# From Washington

**FGIS retains test weight as soybean grading factor**

As expected, USDA's Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS) dropped a proposal to delete test weight per bushel as a grade-determining factor from soybean standards. However, in a final rule effective Sept. 9, 1985, FGIS did replace the current classes of green, black and brown soybeans with a new definition of soybeans of other colors. FGIS received 37 comments to the proposed standards changes. Twenty-nine comments opposed deleting test weight provisions, arguing that test weight is considered a critical test for soybeans and that its deletion would cause importers to look to other suppliers. Twelve comments requested the inclusion of protein and oil content in soybean standards. FGIS said it "is currently conducting studies to refine the methodology for rapidly measuring oil and protein content and will consider proposing the inclusion of these factors into the standards in the future." Details: *Federal Register*, May 1, 1985, pp. 18455-18459.

**USDA to distribute 'Dietary Guidelines' brochures**

USDA has announced it will distribute one million free copies of the newly revised Dietary Guidelines for Americans followed by a series of 14 "mini-bulletins" instructing consumers on using the guidelines. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) also has proposed distributing up to one million free copies. The first seven bulletins being drafted by USDA's Human Nutrition Information Service are to concentrate on each of the seven guidelines. The next seven bulletins will outline how to follow the guidelines under various conditions, such as shopping, eating out, planning and preparing meals, and snacking. The advisory committee which had undertaken a two-year review of the guidelines for USDA and HHS had recommended that they be widely distributed. The committee also recommended that the federal government wait five to 10 years before considering another review. Few substantive changes were made, with no changes in the number of guidelines or their order. Among the changes were a rewording of "maintain ideal weight" to "maintain reasonable weight," and a linking of obesity to heart attacks and strokes in addition to hypertension, hyperlipidemia and high serum cholesterol. Details: *Food Chemical News*, May 13, 1985, pp. 11-15; May 20, 1985, pp. 27-28. *Nutrition Week*, May 9, 1985, p. 7; May 16, 1985, pp. 4-6; May 23, 1985, pp. 4-5; May 30, 1985, p. 6.

**NCI publishes booklet on diet and cancer**

The National Cancer Institute (NCI) has published its booklet, "Diet, Nutrition and Cancer Prevention: A Guide to Food Choices," In it, NCI recommends that Americans increase daily fiber intake from 10-20 grams to 25-35 grams and points to the National Academy of Sciences recommendation that people limit fat intake to 30% of daily calories. NCI also includes a mathematical formula for converting the number of grams of fat listed on the product label to the percentages of calories from fat contained in a serving. In the appendix, amounts of fats in selected foods are listed, along with a guide showing how many calories from fat are permitted in 1,500, 2,000 or 2,500 calorie diets at a range of 20 to 40%. Single free copies are available from NCI's Information Projects Branch, 4B39 NIH 31, 9000 Rockville Pike, Bethesda, MD 20205. Details: *Food Chemical News*, May 20, 1985, p. 28. Dr. Ernst L. Wynder, president of the American Health Foundation (AHF), announced that AHF is beginning a major study on the relationship of dietary fat to the incidence of breast cancer in post-menopausal women. The study will include 2,000 women in eight U.S. locations. It will examine the impact of a diet containing 15% calories derived from fat on the incidence of breast cancer. Details: *Food Chemical News*, May 6, 1985, p. 31.

# From Washington

**FDA proposes delay in sodium labeling rules**

The Food and Drug Administration has proposed delaying the deadline for compliance with sodium content labeling rules until July 1, 1986, due to industry requests showing significant costs if existing labels aren't used. FDA noted that many of those requesting a delay already had made a commitment to use sodium labeling. Among those supporting the year's extension, the National Association of Margarine Manufacturers (NAMM) said its members had been unable to deplete current label inventories because of margarine sales' displacement by federal distribution of surplus butter to the needy. In May, USDA announced it would reduce butter distribution to the needy to 6 million pounds per month for August and September, rather than the 12 million pounds available per month, due to limited state interest during hot weather and to the impact on the margarine industry. The Economic Research Service had estimated that for every 100 pounds of butter distributed, about 86 pounds of margarine was not sold, according to Robert Leard, administrator of USDA's Food and Nutrition Service. Details: *Food Institute Report,* April 20, 1985, p. 9; *Food Chemical News,* May 27, 1985, pp. 18-19.

**Low-fat diet may help produce lower blood pressure**

Preliminary results from a USDA study indicate low-fat diets may increase the body's excretion of sodium and potassium, helping to lower blood pressure. In the three-month study conducted at the Agricultural Research Service's Western Human Nutrition Center in San Francisco, volunteers on a low-fat diet excreted 4% more sodium and 11% more potassium than those who ate a typical U.S. diet higher in fats. Studied were eight healthy 40- to 60-year old men with normal blood pressure. In the low-fat diet, 25% of the total daily calories were from mostly polyunsaturated fat; in the high-fat diet, 44% of the total calories were from fat, mostly unsaturated. A follow-up study of volunteers with slightly elevated blood pressure was scheduled to be completed in June. Details: *Food Chemical News,* May 6, 1985, p. 31. Meanwhile, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) has announced that single copies of the NIH consensus panel's report, "Lowering Blood Cholesterol to Prevent Heart Disease," may be obtained from Michael J. Bernstein, Office of Medical Applications of Research, NIH, Building One, Room 216, Bethesda, MD 20205. Details: *Nutrition Week,* April 18, 1985, p. 3.

**FNB panel suggests microbiological standards**

The Subcommittee on Microbiological Criteria of the Food and Nutrition Board's Committee on Food Protection has made several recommendations concerning peanut butter, mayonnaise and salad dressings in its report, "An Evaluation of the Role of Microbiological Criteria for Food and Food Ingredients." The subcommittee recommended that a microbiological standard for salmonella in peanut butter should include appropriate use of water for cleaning and avoidance of sanitizing if possible. Also, manufacturers should be encouraged to completely separate raw peanuts and peanut butter processing areas. In addition, the subcommittee said, the FDA should consider amending the standard of identity for mayonnaise to include a specified pH level of 4.1 or below and amending the standard of identity for salad dressings to include both a specified pH level of 4.1 or below and acidity of not less than 2.5% calculated as acetic acid. The panel noted the microbiological safety of these products directly relates to the pH level and acetic acid content of the moisture phase. Details: *Food Chemical News,* May 27, 1985, pp. 26-30.

# From Washington

**FEMA to support flavor research work**

The Flavor and Extract Manufacturers' Association (FEMA) in May announced plans to fund research on the benefits of flavors in the care of the elderly. Susan Schiffman of the Duke University Medical Center noted that flavors have to be amplified for the elderly because of a decline in the sense of smell after age 45. Research conducted for FEMA by the Monell Chemical Senses Center, under way for five years, had revealed significant findings, including evidence that sweet (saccharine) and oil taste stimuli are important in the normal digestion and metabolism of ingested fats, FEMA's Paul Hopper said. Hopper said experiments have demonstrated that palatable food flavors do not cause overeating and obesity, but that diet composition appears to be more important. Studies now under way include a look at the oral perception of fats and oils. Details: *Food Chemical News,* June 3, 1985, pp. 11-12.