

# From Washington

## **Fat, cholesterol among FDA priority topics**

FDA's Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition will focus its consumer education program during fiscal year 1985 on the issues of fat and cholesterol, diet and cancer, and sodium consumption. The agency says it hopes to promote and disseminate the USDA/Health and Human Services Dietary Guidelines as well as the findings of the National Academy of Sciences/National Research Council's Report on Diet, Nutrition and Cancer. In addition, the agency aims to educate consumers on using nutritional labeling. Meanwhile, the federal advisory committee reviewing the Dietary Guidelines was to meet December 19 to discuss and possibly approve any changes to the guidelines. The committee's two-year charter is scheduled to expire in February. Details: *Food Chemical News*, Oct. 29, 1984, pp. 9-10, 21-22.

## **FDA proposes easing rules on emulsifiers in margarine**

The Food and Drug Administration has proposed amending the standard of identity for margarine by removing the list of permitted emulsifiers and the maximum use levels for each. The proposal would retain provisions for the use of safe and suitable emulsifiers without specified limitations other than those necessary to achieve the desired effect in the product. Details: *Federal Register*, Oct. 30, 1984, pp. 43560-43561.

## **Dollar, drought reduce U.S. oilseed exports**

Although U.S. agricultural exports rose 9% to \$38 billion for fiscal year 1984, USDA figures showed oilseed exports declined one per cent in value and 21% in volume from fiscal 1983 levels. Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block said tight U.S. supplies caused by the 1983 drought were the principal cause for the decline, but foreign competition and the strong U.S. dollar were contributing factors.

## **Food irradiation meeting scheduled for March**

The U.S. Department of Energy and the Food and Agricultural Organization/International Atomic Energy Agency will cosponsor an international symposium on food irradiation processing March 4-8, 1985, in Washington, D.C. The symposium will focus on the technological feasibility of food irradiation and on consumer acceptance, understanding and benefits of food irradiation. Details: *Food Chemical News*, Oct. 22, 1984, p. 16. Meanwhile, USDA's Agricultural Research Service has made available reports on irradiation sterilized chicken. The reports can be purchased through the National Technical Information Service, 5285 Port Royal Rd., Springfield, VA 22161. For further information on the reports, contact Richard M. Parry, ARS, USDA, Room 114, Bldg. 005, Beltsville Agricultural Research Center-West, Beltsville, MD 20705, telephone 301-344-2734. Details: *Federal Register*, Oct. 17, 1984, pp. 40623-40624; *Food Chemical News*, Oct. 22, 1984, pp. 37-38.

## **Information center on orphan drugs established**

The Department of Health and Human Services is establishing a National Information Center for Orphan Drugs and Rare Diseases within the National Health Information Clearinghouse. The center, expected to be in operation later in 1985, technically will be non-governmental because it will be run by an independent contractor. Details: *Chemical Marketing Reporter*, Nov. 12, 1984.