

from Washington

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration apparently plans to postpone the deadline for compliance with its proposed regulation on source labeling of fats and oils.

Food and Chemical News said in its Oct. 10 issue that FDA Commissioner Donald Kennedy had written to a congressman that a six-month extension (to July 1, 1978) of labeling requirements for bakery product ingredients and for fat and oil source labeling is justified.

Frances D. Grobelny of FDA's Chicago office, who spoke to the AOCS North Central Section during September on FDA labeling requirements, contacted the Bureau of Foods after her talk and wrote to AOCS that an extension appeared likely "to allow for more discussion of this matter."

Kennedy's letter noted that industry spokesmen who had asked for a delay to avoid economic hardships due to large inventories of labels that would be unuseable if the proposal went into effect on Jan. 1, 1978, as originally planned.

One unresolved question is which terms will be used to describe processed fats and oils: hydrogenated and partially hydrogenated vs. saturated or partially saturated.

One inquirer has been told by a Bureau of Foods official that either term may be used on labels in compliance with other aspects of the law.

The FDA's proposal to modify BHTs generally accepted as safe (GRAS) status has drawn several comments, *Food and Chemical News* reported. Koppers Company said BHT was safe and asked that a National Academy of Science committee be asked to review data on the food preservative. The Institute of Shortenings and Edible Oils said FDA's initial literature search was too limited, urging more thorough reviews to see if BHT's safety is questionable.

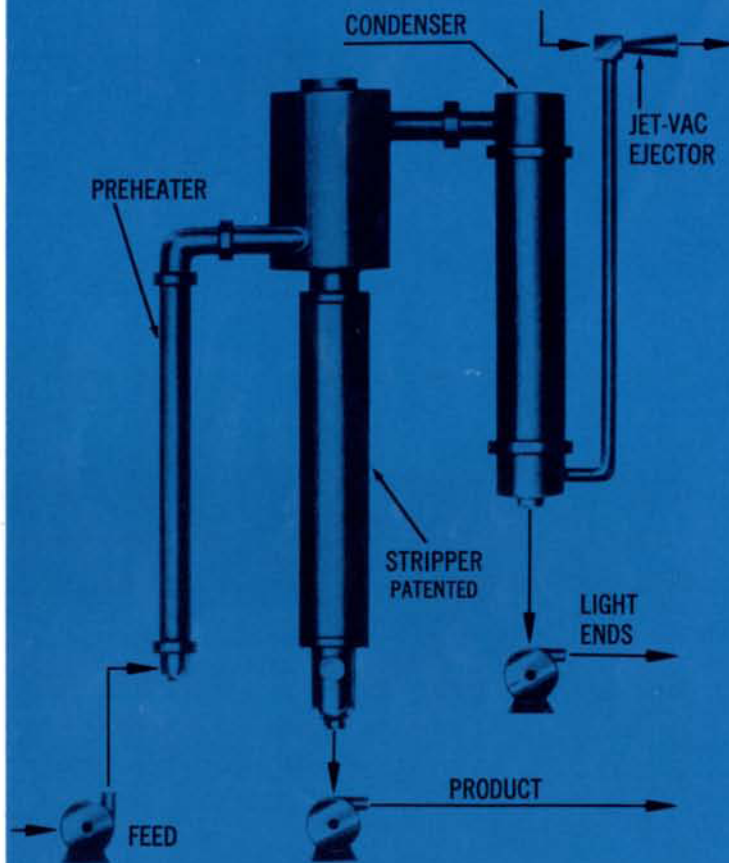
Another antioxidant, BHA, was the subject of a Federation of American Societies of Experimental Biology committee hearing. The committee was urged by one witness to list the antioxidant as GRAS based on tests with rats showing minor effects of BHA. But another witness said BHA caused significant changes in livers in rhesus monkeys. BHT, by comparison, causes more reaction in rat's livers than those of monkeys. Unresolved was the question of which animal was more suitable for testing. The committee has to decide whether to recommend that BHA, like BHT, should be reevaluated for use in human foodstuffs.

Food Chemical News also reported on Oct. 17 that a Bureau of Foods official has said there may be changes in lipid labeling requirements. Dr. John Vanderveen, speaking to an IFT Washington section meeting, said a reappraisal may be forthcoming on cholesterol label declarations. "He predicted there will be more pressure to regulate on the basis of epidemiological data, which may or may not be conclusive," the magazines said, noting that Dr. Vanderveen commented that data is no more conclusive now than it was ten years ago on the relationship between dietary cholesterol and heart disease.

Early in October, the FDA proposed a food standard for pasteurized cheese spread that would require a percentage label statement of milkfat and permit varying amounts of fat. The agency had been pondering how to handle low fat cheese products, particularly with respect to labeling. The

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