

# Mexican Regulations and Standards for Use of Soy Protein for Human Feeding<sup>1</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

A Sanitary Code, adopted in Mexico in March 1973, establishes a complete program of nutrition, including definitions for the use of soy products. Also a tax related to the social security system in the Republic of Mexico creates child care centers in which soy proteins will be included in the diets served.

## INTRODUCTION

Two important official events have occurred recently in the development of better nutrition in Mexico.

The first and most important is related directly to the new Sanitary Code of the United States of Mexico approved in March 1973. The second refers to a tax imposed upon companies for the creation of child care centers in the Republic of Mexico. This will be accomplished by increasing an employer's share of payments to the Mexican Institute of Social Security according to the employer's rank on the income scale.

## NEW SANITARY CODE

Under Title I, Chapter 1, Article 3, of our new Sanitary Code, the need for better nutrition in the country is pointed out. It also establishes the creation of a complete program for nutrition. This program includes the establishment of research laboratories; provides for studies of actual nutritional conditions in the country; points out the necessity of establishing minimum nutritional requirements; recommends diets for improving nutrition; and establishes priorities in training specialized personnel who will really promote education in nutrition. The significance of establishing a national nutrition program into federal law is that it will make possible for the first time in our sanitary legislation and, in the very near future, important advances in the area of nutrition. These advances will be related intrinsically to soy products for the consumer, since said products have the complete support of our sanitary authorities for inclusion in diets that will be developed when carrying out the program.

Nevertheless, for better control of products with nutritional characteristics that will be introduced into the Mexican market from now on, the new health law establishes that:

Nonalcoholic drinks and foods that have therapeutic properties or have such properties attributed to them or that are designated for special diets will be subject to the foreseen regulations in Chapter 5 of this title for its sanitary control (Chapter 5 of the law refers to medicines).

Nonalcoholic foods and beverages which have labels stating that protein, vitamins, or any other substance to which therapeutic properties are attributed have

been added will be considered special dietary products.

We believe that the labeling requirements for soy products, for which it is desirous to attribute therapeutic properties from a nutritional point of view, must be subject to the regulations of the articles of the aforementioned Law. This does not mean that our health authorities are trying to restrict soy products or other products with nutritional value; on the contrary, they try to prevent anyone from deceiving the consuming public by advertising and labeling products with excessive claims of nutritional quality. These products must be proven from the therapeutic point of view and passed through a test as a medicine; otherwise, they may continue to be marketed as products with nutritional characteristics without passing through the medical register, in which case they might not concur with their generic denominations.

It is important to point out the fact that texturized soy products, (textured vegetable proteins) cannot be called "meat substitutes" nor "meat analogues" in the labeling regulations but simply that which they are: "soy products."

Another of the requirements related to these problems is that, for manufacturing purposes, 0.1% of titanium dioxide will be added, so that soy proteins can be used in portions of up to 10% in the manufacture of products that can be called sausages, i.e. wieners, salami, bologna, etc. If the meat is substituted with more than 10% of textured soy protein, then said products should be called "vegetable protein sausages meat style."

We believe that, with all the new rules that are contained in the new health law related to nutritional products, including soy products, health authorities will join with manufacturers of such products in developing rules and standards of quality and labeling for each specific case. Both parties are interested in trying to solve the problems caused by malnutrition in our country.

## CHILD CARE CENTERS

The second important event for developing better nutrition in Mexico was the massive creation of child care centers where soy products will be used in the diets of children attending such centers. The introduction of nutritional diets will considerably increase the consumption of vegetable protein in our markets, and since they will know and use soy products from infancy, consumers will change their views toward these products. In the future, this will mean that it will not be necessary to explain the qualities and characteristics of soy. Therefore, it will be possible for these products to be consumed as part of the normal diets and tastes of the people.

There exist many other important points related to the legislation concerning soy products in Mexico, some very specific and others in general, but I trust that the two mentioned here will give an idea of our present regulations.

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