FDA expands Lopid use

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved Warner-Lambert's Lopid for use in preventing coronary heart disease. Until FDA's decision, Warner-Lambert had been allowed to claim only that Lopid reduces the bloodstream levels of triglycerides in patients at risk for pancreatitis.

Some physicians, acting in response to a Helsinki (Finland) Heart Council study published in 1987, had prescribed the drug to cardiac patients with problematic cholesterol levels prior to FDA approval, Warner-Lambert said. The study showed evidence that Lopid can reduce the risk of coronary heart disease.

Lopid works by increasing the amount of high-density lipoproteins (HDL) in the blood. The drug is meant primarily for patients with high total cholesterol, high triglyceride and low HDL levels, a company spokesman said.

Cholybar (cholestyramine), another Warner-Lambert product, is the first cholesterol-lowering drug that comes wrapped in a chewable candy bar. The drug first will be available in caramel and raspberry flavors, with more flavors planned.

USDA considers drawback limits

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) may eliminate drawback benefits to exporters who export U.S. agricultural commodities under USDA programs. If USDA revises the rules covering export programs, exporters would have to agree not to claim any duty drawbacks as a condition of program participation.

The Export Enhancement Program (EEP), the Sunflower Oil Assistance Program (SOAP) and the Commodity Credit Corporation Export Credit Guarantee Program (GSM-102) are among the programs that would be affected.

USDA is considering the change because it received complaints that drawbacks are contrary to the intent of USDA's export programs. At this point, USDA is only evaluating comments to determine whether companies that enjoy duty drawback should also be eligible for the benefits of certain export programs, according to John Reddington, USDA's deputy assistant administrator for commodity and marketing programs. Details: *Federal Register,* Jan. 11, 1989, p. 987.

SPC wants equal status for soy

The Soy Protein Council (SPC) has asked the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) to consider soy protein on the same basis as a number of other binders presently under evaluation for use in meat and poultry products.

SPC is concerned about proposals that seek approval for whey protein concentrate as a binder in whole muscle meat cuts, according to Sheldon J. Hauck of SPC. SPC is asking that FSIS either include soy flour, soy protein concentrate, soy protein isolate, and other "proteinaceous binders" in the clearance or not permit whey protein concentrate in whole muscle cuts.

Meanwhile, the National Food Processors Association (NFPA) has endorsed the proposed clearances of wheat gluten, tapioca dextrin, whey protein concentrate and sodium caseinate as meat and poultry binders. Both SPC and NFPA support Food Safety and Inspection Service's proposals to recodify existing binder clearances and to make several technical changes in binder-use regulations. Details: *Food Chemical News,* Jan. 19, 1989. p. 16.

In separate action, USDA has proposed that processors be allowed to use a mixture of sodium alginate, calcium carbonate, lactic acid and calcium lactate as a binder in ground and formed poultry products.

OSHA sets levels for exposures

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has issued new exposure limits for hundreds of toxic and hazardous substances. According to OSHA, the regulations on more than 400 chemicals and other substances could prevent 700 deaths and 55,000 illnesses per year.

Chloroform, acetone, carbon disulfide, perchloroethylene and grain dust are among the substances for which new limits have been established. The permissible exposure level (PEL) for acetone will be 750 parts per million (ppm) TWA (time-weighted average over eight hours) plus 1,000 STEL (short-term exposure limit over 15 minutes). The PEL for carbon disulfide has been reduced from 20 ppm TWA to 4 ppm TWA with 12 ppm STEL and permitted respirator provisions for some operations. Perchloroethylene's PEL has been reduced from 100 ppm TWA to 25 ppm TWA. The PEL set for grain dust is 10 milligrams per cubic meter.

The new standards became effective March 1, 1989; employers are expected to be in compliance by Sept. 1, 1989. A listing of the new standards was published in the *Federal Register,* Jan. 19, 1989, pp. 2332-2983. OSHA also has prepared a booklet concerning the new levels. For a free copy of the booklet or the *Federal Register* notice, contact OSHA's Publication Office, telephone 202-523-9667. For more information, contact the OSHA Information Office, Room N3647, 200 Constitution Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20210, telephone 202-523-8151.