International dietary study

The Food and Drug Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture and the National Bureau of Standards are participating in an international dietary study coordinated by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The agencies and those of other nations will analyze diets in the U.S., Brazil, Canada, China, Iran, Italy, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Thailand and Turkey. Each country is developing mixed diet samples representative of foods consumed by typical families in various target population groups. An international network of reference laboratories around the world will analyze the diet samples.

The study will examine 24 biologically important trace elements as well as food energy, fiber content and phytates. Details: *Food Chemical News*, Feb. 3, 1986, p. 17, and the National Bureau of Standards.

Diet changes may add to life-span

Increases in life expectancy may be due in part to changes in diet, according to a report released in late January by the Department of Health and Human Services.

The report, "Health, United States, 1985," noted changes in personal health behavior, such as decreased smoking, modified eating habits and increased exercise, may be factors in a decline in mortality from heart disease. The report pointed out that in 1983, life expectancy at birth reached 74.6 years, with white females given a life expectancy of 78.7 years.

Also, the report suggested that improved nutrition may account in part for a decline in the infant mortality rate. Details: *Food Chemical News*, Feb. 3, 1986, p. 74.

Meanwhile, the National Research Council's Food and Nutrition Board has published a book, *What is American Eating?*, prepared from a symposium on American eating habits attended by academic, government and food marketing personnel.

The book examines eating patterns, nutrition and health; factors that shape eating patterns; eating trends and nutritional consequences; and nutrition programs, policy and research. The paperback, which costs $14.95, is available from National Academy Press, 2101 Constitution Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20418.

24-ounce size for "spreads"

The Laws and Regulations Committee of the National Conference on Weights and Measures is recommending that the conference permit margarine-like "spreads" to be marketed in a 24-ounce size.

The National Association of Margarine Manufacturers originally had requested that both 12-ounce and 24-ounce sizes be allowed but withdrew its request for the 12-ounce size since it might look too much like the one-pound size.

The committee also said it would recommend amending its Uniform Regulation for the Method of Sale of Commodities to include both "margarine-like" and "butter-like" spreads. Members said they believed this would encompass any type of "spread" now on the market. Details: *Food Chemical News*, Feb. 3, 1986, pp. 41–42.

ITC drops castor oil investigation

The International Trade Commission (ITC) dropped its antidumping investigation of Brazilian hydrogenated castor oil imports in late January after ruling that U.S. producers have not been materially injured by the shipments.

In December, the U.S. Department of Commerce ruled that Brazilian castor oil producers had been selling hydrogenated castor oil at less than fair value on the U.S. market, at a 1.5% dumping margin. In the January ruling, however, ITC commissioners voted unanimously that American producers were not suffering as a result. Dumping allegations concerning 12-hydroxystearic acid were dismissed in December after the Commerce Department determined this product was not being sold at less than fair value.

The investigation was begun last year after Union Camp Corp. filed a petition on behalf of the U.S. industry allegedly that domestic producers were losing business because of unfairly subsidized castor oil imports from Brazil. Details: *Federal Register*, Feb. 6, 1986, p. 4662.

Chocolate, cocoa standards review

The Food and Drug Administration ruled in January to accept comments until April 30 on whether the U.S. should amend its food standards for chocolate and cocoa products to conform to Codex Alimentarius standards. Originally, FDA had set Jan. 31, 1986 as the deadline for comments.

FDA postponed the date based on a request by the Chocolate Manufacturers Association of the U.S. for a 90-day extension to allow the industry adequate time to properly review the Codex standards. Details: *Federal Register*, Jan. 30, 1986, pp. 3797–3798; Feb. 4, 1986, p. 4391.

FDA recommends TBHQ testing

Tert-butylhydroquinone (TBHQ) is FDA's Fiscal Year 1986 priority chemical for National Toxicology Program (NTP) carcinogenicity testing, according to NTP in seeking comments on possible testing for TBHQ and six other substances.

Because of the priority rating, TBHQ will be submitted directly for action by NTP's Executive Committee rather than being evaluated first by the Board of Scientific Counselors. TBHQ, an antioxidant, has been cleared for direct food use and has been approved by USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service for use in meat and poultry products.

For more information, contact Dr. Victor A. Fung, Chemical Selection Coordinator, NTP, Room 2855, Bldg. 31, National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, MD 20893, telephone 301-496-3511. Details: *Food Chemical News*, Jan. 27, 1986, pp. 38–40.