

From Washington

ASA: Label tropical fats

The American Soybean Association (ASA) has petitioned the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to require specific labeling of palm, palm kernel and coconut oils in food products and to prohibit the use of the term "vegetable oil" to describe tropical fats with more than 25% saturated fat.

Noting these imported tropical fats are highly saturated, ASA cited research showing that foods high in saturated fats pose nutritional and health risks. Urging FDA to require more specific labeling concerning the use of the terms "vegetable shortening" and "vegetable oil," ASA asked FDA to require manufacturers to disclose that the oil in a palm, palm kernel or coconut oil product labeled "100% vegetable oil" is a saturated fat; to include the words "a saturated fat" immediately after palm, palm kernel or coconut oil whenever these tropical fats appear in an ingredient list on any food label; and to list "tropical oils" and the fatty acid saturated fat content on the label. ASA also asked FDA to reclassify tropical oils containing more than 25% saturated fat as a separate category from vegetable oil.

Currently, food manufacturers are only required to name the source of the vegetable oil, such as "palm oil" or "vegetable oil shortening (contains one or more of the following: coconut, palm, palm kernel, soybean oil)."

The ASA petition included results of a supermarket survey of 1,155 foods containing vegetable oils. The survey found 158 different vegetable oil ingredient combinations on food labels. Forty-three percent of the labels listed multiple-choice or generic vegetable oil ingredients, which ASA said hides from consumers the fact that the products contain highly saturated palm, palm kernel and coconut fats. ASA noted that Americans eat nearly 2 billion pounds of tropical fats a year, displacing the equivalent of oil derived from 171 million bushels of soybeans.

AOCS member David Erickson,

ASA's director of technical services, told a Washington press conference that ASA filed the petition "because we are concerned about consumer health, and we want to protect the good image of vegetable oil, especially soybean oil."

As a follow-up to the petition, ASA in mid-February hosted a conference on truth in labeling, focusing on tropical fats. Participants included representatives from U.S. sunflower, corn, cotton, peanut and soybean associations, as well as from the American Heart Association and processors such as Central Soya Inc., Archer Daniels Midland and Ag Processing Inc.

Some objections to the labeling proposal have been voiced to ASA by manufacturers using vegetable oils in their products. Objections center on the cost of changing labels and the desire to retain the option of using different oils, depending on availability and price, by keeping the labeling phrase "contains one or more of the following."

In an editorial in *The Cocomunity* newsletter, the executive director of the Asian and Pacific Coconut Community (APCC) noted, "War is being declared against one of the world's poorest of the poor—the coconut farmer." He noted that U.S. coconut imports in 1985 were 450,000 tons, with more than half going for nonedible purposes, while U.S. soybean exports to tropical countries far exceeded that amount. "Soya imports displace the livelihood of millions of farmers in tropical countries who are very much hard pressed than their well-to-do brethren in the U.S. and who do not have the benefit of loan programs, support prices or aid-financed exports," he wrote, adding, "Unfortunately, the coconut farmer's is a voice in the wilderness. It is seldom heard outside the prime-terms of his small holding."

Meanwhile, the Consumer Federation of America, the Wisconsin State Department of Health and several universities have endorsed an earlier petition filed by the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) to require label

declarations for saturated fat on food labels whenever coconut, palm or palm kernel oils are contained in a product. The University of Alabama at Birmingham, Brown University's Memorial Hospital of Rhode Island and Loma Linda University urged that the phrase "a saturated fat" be declared "right after the name of the oil on package labels." Details: *Food Chemical News*, Feb. 16, 1987, pp. 61-62.

CSPI filed a citizen petition Aug. 5, 1986, asking FDA to stop labeling claims made by food companies of "100% vegetable shortening" for tropical fats. Details: *Food Chemical News*, Aug. 11, 1986, pp. 12-13.

Fish oil for research

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has announced it will produce fish oil for health researchers to use in their work.

The U.S. Commerce Department agency explained that this will provide scientists with standardized test materials of guaranteed quality and composition. The lack of a consistent and reliable source of test materials has hampered research and made it difficult to compare results from different experiments, NOAA said.

The test material will consist primarily of refined menhaden oil and concentrates of certain of its active chemical components. The materials will be produced by NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service laboratory in Charleston, South Carolina, under an agreement with the National Institutes of Health and the Alcohol, Drug Abuse and Mental Health Administration. NOAA expects to have materials available this year. Details: *Food Chemical News*, Feb. 2, 1987, p. 43.

USDA outlines peanut policy

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Commodity Credit

Corporation (CCC) has proposed a national support level of \$607.47 per short ton, the same as last year, for 1987-crop quota peanuts.

The USDA agency also recommended keeping the national average support level for 1987-crop additional peanuts within the range of \$126.70–190.54 per ton. The higher figure, it said, is based on a \$255-per-ton crushing price for the 1987/88 marketing year; the lower figure is based on a \$186-per-ton crushing price. Support for 1986-crop additional peanuts was \$149.75 per ton.

The CCC predicted that 229,000–234,000 tons of U.S. peanuts will be available for crushing during the 1987/88 marketing year, compared to 189,000 tons during the 1986/87 marketing year. It also projected prices to range from 23 to 31 cents a pound for peanut oil and \$130 to \$160 a ton for peanut meal.

The CCC said it expects demand for U.S. peanuts in foreign markets to strengthen, with the U.S. probably supplying approximately 448,000 tons of peanuts to the export market in the 1987/88 marketing year.

The agency proposed a range of \$220–585 per ton as the minimum price for additional peanuts exported for edible use. Details: *Federal Register*, Jan. 26, 1987, pp. 2796–2798.

Meanwhile, USDA's Federal Crop Insurance Corporation has proposed procedures for insuring safflowers, effective for the 1987 crop year and succeeding years. Details: *Federal Register*, Jan. 26, 1987, pp. 2713–2717.

P&G defends 'canola' use

Disagreeing with an American Soybean Association (ASA) request that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) ban the use of the terms "canola" or "canola oil" to indicate low erucic acid rapeseed (LEAR) oil content, Procter & Gamble has urged that the petition be denied. The firm, in defending its parenthetical use of "canola oil" on its Puritan oil

labels, said the ASA petition is based on false premises.

P&G noted that its Puritan Oil is made entirely of low erucic acid rapeseed oil and is labeled in compliance with existing regulations and in accordance with common or usual name-labeling provisions and the requirements of the Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act. The product is labeled "100% Pure Vegetable Oil: Low Erucic Acid Rapeseed Oil (Canola Oil)."

The firm said the term "canola" is widely used in Canada to distinguish a modern genetically improved LEAR variety from other varieties. That name is used by the Canadian Grain Commission, by the Canola Council of Canada and by Canadian growers, processors, marketers and the public to identify the improved LEAR.

In its request to FDA, ASA argued that the term "canola oil" in Canada would permit oil with up to 5% erucic acid, while U.S. generally recognized as safe (GRAS) regulations limit erucic acid content in LEAR oil to 2%. P&G countered that Canada's 5% erucic acid limitation refers to all vegetable oils sold in that country, not simply to canola oil. Also, the firm added, "All of the canola produced and sold throughout Canada today meets the requirements" of U.S. GRAS regulations. "In fact, the canola oil now produced ranges from 0.3% to 1.2% erucic acid, with an average of 0.6%. Thus, all canola oil now produced is low erucic acid rapeseed oil by U.S. definition."

P&G urged that the ASA petition to FDA be denied. Details: *Food Chemical News*, Feb. 16, 1987, pp. 41–43.

Federal grain grading plan

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS) is requesting public comments on adopting an optimal grading system for grain, including soybeans and sunflowerseed.

Such a plan would establish a single grade for grain quality and condition, to replace the current numerical grading provisions in the

official U.S. grain standards. Such an optimal grade designation would contain maximum limits for foreign material, damaged and broken kernels, splits, and shrunken or broken kernels. FGIS is slated to report to the U.S. Congress by May 1, 1987, on comments received and its recommendations.

Deadline for comments is April 13, 1987. They may be submitted to Lewis Lebakken Jr., Information Resources Staff, USDA-FGIS, Room 1661-S, Washington, DC 20250, telephone 202-382-1738. Details: *Federal Register*, Feb. 10, 1987, p. 4151.

FDA postpones color closings

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has postponed the closing for the provisional listing of FD&C Yellow 6 and D&C Reds 8 and 9.

The new closing date is April 6, 1987; it previously had been set for Feb. 3, 1987. FDA said it was postponing the closing to allow time to evaluate any objections to permanently listing the colors. FDA on Dec. 5, 1986, published a rule to permanently list Reds 8 and 9 for use in drugs and cosmetics. The agency on Nov. 19, 1986, published a rule to permanently list Yellow 6 for use in foods, drugs and cosmetics. Details: *Federal Register*, Feb. 3, 1987, pp. 3224–3225.

In addition, FDA has clarified the preamble of its final rules permanently listing D&C Orange 17 and D&C Red 19 for use in externally applied drugs and cosmetics. In clarifications published in the *Federal Register* Feb. 19, 1987, FDA concluded both were safe within the meaning of the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act and did not pose a genuine risk of cancer within the meaning of the Delaney Clause, despite evidence that they induce cancer in laboratory animals. FDA made the clarifications as a result of Public Citizen objections that colors should be banned if they are found to be animal carcinogens. Details: *Food Chemical News*, Jan. 19, 1987, p. 38.

EPA publishes pesticide facts

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has made available registration standard documents for a number of pesticides and pesticide chemical fact sheets.

The registration standard documents describe the agency's regulatory conclusions and positions on continued registrability for pesticides whose reviews have been completed or draft registration standards for those still under review. Pesticide fact sheets include descriptions of the chemical use patterns and formulations, scientific findings, a summary of the agency's regulatory positions, and a summary of major data gaps.

Copies of these documents and fact sheets may be purchased from the National Technical Information Service, 5285 Port Royal Rd., Springfield, VA 22161, telephone 703-487-4650. Microfiche copies

are available for \$6.50. Hard copies of pesticide fact sheets are available for \$9.95 each. Hard copies of standards vary in price according to the length of the document. Details: *Federal Register*, Feb. 4, 1987, pp. 3477-3478; Jan. 29, 1987, p. 2959.

In other EPA action, the agency has published a rule exempting mineral oil from a tolerance requirement when used as an inert ingredient diluent, carrier and solvent in pesticide formulations. Details: *Federal Register*, Feb. 18, 1987, pp. 4905-4906.

NTP report on toxicology

The National Toxicology Program (NTP) has completed a technical report describing toxicology and carcinogenesis studies of tetrachloroethylene, used primarily as a dry cleaning agent, an industrial solvent

for fats, oils, tars, rubber and gums, and a metal degreasing agent.

The two-year inhalation studies using rats and mice showed clear evidence of carcinogenicity for male rats and mice studied, and some evidence of carcinogenicity for female rats studied.

Free copies of the report, "Toxicology and Carcinogenesis Studies of Tetrachloroethylene (Perchloroethylene) in F344/N Rats and B6C3F₁ Mice (Inhalation Studies)," TR311, are available from NTP Public Information Office, MD B2-04, PO Box 12233, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709.

Meanwhile, the International Life Sciences Institute, the National Center for Toxicological Research and the University of Arkansas are working on an agreement under which the three institutions can collaborate on the solution of generic methodological problems in risk assessment. Details: *Food Chemical News*, Feb. 2, 1987, p. 2.

Viewpoint

Health and nutrition notables

The following column highlighting four research topics in the area of health and nutrition was written by AOCS member J. Edward Hunter, professional and regulatory relations, food product development, The Procter & Gamble Co., Cincinnati, Ohio.

Dietary fat and breast cancer risk

A recent article entitled "Dietary Fat and the Risk of Breast Cancer" by Willett et al. in *The New England Journal of Medicine* (Vol. 316, No. 22, 1987) reports that among women in the highest quintile of calorie-adjusted intake of total and saturated fat, linoleic acid and cholesterol, there was no increased risk of breast cancer.

The study involved a survey of 89,538 U.S. registered nurses 34-59 years of age, with no history of cancer. In 1980, the nurses completed a dietary questionnaire designed to measure individual consumption of total fat, saturated

fat, linoleic acid and cholesterol, as well as other nutrients. The mean value for the highest quintile of total fat intake was 44% of calories, and that for the lowest quintile was 32% of calories. During a four-year follow-up period, 601 cases of breast cancer were diagnosed.

After adjusting the data for established risk factors for breast cancer (such as maternal history of breast cancer, a sister with a history of breast cancer, and current smoking), the relative risk of breast cancer among women in the highest quintile for total fat intake compared to women in the lowest quintile was 0.82. Corresponding

relative risks were 0.84 for saturated fat intake, 0.88 for linoleic acid intake and 0.91 for cholesterol intake. Similar results were observed for both postmenopausal and premenopausal women. Thus, there is no evidence that total fat intake or consumption of specific types of fat among women was positively associated with the risk of breast cancer.

The investigators could not exclude the possibilities that the amount of fat consumed earlier in life or at levels below 30% of calories might influence the occurrence of breast cancer or that fat intake might influence the risk of breast cancer in specific subsets of the population, such as older postmenopausal women or women with an unidentified genetic susceptibility. Nevertheless, the findings