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Local Sections.

Food labeling discussed

Federal agencies seeking to coordinate their food labeling requirements will establish a task force for considering how to make nutritional labeling useful and comprehensible to consumers, Lawrence Bachorik told a Northeast Section meeting in early June.

Dr. Bachorik, of the Food and Drug Administration's policy coordination bureau, said the task force would include representatives of the Food and Drug Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture, industry and others.

FDA, USDA and the Federal Trade Commission announced in 1977 they would seek to make coordinated revisions in food labeling requirements, Dr. Bachorik said in his prepared remarks. At that time, about half the food being sold in the U.S. was processed far higher than when original food labeling laws were approved. The three agencies share responsibility for regulating food labeling and advertising and so agreed to work together on revisions.

Without any changes in existing laws, FDA could modify fats and oils source labeling requirements and require percentage labeling of ingredients, Bachorik said. Congressional action would be needed to revise labeling rules for standardized foods, such as margarine, to give FDA authority to require nutritional labeling.

Bachorik said the Bureau of Foods was still evaluating the comments on the proposed labeling changes, published in the *Federal Register* last December. A *Federal Register* notice of May 30, 1980, said FDA would contract during June for a study on the cost of possible label changes and the results would be available by the end of the year.

Labeling of restaurant foods has received little support in comments received, Bachorik said.

Nutrition science is in its infancy, according to Bachorik, and a great deal is yet to be learned. He cited the late May flap over the National Academy of Science report on general dietary guidelines as one example of the lack of agreement among researchers.

Any labeling changes which do result from the threeagency effort would become mandatory about two years after their approval, Bachorik said, to permit an orderly transition to new labels.

Full disclosure of contents by percentage labeling would mean one company could copy another firm's proprietary formulations, one attendee told Bachorik when asking just how far the public's right to know extended. Bachorik said that comment was a worthwhile point to raise.

He did express concern that a group of trade associations had written to congressional leaders after the period for comments to FDA on the proposals had expired.

NORCAL weekend excursion

The NORCAL section is sponsoring a weekend "train, bus, hoof and mouth" trip from Oakland to Fresno and Yosemite National Park on Sept. 19-21.

Organizer Robert Faulkner says the trip will "recall and salute trains with names such as the 'Orient Express, Wabash Cannonball, Chattanooga Choo Choo, California Zephyr' and others of fact and legend.

"Our northern California members will recreate that civilized style of overland travel when they climb all aboard the San Joaquin Delight in Oakland somewhat after sun-up on Friday, Sept. 19."

Arrival at Fresno will be about noon, followed by a tour of Sunmaid Raisin Co. and vinyards in the afternoon. Dinner and fun will follow at the famed Fresno County Fair.

Saturday morning there will be a visit to Ranchers Cotton Oil facilities in Fresno, with a noon departure by bus for Yosemite. A return train trip to San Francisco/Oakland will leave about noon Sunday from Yosemite/Fresno.

AOCS members who will be in the northern California area that weekend are especially invited to join the tour. Reservations may be made by writing or calling Robert Faulkner, LSI Bulk Terminals, 1269-66th St., Emeryville, CA 94608 (415-428-2442, office; 415-388-3730, home). □