requiring mandatory percentage labeling of significant ingredients, requiring declaration of all optional ingredients in standard identity foods, seeking Congressional authority to require declaration of mandatory ingredients in standardized foods and requiring all ingredients to be listed in descending order of predominance.

Other proposals that would affect oilseed-derived foods include mandatory open dating on semiperishable and perishable foods, mandatory listing of flavoring ingredients, and at some time in the future, revised labeling requirements for imitation and substitute foods.

Hearings on the proposals will be held March 4 and 5 in the main auditorium of the Department of Commerce building at 14th St. and Constitution Ave. NW, Washington, DC.

GRAS status proposed

The FDA has proposed granting generally recognized as safe (GRAS) status to calcium phosphate (mono-, di-, and tribasic), potassium tripolyphosphate, sodium acid pyrophosphate, sodium hexametaphosphate, sodium phosphate (mono-, di-, and tribasic), tetrasodium pyrophosphate, tetrapotassium pyrophosphate, and sodium tripolyphosphate as direct and indirect food additives. More information is available from Corbin I. Miles, Bureau of Foods (HFF-335), FDA, Dept. of HEW, 200 C St. SW, Washington, DC 20204, or see the Federal Register, Tuesday, Dec. 18, 1979, p. 74845. Calcium hexametaphosphate and potassium polymetaphosphate would lose GRAS status under the proposal.

NBS establishes specimen bank

The Department of Commerce's National Bureau of Standards has announced plans to establish a specimen bank to provide a system to monitor pollutant trends by comparing new samples with historic samples kept on file in the bank.

- U.S. oil imports rise** Value of U.S. vegetable oil imports for the fiscal year ending Sept. 30, 1979, was about \$607 million, about a third above the previous fiscal year, the USDA reported in December. Total vegetable oil imports for fiscal 1979 were 744,671 million metric tons compared to 846,450 the previous fiscal year; value for fiscal year 1978 was \$457 million. A 60% rise in the cost of coconut oil accounted for most of the increase. Value of palm oil imports remained about the same as volume dropped 23% and prices rose 26%. Coconut oil imports for fiscal 1979 totaled about 438,433 metric tons for \$355.3 million; palm oil imports totaled 125,697 metric tons worth \$73 million.
- Cake, meal usage reported** U.S. manufacturers of prepared feeds used 6.3 million tons of soybean cake and meal and 944,000 tons of cottonseed cake and meal during 1977, compared to 6.4 million tons and 1.1 million tons, respectively, in 1972. The figures are from the 1977 Census of Manufactures, the results of which are being released by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. The survey of the prepared feed industry showed use of other oilseed cake and meal totaled 213,000 tons in 1977, compared to 252,000 tons in 1972. Total use of fats and oils for 1977 was 814,500 tons.
- SEA considers proposals** The Science and Education Administration (SEA) of the USDA is now considering proposals for awards totaling \$16 million to be granted for plant science and human nutrition research. The funds were appropriated for the Fiscal Year 1980. For information, contact CRGO, Suite 103, Rosslyn Commonwealth Bldg., 1300 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, VA 22209, or see the *Federal Register*, Thursday, Nov. 28, 1979, p. 68780.
- EPA to limit fatty acid waste** The EPA has proposed regulations limiting effluent discharges from facilities that produce fatty acids, tall oil rosins and other rosins. These regulations would require manufacturers to pretreat effluent. For more information, contact William Thomson, P.E., Effluent Guidelines Division, EPA, 401 M ST. SW, Washington, DC 20460, or see the *Federal Register*, Thursday, Nov. 29, 1979, p. 68710.
- Flavor list expanded** The Food and Drug Administration has added 54 flavoring ingredients to the list of items it will review as generally recognized as safe (GRAS). The list was compiled by the Flavor and Extract Manufacturer's Association and published in the July 1979 Food Technology. For a list of the substances, see either that issue of Food Technology or the *Federal Register*, Tuesday, Dec. 11, 1979, p. 71460.
- Brightener rule amended** The FDA has amended limitations for 7-(2H-naphtho[1,2,d]-triazol-2-yl)-3-phenyl-coumarin used as an optical brightener in olefin polymer food packaging. The level is now 20 parts per million or less, by weight of the olefin polymer. For more information, contact Gerad McCowin, Bureau of Foods (HFF-334), FDA, Dept. HEW, 200 C St. SW Washington, DC 20204, or see the *Federal Register*, Tuesday, Dec. 18, 1979, p. 74816.
- TSCA list expanded** The Environmental Protection Agency's latest report on testing of substances under the toxic substance control act was published in the *Federal Register* on Friday, Dec. 7, 1979, page 70664. The report recommends benzidine-based, o-dianisidine-based and tolidine-based dyes be added to the priority list for testing along with hydroquinone and quinone.

- Food additive petitions** The FDA has received the following petitions for additives to packaging intended for food contact:
- Eastman Chemical Products proposes use of copoly(ethylene/1,4-cyclohexylene dimethylene) terephthalate in plastics;
 - Ciba-Geigy Corp. proposes use of tetrakis[methylene (3,5-tert-butyl-4-hydroxyhydrocinnamate)] methane as an antioxidant and thermal stabilizer in poly-1-butene and butene/ethylene copolymer;
 - E.I. duPont de Nemours & Co. proposes use of nylon 612/6 copolymer as a stabilizer with polyoxymethylene homopolymer.
- For more information, contact Gerard L. McCowin, Bureau of Foods, (HFF-334), FDA, HEW, 200 C St. SW, Washington, DC 20204, or see the *Federal Register*, Tuesday, Nov. 27, 1979, p. 67729, and Friday, Nov. 30, 1979, p. 69010.
- Sunflower insurance offered** Regulations for insuring the 1980 sunflowerseed crop have been issued by the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC). The rules combine provisions from previous years with recent material and are available from Peter F. Cole, FCIC, USDA, Washington, DC 20250, or see the *Federal Register*, Monday, Nov. 26, 1979, p. 67355.
- Peanut regs published** Regulations for insuring the 1980 peanut crop appear in the *Federal Register*, Wednesday, Nov. 20, 1979, p. 67955. Acreage allotments were published Dec. 7, p. 70452.
- Rice bran wax** The Food and Drug Administration has approved use of rice bran wax as a release agent in processing plastic packaging materials for dry foods. Details are in the *Federal Register* of Tuesday, Dec. 4, 1979, p. 69649.
- Dow files petition** Dow Chemical Co. has proposed a residue tolerances for the insecticide chlorpyrifos (0,0-diethyl 0-(3,5,6-trichloro-2-pyridyl)phosphorothioate). Proposed tolerances in parts per million are: fat, meat and meat by-products of goats and sheep, 1.0; in soybeans, 1.0; soybeans forage, 8.0; and soybeans straw, 10.0. Details in the *Federal Register* of Tuesday, Dec. 4, 1979, page 69726.
- Cosmetic listing changed** The FDA is requiring cosmetic manufacturers to list in order of predominance noncolor additives present in quantities of 1% or less. Manufacturers previously could list such additives in any order. Details: *Federal Register*, Friday, Nov. 30, 1979, p. 68822.
- Enzyme approval sought** Novo Laboratories has filed a petition with the FDA requesting generally recognized as safe (GRAS) status for a cellulose enzyme derived from a nonpathogenic strain of *Trichoderma reesei*. To comment, contact Corbin I. Miles, Bureau of Foods (HFF-335), FDA, HEW, 200 C St. SW, Washington, DC 20204. More information is in the *Federal Register*, Tuesday, Nov. 27, 1979, p. 67731.
- Sucrose tallowate exempted** The Environmental Protection Agency has waived premanufacture notification requirements to permit a Kansas firm to import sucrose tallowate for test marketing purposes. Hesser and Associates of Overland Park says it plans to test the ingredient in detergents. Sucrose tallowate also could have applications in the food and cosmetic industries. Since none of the substance will reach consumers and all data indicated no toxic effects, EPA waived normal premanufacture notification requirements. Details: *Federal Register*, Monday, Dec. 17, 1979, p. 73156.
- Coloring ingredient proposed** The General Foods Corporation has asked the Food and Drug Administration to approve polysorbate 60 as a surfactant and wetting agent for natural and artificial colors in food. Details in the *Federal Register*, of Friday, Dec. 7, 1979, p. 70568.