From Washington

Cottonseed oil approved for USDA nutrition programs

USDA has advised National Cotton Council President Samuel B. Hollis that cottonseed oil has been approved for purchase and use in various nutrition programs. The action came as a result of urgings by the National Cotton Council and National Cottonseed Products Association that cottonseed oil be eligible for domestic food programs under all USDA purchasing authorities. Details: *The Cotton Gin and Oil Mill Press,* March 30, 1985, p. 11; *Oil Mill Gazetteer,* April 1985, p. 11.

FDA to sample olive oil products

The Food and Drug Administration has ordered sampling of imported and domestic olive oil products to determine whether they may be adulterated or misbranded. The sampling assignment, set for completion in April 1986, will be carried out by the Boston, Chicago, San Francisco and New York Import Offices. FDA investigators also will inspect manufacturing procedures of domestic olive oil producers. Details: *Food Chemical News,* March 25, 1985, pp. 12-13.

FDA comments sought on proposed tofu standards

The Soyfoods Association of America has asked the Food and Drug Administration to comment on a draft of tofu standards which the association has developed. Association representatives presented the draft standards to FDA officials in a March 26 meeting and requested that the agency offer its views by June 1. In a letter to Sanford Miller of FDA's Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition on behalf of the Soyfoods Association, Stephen McNamara of the law firm of Hyman, Phelps and McNamara wrote, "We emphasize that certain aspects of these draft standards are still subject to vigorous debate within the industry. For example, there is controversy concerning labeling provisions that would be endorsed by the standards, and concerning the percentage of tofu that should be present in a 'second generation' product that is identified in labeling as a tofu-derived product." Association leaders plan to further discuss and complete the standards at a board of directors meeting in Las Vegas in mid-June.

Court tells FDA to set tolerances

The U.S. Court of Appeals, District of Columbia, has ruled the Food and Drug Administration must set tolerances for all environmental contaminants, including natural ones. As a result, FDA can no longer use informal action levels to regulate food containing residues of banned chemicals or natural contaminants such as aflatoxin. The court's decision March 26 came in a case involving aflatoxin in corn for which there is no official tolerance level. In its ruling, the court said aflatoxin in corn "must be considered an 'added' poisonous or deleterious substance since aflatoxin is not an inherent constituent of corn but results from an environmental or agricultural contaminant." Details: *Food Chemical News,* April 1, 1985, pp. 6-9; *Chemical Marketing Reporter,* April 1, 1985, p. 4. Meanwhile, FDA has declined granting interim approval to use of ammoniation of cottonseed products to reduce aflatoxin levels but has indicated it is searching for some way to clear use of the process. The National Association of State Departments of Agriculture had urged interim approval. A study conducted by scientists at the Institute of Toxicology of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology and the University of Zurich has found ammoniation of aflatoxin-containing corn reduces the geno-

toxicity of aflatoxin B1 in the corn by at least 20 times. The findings were published in the March/April issue of the *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry*. Details: *Food Chemical News*, March 25, 1985, p. 5; April 8, 1985, pp. 23-25.

FDA intends to finish cholesterol label rules

The Food and Drug Administration has announced its intention to complete the safety review of substances classified as generally recognized as safe, develop final rules for food irradiation and regulation of carcinogenic constituents in foods and color additives, and draft a final rule on the definitions of low cholesterol and reduced cholesterol foods during fiscal 1986. Details: *Food Chemical News*, March 18, 1985, p. 3. In addition, Food and Drugs Commissioner Frank Young has said FDA's focus on nutrition will begin with a Surgeon General's report on nutrition. The report is tentatively scheduled for release June 1, 1986, with drafts for the first sections due for submission by July 1, 1985. Details: *Food Chemical News*, April 1, 1985, p. 30; April 8, 1985, p. 2.

Panel urges approval of food irradiation

A panel of scientists and food specialists has called on governments around the world to recognize food irradiation as safe and technologically feasible and to take steps to implement its use. The panel delivered its report in March at the International Symposium on Food Irradiation sponsored by the U.N.'s Food and Agriculture Organization and the International Atomic Energy Agency and held in Washington. Delegates to the international symposium cited "legislative disharmony" on national and international levels as an obstacle to introduction of food irradiation. According to a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency, nearly 30 countries have approved selected irradiated food items. The panel acknowledged that consumer acceptance is an essential prerequisite for food irradiation introduction. In other developments, the Codex Alimentarius Committee on Food Labeling in March concluded that irradiation of food and food ingredients should be indicated on labels. However, the committee did not recommend specific wording. In the U.S., FDA's Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition is working with the National Bureau of Standards to find a method to determine when foods have been irradiated. While it is illegal to import irradiated foods into the U.S., there have been incidents of "sterile shrimp" entering the country. As far as irradiation regulations, a USDA spokesman at the international symposium said that FDA approval of irradiation for meat and poultry is only the first hurdle to actual use. Ronald Engel of the Food Safety and Inspection Service said such issues as dosimetry, specific product uses, packaging, labeling, radiation sources and dose levels will have to be addressed after the FDA makes its ruling. Meanwhile, Radiation Technology Inc. is constructing a radiation processing facility at the Port of Salem, Salem, New Jersey, which is expected to be completed in October. The irradiator will be used to process poultry, fruit, vegetables and seafood and to sterilize medical products, pharmaceuticals and cosmetics. Details: *Food Institute Report*—March 16, 1985, p. 10; March 23, 1985, p. 4; *Food Chemical News*—March 11, 1985, pp. 13-14, 16-17; March 18, 1985, pp. 13-16; March 25, 1985, pp. 21-23.