AHA publishes its diet plan

The American Heart Association (AHA) has published a pamphlet recommending that consumers limit their intake of meat, seafood or poultry to no more than five to seven ounces a day, substitute meatless or "low-meat" entrees for regular dishes and use no more than five to eight teaspoons of fats and oils per day for cooking, baking and salads.

It advised a total fat intake of 30% of calories, a maximum daily cholesterol intake of 300 milligrams and maximum saturated fat intake of 10% of daily calories.

The pamphlet warned against consuming coconut and palm oil, which it said "are often used in bakery products, nondairy creamers, whipped toppings, candy and commercially fried foods." Also, it claimed that olive oil and peanut oil, high in monounsaturates, "are not as good" as oils high in polyunsaturated fats and should be avoided or used sparingly.

Meanwhile, scientists at AHA's annual meeting in November said a long-term diet of saturated fat and cholesterol may suppress the body's ability to remove cholesterol from the blood, thus accounting for the rise in serum cholesterol levels found with aging.

Scott Grundy, director of the Center for Human Nutrition at the University of Texas Health Science Center in Dallas, said long-term saturated fat consumption may shut down the ability of the liver to remove low-density lipoproteins from the blood. Details: *Food Chemical News*, Nov. 18, 1985, pp. 27-30.

Meanwhile, the National Cholesterol Education Program's coordinating committee has announced its goal will be to tell the public to "know your cholesterol count." Public awareness of the significance of blood cholesterol level and its risks is judged to be "poor," the National Institutes of Health committee was told in a November meeting. Details: *Food Chemical News*, Nov. 25, 1985, pp. 12-13.

Fast food menus under scrutiny

The American Council for Science and Health (ACSH) has released a report, "Fast Food and the American Diet," in which it recommends more low-fat and low-salt products be added to fast food restaurant menus. Noting that many fast food items are high in calories, sodium, fat or cholesterol, ACSH said those on restricted diets must plan their fast food choices carefully. Meanwhile, in a petition organized by the Center for Science in the Public Interest, nine consumer groups and approximately 130 scientists asked FDA to require labeling of fast foods served in restaurants. The petition also asked for an end to frying fast foods in beef tallow and other highly saturated fats, and the offering of more low-fat items. Details: *Food Chemical News*, Nov. 11, 1985, pp. 8-12; Nov. 18, 1985, pp. 19-20; Dec. 2, 1985, p. 8.

Lunch 'meat' may be nuts, seeds

USDA's Food and Nutrition Service has proposed allowing nuts, seeds and nut and seed butters as meat options in the National School Lunch Program, Summer Food Service Program and the Child Care Food Program. While peanut butter already is included in the programs, nuts, seeds and other nut and seed butters currently are not considered options for fulfilling meat requirements. If approved, peanuts and soynuts would be among the nut products allowed. In addition, USDA is asking for comments on possibly allowing tofu and yogurt as meat options in these food programs. Details: *Federal Register*, Dec. 6, 1985, pp. 49933-49937. Scientists from USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) and the agency's Agricultural Research Service (ARS), meanwhile, at a December meeting said little progress has been made in developing analytical tests for the presence and amount of various nonmeat proteins in meat and poultry products. A scientist from the USDA Eastern Regional Research Center said that most of the research thus far has been directed toward methods concerning soy products. In 1984, FSIS had asked ARS to develop analytical procedures for 20 protein-containing ingredients that potentially could be added to meat products. Details: *Food Chemical News*, Dec. 9, 1985, pp. 30-31.

Chocolate, cocoa standards eyed

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in December sought comments on whether the U.S. should amend its food standards for chocolate and cocoa products to conform to Codex Alimentarius standards. The agency said that if there is no support for changing these U.S. standards of identity, no amendments will be proposed. FDA noted that although Codex standards for chocolate and cocoa products specify analytical methods, the FDA will adhere to its policy of using available Official Methods of the Association of Official Analytical Chemists. The agency said that the Codex standard for chocolate products defines 14 products, as does the FDA standard. Six of the U.S. standardized products have similar but not identical counterparts in the Codex standard. These cover chocolate liquor, sweet chocolate, milk chocolate, buttermilk chocolate, skim milk chocolate and mixed dairy product chocolates. FDA standards also define three chocolate coatings containing vegetable fat other than cacao fat, which have no counterparts in the Codex standard. U.S. food standards require chocolate liquor to be used as the characterizing ingredient in chocolate products, while Codex standards are less restrictive. The Codex standard for cocoa powders defines cocoa powder and fat-reduced cocoa powder, as well as six cocoa-sugar mixtures that have no counterparts in the U.S. standards. FDA standards, meanwhile, define 14 cacao prod-

ucts. Details: *Federal Register*, Dec. 2, 1985, pp. 49398-49405. Meanwhile, the Chocolate Manufacturers Association (CMA) presented a "discussion paper" to FDA citing examples of products on the market that are "misbranded" as chocolate products. CMA said the labels misuse the standard term "chocolate" by using it to describe a product not meeting U.S. standards of identity for legal chocolate. CMA pointed out that the distinction between "chocolate" products and "chocolate-flavored" or "cocoa" products is clearly defined in existing food standards. Details: *Food Chemical News*, Dec. 9, pp. 14-15.

NSPA: Argentine trading unfair

The National Soybean Processors Association (NSPA) filed a petition on Dec. 13, 1985, with the U.S. Trade Representative to challenge alleged unfair subsidy practices by Argentina in soybean trade. The NSPA petition followed publication of a study by Economic Consulting Services (ECS) on the subsidy effects of differential export taxes used by Argentina in world markets for soybeans and soybean products. The study said that Argentine tax differentials subsidize soybean meal and oil exports, creating artificial and unfair cost advantages to Argentine soybean crushers. NSPA requested the administration seek a bilateral agreement between the two countries to eliminate "distortions" to world trade caused by the lower Argentine rates for soybean meal and oil. Copies of the NSPA petition and ECS study are available for public inspection at the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, 600 Seventeenth St., NW, Washington, D.C.