



# **THE FLASH!**

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**Winter 2000**

## **Message From The President**

As I sit here writing my President's message and reviewing the news from our region, it seems that traditional Public Health Programs are under increasing attack as budgets become tighter. It seems to me that there are several reasons for this.

First, the goal of public (or environmental) health is to assure that people do not become sick or injured from environmental causes. This goal of making sure that nothing happens does not get much attention. It's hard to take a picture of nothing happening as opposed to a new building, a child being abandoned or a drive-by shooting. The prevention concept, although sellable, has a hard time competing with an after-the-fact crisis. The simple fact is, the better we do our job, the harder it is to justify keeping status quo budgets.

Second, Public Health Programs have emphasized regulation. For a long time, regulatory agencies have become unpopular - "Too many rules," the people say, not thinking about why the numerous rules are needed to protect their health and lives.

Third, new environmental problems such as herbal food, food additives, second hand smoke, "new" bacteria and cancer causing agents in our environment have received attention. Our routine, day to day preventative type programs are soon forgotten.

How can we overcome these and other reasons so we can see public health programs receive the attention they deserve? Pointing out the problems is sometimes the easy part. Arriving at a solution will not be easy. Each of us will have to utilize our unique assets to put the pieces back together.

If not, then we may all fall victim to the Chinese Mental Health Proclamation. Over 30 years ago, China eliminated the ability to obtain data, and removed the word "mental health" from its language. It was then possible to say that China's population no longer had anyone suffering from mental illness. This may not seem logical but it happens daily in forums concerning public health issues.

A final thought. Public opinion generally supports public health programs, however we seldom make an effort to collect information about public opinion and give that to the decision-makers. Instead we lobby directly. You may not realize the value of an association like WAFDO or AFDO, but they can be an effective voice at shaping public opinion. But only if you participate in the shaping of this future. Let us dedicate some time to our professional association. Working together we can influence our future instead of letting THEM do it.

Sincerely,

Cory Willis

## Letter from the Editor

Well, Seattle survived the WTO and the Space Needle continues to grace the cityscape so it's full steam ahead for the planning committee of the WAFDO 2000 Annual Conference. We received several responses to our survey and plenty of great suggestions for topics and speakers. Thanks to everyone who took the time to let us know your ideas. If you come up with any other suggestions, don't hold back—we are all ears and we welcome your thoughts. You can contact either Candace Jacobs or myself.

FLASH! central received some great contributing articles for this edition and I filled in with some national and international pieces I found on the Internet. One article reminded me of one of my first food safety regulatory meetings where an educator and many others agreed there was a need to get food safety education back into the schools. Progress is in the works on that, as you'll see in "FDA and NSTA Announce Food Science Program for Teachers" on page 6.

We are pleased to see a number of new WAFDO members to help continue the progress of this association. And I trust that former WAFDO President Jos Campioni will be delighted to see CFIA's Gary Baird and Stuart Wilson on the new member roster. President Cory Willis is absolutely correct, now more than ever we need to publicize a positive spin on the fine work accomplished by food and drug regulators and industry in the protection of public health. Your contributions of "good news" articles and progressive editorials help this newsletter get the word out—especially once we begin publishing the FLASH! on the Internet!

Thanks for your help,

Linda Condon

### Articles & Editorials Due at WSDA

### The FLASH! Publication Date

April 30, 2000 .....	May 20, 2000
July 30, 2000 .....	August 20, 2000

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## Membership Dues Reminder

We are in the process of compiling a membership directory for our WAFDO members. If you have not yet paid your dues for 2000, please return your membership renewal form and dues as soon as possible to Chuck Henry, WAFDO Secretary - Treasurer.

## WAFDO Membership Structure

- Regulatory - Member is engaged in official regulatory activities ..... \$15 / year
- Retired - Member held an active membership in the Association during employment ..... \$15 / year
- Scholastic - Member is engaged in research, teaching or studying issues involving food, drug, cosmetics, devices, biotechnology or environmental control ..... \$ 15 / year
- Associate - Member is engaged in activities other than regulatory activities ..... \$50 / year

## Welcome New WAFDO Members!

### New Regulatory Members

Gary Baird, Food Safety Officer, Canadian Food Inspection Agency  
Kelly Bench, Food Safety Specialist, Oregon Dept. of Agriculture  
Susan Bird, Food Safety Specialist, Oregon Dept. of Agriculture  
David Gifford, Food Program Manager, Washington State Dept. of Health  
Michael Hernandez, Program Specialist, California Dept. of Health  
Dr. James Glover, Public Health/Food Safety Veterinarian,  
California Dept. of Food and Agriculture  
Ellen Laymon, Food Safety Specialist, Oregon Dept. of Agriculture  
Leslie Lowry, Food Safety Education Specialist, Oregon Dept. of Agriculture  
Greg Parks, Food Safety Specialist, Oregon Dept. of Agriculture  
Stuart Wilson, Assistant Director, Mainland Interior Region,  
Canadian Food Inspection Agency

### New Associate Members

Shane Erickson, Food Safety and Environmental Assurance Manager,  
Safeway Inc.  
Mark Hooper, Director Quality Systems, Agrilink Foods  
Kenny Lum, Director, National Food Processors Association  
James Roesler, Quality Improvement Manager, General Mills, Inc.

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## **FDA Denver District Director Gary Dean Retires**

*Submitted by Virlie Walker*

Gary C. Dean, Director, Denver District FDA retired on December 31, 1999 after 36 ½ years of dedication and commitment to the US Food and Drug Agency. Mr. Dean was appointed Director of the Denver District Office in May 1996. He began his successful FDA career in June 1963 as an Investigator in the Kansas City District Office, and since then has served in several other FDA offices in various locations and positions.

His most recent significant achievement among many in his career, was his participation in the Medical Device Industry Grassroots, which led the Agency into innovative and cooperative working relationships with its stakeholders. The most important outcome of that event was the formation of the Medical Device Task Force of which Mr. Dean is an active member and one of FDA's representatives. He is Chair of FDA's Medical Device Field Committee and a member of the Human Resources Field

Committee. He is also a member of the Medical Device Investigator Certification Board and a member of the Medical Device Certification Audit Development Cadre.

Mr. Dean has received several significant awards for his outstanding achievements with FDA including: Commissioner's Special Citation; Commendable Service Award; several Group Recognition Awards; and two of Vice President Gore's Hammer Awards.

It is our guess that Gary will be spending MORE time on the golf course, at the fishing hole, in the new camper, and enjoying his grandchildren.



The Celebration for Gary's Retirement was held at Baby Doe's Restaurant in downtown Denver on January 14, 2000. The event, shared by many, marked the Graduation to a New and Better life for Gary. Congratulations!

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## **FDA San Francisco District Director Patricia C. Ziobro Retires**

*Submitted by Jim Waddell*

After thirty-seven years of service dedicated to protecting consumers, Patricia Ziobro, San Francisco District Director retired from the US Food and Drug Administration. Pat's professional career has been exemplary in her many assignments regulating foods, drugs, medical devices, cosmetics, and related consumer products. Her efforts have been successful in improving the level of protection provided to consumers of Food and Drug-regulated commodities.

Over the last several years, Pat's work in partnership agreements with California agencies and industry groups has demonstrated her initiative to make government work more efficiently. She has been instrumental in co-locating staff from her agency with those of the California Department of Health Services, in the provision of joint training, and in a nationally recognized pilot effort to conduct research in fresh juice processing.

Pat Ziobro's work with WAFDO and AFDO includes her active participation in the annual Educational Conferences and with Food and Drug leaders throughout the country to carrying out our public health protection activities. Pat has been instrumental in helping these associations achieve success. Best of luck to you on your long and healthy retirement.

*To all of my many friends in FDA and in the fine organizations we work with:*

I have decided to join many of my colleagues in this month's exodus and will be retiring from FDA on December 31. I can still remember the welcoming FDA family in the Buffalo District when I started in the laboratory just two days after my college graduation. Many years and changes have transpired since then, but the same spirit of togetherness and sense of dedication to a mission we all believe in, has been a part of our organization, wherever I have had the privilege of working. I am blessed to have been able to end my FDA days in the San Francisco District, with some of the agency's finest people, who are accomplishing work which has made me very proud.

I have had the good fortune to be associated with many talented and dedicated people in the FDA organization and the many groups we have partnered with. I feel together we have been able to make a difference.

Now FDA priorities will be replaced with other priorities—family, fishing, and flying (it's time to finally finish up the studying I need to get my private license). Thank you all who have walked along my life's path, for just a few steps or many miles, for the opportunity to be your colleague and your friend.

Regards,  
Pat





## *Jos Campioni Extends Gratitude*

To the WAFDO Board and Members,

Thank you for the honor bestowed on me by awarding me with the Wiemann Award. This was a total surprise and caught me off guard. John Vodneck phoned the day before to inform me that WAFDO would establish a phone line so I could listen in to the speeches. It was a very kind offer, as I could not attend. Gail and I were at a friend's place to have dinner. The phone rang and Patricia Klocker, the President, was on the line, explaining that there were some technical problems. We chatted for a while regarding the conference when at last the speaker phone worked.

Next I hear my good friend Maurice Tamura doing the introductions. It was faint and not clear, but I did hear that Orlen Wiemann was there. Then all of a sudden Maurice started introducing me, and I was confused. Why me and why so long? It still did not dawn on me. I nearly interrupted Maurice to mention that there was no need for an introduction, that most people knew me. Then at the end I hear "congratulations Jos," and I still did not know what was going on. I hear applause and someone saying, "do you want to say something?" I was not sure whether they were talking to me or to someone else at the head table. I was totally confused and still did not know what was going on. During my introduction I heard someone crying. I thought it was one of the ladies at the head table. I was touched!

At last I understood that I was asked to say something. I still did not comprehend that I was awarded this prestigious award. My thoughts were somewhere else. WAFDO was giving me more moral support. Half way through my response it dawned to me that the words "congratulations Jos" had a certain meaning. But still I could not and dared not to mention the Wiemann Award. I had enough problems to contain my emotions, but to be safe I uttered the words "thank you for the honor bestowed on me." There was applause and the phone session was over, and yes, I was still confused and did not know what had happened.

Only when Gail approached me, with tears flowing, and said: "CONGRATULATIONS, YOU WON THE WIEMANN AWARD," did I understand what had happened. It was Gail who had been listening in and was crying. I felt embarrassed, daft but very happy. I had regrets that I did not know, so I could have responded in a proper manner. But you know me, my emotions could have been completely out of control, and I would not have been able to utter a word.

I am in full control now, and would like to take this opportunity to thank Orlen Wiemann and the Board of Directors for awarding me this most prestigious award. I am most honored to be in the company of all the previous winners. I never dreamed I could be this lucky. Maurice, my friend, thank you for the kind words you spoke.

As I have said many times, my association with WAFDO and AFDO has been a tremendous experience, enrichment, and source of contacts, but above all, the opportunity to make some many good friends in the USA, in government and industry. I regard WAFDO as my extended family, as so many members became such close friends. At the '98 Conference, I lost control over my emotions as I knew too well that it was a final good-bye for many of my friends.

I regret to see a decline in representation by the Canadians. "Zij snappen er geen bal van!" is a good Dutch expression, meaning "They do not understand a darn thing," despite all the pleas made to them by Barry Morgan and myself, and the examples of the past that showed the benefits of sending representatives to the WAFDO and AFDO conferences.

One day when there is a real emergency on a food matter in both Canada and the USA, the lack of knowing personal contacts will show. I opened the door for Ottawa to have a seat on the AFDO Board, as an Advisor, and yet we see no signs of improvement for the Western Regional Offices. I also notice a similar decline for FDA reps in the West. A matter of resources they say. Yet I hear about terrible wastes in other areas. There is a real need to give working level and lower management staff the opportunity to get involved in at least the Regional Sections. I am now retired, so enough of this bitching!

Again, thank you for your support and the honor bestowed on me; sorry Gail and I could not be there. We miss you! Our love and best wishes to you all. Good-bye, till we meet again.

Jos Campioni



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## **Charles M. Breen** **New FDA Seattle District Director**

*Submitted by Sue Hutchcroft*

Charles M. Breen graduated from Dartmouth College in 1972 with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Chemistry. Upon graduation, he joined the Food and Drug Administration as a Consumer Safety Officer in the San Francisco District from 1972 through 1977.

In 1997, Charles accepted the position as the Resident in Charge of the Helena, Montana Resident Post until 1987 when he became a Compliance Officer for the Center for Veterinary Medicine in Rockville, Maryland.

In 1992, Charles moved to the Kansas City District in the position of St. Louis Branch Director. Mr. Breen accepted the Seattle District Director position in November 1999 and reported to the Seattle District office on January 24, 2000.

## **Richard Baldwin's** **Reassignment Opens Pacific** **Region Director Position**

Richard Baldwin, former FDA Pacific Regional Director, has been reassigned to perform ORA-wide duties effective January 24, 2000. Susan Setterberg, currently the regional Food and Drug Director for the Central Region, will be acting Pacific Region Director from mid-February until April 1, 2000. FDA is in the process of advertising to fill the permanent position.

*Source: Dennis Baker, FDA-ORA Washington, D.C.*

## **FDA Offices of Food Labeling and** **Special Nutritionals Merge**

CFSAN Director Joseph A. Levitt announced the merger of the Office of Food Labeling and the Office of Special Nutritionals to be called the Office of Nutritional Products, Labeling and Dietary Supplements (ONPLDS) and headed by Acting Director Dr. Christine Lewis.

The new structure has been developed to maximize the resources in the two offices, improving the way FDA performs related functions such as health claims and overlapping labeling issues. The reorganization is designed to further enhance FDA's science-based approach to addressing dietary supplement and food labeling issues. All current functions of these offices will be maintained in the new office.

Dr. Lewis, who will serve as the Acting Director for the new office, has been at FDA since 1986. She has worked in both offices, first in the Clinical Nutrition Section and in the Office of Food Labeling, and most recently as the Deputy Director of the Office of Special Nutritionals. In 1995, she was selected to spend a year in Rome with the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization to work on a special project involving international harmonization of food labeling and food composition databases.

Prior to coming to FDA, Dr. Lewis worked as an assistant professor at Pennsylvania State University, teaching both undergraduate and graduate nutrition-related courses. Dr. Lewis received her bachelor's degree in food microbiology at the University of Connecticut and her master's degree in biochemistry and doctoral degree in nutrition and statistics from Pennsylvania State University.

*Source: FDA, January 18, 2000*

## **FDA Finalizes Rule for Claims on** **Dietary Supplements**

FDA published its final rule that defines the types of statements that can be made concerning the effect of a dietary supplement on the structure or function of the body pursuant to the Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act of 1994 (DSHEA). Under DSHEA, dietary supplements may bear "structure/function" claims — claims that the products affect the structure or function of the body — without prior FDA review. They may not, without prior FDA review, bear a claim that they can prevent, treat, cure, mitigate or diagnose disease (a disease claim).

The final rule precludes express disease claims ("prevents osteoporosis") and implied disease claims ("prevents bone fragility in post-menopausal women") without prior FDA review. The final rule clarifies that such express and implied disease claims can be made through the name of a product ("Carpaltum," "CircuCure"), through a statement about the formulation of a product (contains aspirin), or through the use of pictures, vignettes, or symbols (electrocardiogram tracings).

The rule permits claims that do not relate to disease. These include health maintenance claims ("maintains a healthy circulatory system"), other non-disease claims ("for muscle enhancement," "helps you relax,") and claims for common, minor symptoms associated with life stages ("for common symptoms of PMS," "for hot flashes"). The rule was published in the January 6, 2000 Federal Register and became effective on February 5, 2000.

*Source: FDA Talk Paper T00-1, January 5, 2000*

## Travel Advice

Submitted by Cory Willis

*Don't drink bottled water, there's something better!*

If you've been traveling overseas with your trusty bottle of bismuth suspension to prevent diarrhea — that's good. According to the department of pediatrics at Tripler Army Medical Center in Honolulu, Hawaii, bismuth salicylate is very effective at killing bacteria.

But, as reported in BMJ, researchers found something better: red wine. When they compared bismuth with red wine, they found that while both killed bacteria equally well, the wine seemed to reduce the rate at which the bacteria grew back.

Which is good news for travelers, since wine does taste better than bismuth. But it doesn't answer the question— what was the department of pediatrics doing conducting this study? Let the kids have bismuth suspension, and keep the wine for the adults, OK?



## FDA and NSTA Announce Food Science Program for Teachers

The FDA and the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) announced a new Professional Development Program in Food Science for middle and high school teachers. According to NSTA, food science provides science educators with an opportunity to provide topically relevant lessons for their students. The professional development program is being offered to enhance teachers' understanding of food science.

A new supplementary food science curriculum developed jointly by FDA and NSTA will be distributed to schools in September. In July, 25 middle school and 25 high school teachers from across the country will come to Washington, D.C., to preview the supplementary curriculum program; meet with scientists to discuss the science of food safety; visit laboratories and food processing plants; and develop an understanding of how food safety policy is created.

Teachers wishing to apply for the program must complete an application and submit it to NSTA by March 10, 2000. After completing the program, participants will be required to present a follow up workshop in their respective school or district during the 2000-2001 school year. Program expenses will be covered and an honorarium will be provided. Applications are available from NSTA by fax at 703-522-5413 or from its Web site: <http://www.nsta.org/programs/fda.htm>. For more information on the professional development workshop or the supplementary food science curriculum program, contact Laura Fox at FDA, (202) 260-0574; or e-mail [Lfox@bangate.fda.gov](mailto:Lfox@bangate.fda.gov).

Source: [EDNET@FOODSAFETY.GOV](mailto:EDNET@FOODSAFETY.GOV), January 28, 2000

## Clinton Seeks Increased Funding for Food Safety Initiative

The President's FY 2001 budget request for FDA's role in the Food Safety Initiative is up \$30 million over the enacted level for the current year. The Food Safety Initiative is a long-range, inter-agency program based on a working partnership among FDA, Centers for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC), U.S. Department of Agriculture, states, academia, industry and consumers.

FDA's request for FY 2001 would, among other things, ensure annual inspections of high-risk food establishments and enhance the supporting laboratory analyses; work with states to implement audit programs to ensure consistent application of regulations and develop consistent nationwide food safety standards; implement the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point system for fruit and vegetable juices; develop and evaluate on-farm intervention strategies and/or technologies to improve testing methodologies for Salmonella Enteritidis; and complete the National Antimicrobial Resistance Monitoring System by adding national and international data collection sites.

Source: *FDA Talk Paper T00-9, February 7, 2000*

## "Review-It" Dietary Supplement Labeling Compliance Review Seminar

**April 17-18, 2000**

Jointly Presented by the  
AAC Consulting Group, Inc. and the  
Association of Food and Drug Officials

Hyatt Regency Bethesda  
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Bethesda, MD 20814

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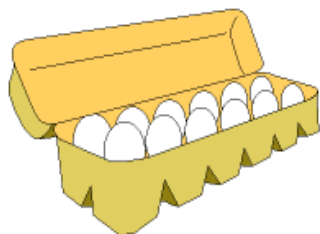
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## **Outbreaks of Salmonella Serotype Enteritidis Infection Associated with Eating Raw Shell Eggs United States, 1996–1998**

Although the number of *Salmonella* Enteritidis (SE) outbreaks have declined in recent years, undercooked eggs still remain the primary source of SE infection.

During the 1980s and 1990s, Salmonella serotype Enteritidis emerged as an important cause of human illness in the United States. Studies have shown that much of this increase is associated with the consumption of raw or undercooked eggs. Although the rates of sporadic illness as well as the number of SE outbreaks have declined in recent years, SE is still an important public health problem. Further reductions in illness can be accomplished by establishing prevention measures such as on-farm control programs, refrigeration during transport and storage, and consumer and food worker education.

Source: *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*  
February 4, 2000



## **Egg Safety From Production to Consumption: An Action Plan**

The Clinton Administration announced a new egg safety program that is intended to reduce the incidence of Salmonella Enteritidis by 50 percent by 2005. Under the program, egg producers and processors will carry out one of two strategies to improve egg safety. The first strategy requires rigorous on-farm agricultural and sanitation practices, extensive testing for Salmonella, and diversion of eggs that test positively to pasteurization or cooked products. The second strategy requires implementation of new technologies, such as in shell pasteurization, to kill the organism at the packing stage of production.

One of the objectives in this action plan includes the development and distribution of consumer education materials. Visit website <http://www.foodsafety.gov/~fsg/ceggs.html>

Source: EDNET@FOODSAFETY.GOV, January 28, 2000

## **NASDA Comments on the Food Safety Strategic Plan**

NASDA provided comments on the administration's food safety strategic plan during an interagency workgroup meeting of the President's Council on Food Safety. The special briefing was held by USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in advance of a public meeting held on January 19, 2000.

The Council's Strategic Planning Task Force has been tasked by the President to develop a comprehensive five-year federal food safety strategic plan by July 2000. The plan will be used to set priorities, improve coordination and efficiency, identify gaps in the current system and mechanisms to fill those gaps, strengthen prevention and intervention strategies, and develop performance measures to show progress.

In a letter submitted to the Council, Fred Dailey, NASDA president, and Dan Wyant, chairman of NASDA's Food Regulation and Nutrition Committee, expressed support for the planning process and goals. They also urged the Council to maintain an ongoing mechanism for state and local involvement in the federal planning process and reminded members of the heavy investment of state and local partners in the national food safety system.

Source: *NASDA News*, December 10, 1999

## **Research Finds Soy and Whey Proteins May Help Prevent Breast Cancer**

Researchers at the Arkansas Children's Nutrition Center (ACNC) have found that whey and soy protein may help prevent breast cancer. This research is featured in this month's "Cancer, Epidemiology, Biomarkers and Prevention Journal" (an official journal of the American Association for Cancer Research). In laboratory studies, researchers compared the protective effects of soy protein and whey protein against chemically induced tumors in the milk producing glands of rats. They found that approximately 50 percent fewer rats had mammary tumors when fed a diet containing a processed whey protein as compared with rats eating a standard diet. Whey protein is a class of minor proteins found in milk. Soy protein prevented approximately 25 percent of mammary cancer. According to ACNC Director Thomas Bader, 180,000 new breast cancer cases are diagnosed each year in women living in the United States.

Source: *NASDA News*, January 28, 2000

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## **GMO Food Agreement**

More than 130 countries reached a landmark agreement on January 29th to regulate trade in genetically modified organisms, a major part of the world's food supply that has raised environmental and health concerns and strained international trade relations.

The U.N.-sponsored agreement strikes a delicate balance between the interests of major exporters of genetically modified crops, such as the United States and Canada, and importers in the European Union and developing countries, which have expressed concerns about the health and environmental impact of the new food varieties.

The agreement, which still must be ratified by 50 countries before it goes into effect, establishes an international framework for countries to use when making decisions about genetically modified crops. It also requires, for the first time under an international agreement, labeling of commodity shipments that "may contain" genetically modified foods. But there is no specific requirement that farmers or the grain industry segregate conventional and modified crops, which the U.S. government said could cost billions of dollars.

"On balance, we think this is an agreement that protects the environment without disrupting world food trade," David Sandalow, assistant U.S. secretary of state for oceans, environment and science, told reporters. European Commission Environmental Minister Margot Wallstrom said the protocol, signed by more than 130 countries, was a victory for consumers and importers and an agreement of which all countries could be proud. The pact also won praise from both industry groups and environmentalists, who each feared the other would have more influence over the final outcome of a pact on genetically modified organisms.

Source: Doug Palmer, Reuters, Yahoo News, January 29, 2000



## **Food Safety Materials Now Available in Other Languages**

A new section, "Other Languages," has been added to the FoodSafety.gov web site. This new section will provide links to all government food safety materials that are available to the public on the Web in languages other than English. Materials are available in the following languages: Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Korean, Russian, Spanish and Portuguese. Video materials on the web that are in other languages are also listed. Visit their website at <http://www.FoodSafety.gov/~fsg/fsglang.html>

Source: EDNET-L@FOODSAFETY.GOV, 01/2000

*labeling of commodity shipments that "may contain" genetically modified foods*

## **Senator Reportedly Set to Introduce Legislation to Require Labeling of Genetically Engineered Foods**

According to a February 10 announcement from the Campaign to Label Genetically Engineered Foods, Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA) intends to introduce the legislation in the Senate following the President's Day Recess. In a February 8 letter to other Senators, she wrote: "... the health and environmental effects of genetically engineered food are not yet known. Given the rapid expansion of this largely untested technology, we should provide consumers with the right to know whether they are eating genetically engineered food. Congress has already provided consumers similar rights by requiring the labeling of foods containing artificial colors and flavors, chemical preservatives and artificial sweeteners. Labeling genetically engineered food would not be unprecedented for the U.S. In fact, as part of a recent 131-nation agreement to regulate trade in genetically engineered crops, the U.S. agreed to label its international shipments of seeds, grains and plants that may contain genetically engineered material. If we can provide this information to our trading partners, shouldn't we make similar information available to American consumers?"

Food Industry Environmental Network, February 11, 2000

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## **USDA Approves Irradiation of Meat**

On December 23, FSIS published a final rule in the Federal Register amending its regulations to permit the use of ionizing radiation for treating refrigerated or frozen, uncooked meat, meat byproducts, and certain other meat food products to reduce levels of foodborne pathogens and to extend shelf-life. FSIS is also revising the regulations covering the irradiation of poultry products so that they will be as consistent as possible with the regulations for meat food products.

Raw meat treated with irradiation must be packaged with the international radura symbol prominently displayed so that consumers will know what they are buying. For unpackaged meat products that do not have labels, the statement and logo must be displayed at the point of sale to consumers. The labeling requirements do not apply to products purchased through foodservice operations, such as restaurants. The rule takes effect on February 22, 2000.

*Source: American Association of Food Hygiene Veterinarians, News-O-Gram, December 1999, Vol. 23, No. 6*

## **Colorado Encourages Sprout Growers to Follow FDA Guidance Document**

*Submitted by Roberta Boitano*

Colorado sprout producers are being encouraged to implement the October FDA guidance document concerning sprout production or to initiate similar effective control measures, including effective microbial testing, to identify and prevent contaminated sprouts from entering into commerce.

Copies of the guidance documents were mailed to all known Colorado sprout producers with a cover letter explaining that if these procedures or similar effective procedures are not implemented, the sprouts will be considered adulterated under the Colorado Pure Food and Drug Law, 25-5-410 (1) (d). Copies of these documents and cover letter have also been provided to the Colorado Directors of Environmental Health, City/County Environmental Health Officers and the Consumer Protection Division (CPD) staff.

Beginning in mid February 2000, inspectors from CPD will be conducting inspections of all known Colorado sprout producers to assess the level of adoption of effective preventive controls. Local health officials will be notified of impending inspections within their jurisdictions and encouraged to send members of their staff with CPD field staff assigned to this effort.

## **Explosive Hot Chili Sauce Prompts Hawaii DOH Advisory**

*Submitted by Maurice Tamura*

On January 11, the Hawaii Department of Health issued a news release warning consumers not to open certain bottles of a popular oriental hot chili sauce because the contents may splatter and can irritate the eyes and other mucous membranes that come in contact with the sauce. The problem is the result of excessive gas production within the bottle. There is no hazard after the bottle has been opened, although the chili ingredient is an irritant and consumers should not expose their eyes or other sensitive areas to the sauce.

The sauce, Tuong Ot Sriracha Hot Chili Sauce, is made by Huy Fong Foods, Inc. of Rosemead, California and is packaged in 17 and 28 ounce plastic bottles. Only certain batches of the sauce may be a problem. The codes for these batches are found on the neck of the bottles and begin with the following symbols on the first line: H9TM, H9TA, H9TW, H9TX or H9TY.

Huy Fong Foods had voluntarily recalled the sauce in September 1999 because the garlic used to make the sauce began to ferment and form gases which pressurized the contents of the bottle. The Hawaii Department of Health had received one report of injury and continues to find the recalled codes in the marketplace.

Consumers were advised to discard the unopened sauce or return it to the place of purchase if it bears any of the above-mentioned codes. No other codes or Huy Fong products were recalled. The Hawaii Department of Health worked with local distributors of the sauce to remove the recalled codes from sale.

## **HACCP Principles for Retailers**

*Submitted by Mike Govro*

The Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA), Food Safety Division has scheduled a training session called "Managing Food Safety: Application of HACCP Principles at Retail" for June 6-8 in the Portland area. The class will be led by John Marcello, retail food specialist from Phoenix. Each Food Safety Specialist will be paired with a retail food industry member. The pairs will work through real food preparation situations and attempt to put HACCP based controls in place. The industry member will then return to work and put the changes into effect. We hope that the session will help build better working relationships with industry, accomplish some training and solve some food safety problems all at once. The ODA will also try to determine if this is something they can or should attempt to duplicate in the future.

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## **Coalition Helps California Update the Retail Food Facilities Law**

*Submitted by Jim Waddell*

Assembly Bill 1978, by Assemblyman Bill Campbell of Orange County, CA is just one of several food safety laws in recent years sponsored by a group called the Committee to Review the California Uniform Retail Food Facilities Law (CRC). The bill established minimum standards for knowledge of food safety in California food facilities, required certified food safety employees to train other employees in food safety and upgraded the requirements for food preparation in food booths at community events. Because it was written by a coalition of regulators and industry representatives, the law is short on bureaucratic requirements (there is no ID card, registration, or fee paid to the government) and long on convenience (operators choose from one of four nationally recognized food safety examinations, needing only their examination certificate to show compliance).

Formed not long after the 1993 fatal E. coli 0157:H7 outbreak in hamburgers, CRC is a coalition of representatives of local environmental health agencies, the State Department of Health Services, and various representatives of the retail food industry. The purpose of the group is to foster uniform, science based food safety law reform in California. Coincidentally, in 1993 the US Food and Drug Administration published a major revision to its Model Food Code. For the first time, the focus of the Food Code was to eliminate or minimize the known risk factors for foodborne illness. Emphasis shifted away from structure and equipment to behaviors and processes. In terms of food safety, what is done to food and how it is done is far more important than where it is done. CRC looked to the Model Food Code as a reference for what changes were needed in the California Uniform Retail Food Facilities Law (CURFFL).

The benefits of this coalition have been many. CRC has come to be recognized in the legislature as the authoritative body for food safety issues. Lines of communications between industry and regulators have been established. Joint food safety training programs have been presented. Industry and regulators have formed alliances to foster the use of Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) plans in food service. A great deal has been learned from these cooperative efforts.

Here are a few of the significant changes to CURFFL as a result of the CRC:

1. Thorough cooking is required for comminuted meat (hamburger), poultry, pork, and raw shell eggs. Cooking temperatures are specified for microwaved raw meats and reheated potentially hazardous foods.

2. Food establishments must have at least one owner or employee who has passed a nationally recognized examination in food safety.
3. A handwash sink is required in the kitchen.
4. Three compartment sinks are required for washing, rinsing, and sanitizing utensils and dishes.
5. HACCP plans are mandatory for high-risk operations including smoking of meat and fish, curing meat, modified atmosphere packaging for extended time periods, chemical preservation, canning of low acid food, and time as a public health control.
6. Handwashing and personal hygiene requirements are expanded and clarified.
7. Sanitization schedules for food contact surfaces and equipment are in place.
8. Rapid cooling of potentially hazardous foods is now mandatory.
9. The cold holding temperature for most potentially hazardous foods was lowered from 45 to 41 degrees F.
10. Whole shell eggs are potentially hazardous foods. Eggs must be held at 45 degrees F or less.

The above were not in CURFFL, or were inadequate to protect public health, before CRC was formed. A major task before CRC at present is a complete re-write of CURFFL based on the Model Food Code.

## **Oregon Adopts Unpasteurized Juice Warning Label Rule**

*Submitted by Mike Govro*

On January 12, the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) held a public hearing on the adoption of the unpasteurized juice warning label requirements listed in 21 CFR 101.17(g). One small raw juice processor testified in opposition to the rule, but its adoption was recommended and the rule was placed in effect.

The ODA has not yet decided how to determine if a product has received the five log reduction of the "pertinent organism" that exempts it from this labeling requirement. The rule also references compliance with any forthcoming HACCP rule, which may be established. The adoption of future rules without a hearing is not allowed in Oregon, and another hearing would be necessary to adopt such a rule.

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## **Oregon Holds Hearing to Adopt OMRI's Organic List**

*Submitted by Mike Govro*

On February 2, the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) held a hearing to adopt a more current version of the Organic Materials and Practices list. The ODA proposed the adoption of a list commercially produced by the Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI). The OMRI list includes materials that were not on the original list that Oregon originally adopted, and it also prohibits the use of genetically modified organisms as control measures. The hearing was attended by about 20 people and all comments offered at the hearing were in support of the adoption of the OMRI list. ODA did receive two letters after the comment period which raised questions about the hearing process and the "under consideration" category used in the list. The hearing officer has not made his recommendation to the ODA director yet.

## **Sleep Aid Sends Man into Deep Slumber**

*Submitted by Bob Armstrong*

In Washington State a consumer complaint was investigated which involved a young male who was participating in an intensive body building program. His training regime included intensive weight training followed by long periods of deep sleep. To facilitate the deep sleep a muscle relaxer, Alprazolam and a nutritional supplement labeled G3 were taken.

After taking the mixture, the complainant fell into a very deep sleep from which he could not be awoken. He was transported to a hospital and put on life support until he revived. Robb Willis, WSDA Food Safety Officer on the Special Projects Team, investigated the properties of G3 and found it related to several nutritional supplements -Blue Nitro, Longevity, Revivarant, G.H. Revitalizer, Gamma G, Insom-X, Remforce, Firewater, GH Gold, Furanone Extreme, Jolt, GenX, Rest-eze, Alpha G 3, and Renewtrient. The active ingredient common to these sleep aids is Furanone di hydro and similar molecules 1,4 butanediol, tetramethylene glycol, gamma butyrolactone.

Furanone di hydro and related compounds are broken down in the body to form gamma butyrolactone (GBL), gamma hydroxybutyric acid (GHB), and 1,4 butanediol BD. GHB is known as a date rape drug that induces temporary amnesia and deep sleep in users. Any use of alcohol or muscle relaxers intensifies the effect. The compounds are considered unapproved drugs by FDA. A short survey of body building nutrition providers indicated these product are relatively available in Washington State.

## **Japanese Organic Regulations May Impact Washington Exports**

The Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) is revising the Japanese Agricultural Standard (JAS) for the labeling of food products. These revisions include the establishment of labeling standards for organic food products. Imported products will have to comply with the new JAS standards by April 1, 2001.

The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) Organic Food Program certifies producers, processors and handlers of organic food. In 1998, Washington's organic food industry produced over \$70 million dollars of organic food products. It is estimated that over \$10 million dollars of these WSDA certified organic food products were exported to Japan.

On January 21, 2000, WSDA Agricultural Trade Representative, Scott Hitchman, and WSDA Organic Program Manager, Miles McEvoy, met with Mr. Onishi, Director of MAFF's Food Labeling Division and Mr. Nishiyama, MAFF Director for International Standardization. The purpose of this meeting with the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery was to discuss the proposed Japanese organic standards and how the standards will affect acceptance of the WSDA Organic Certification Program.

The new standards require an MAFF approved agent to authorize the use of a JAS seal on organic products. The MAFF authorized agents must be incorporated in Japan and follow inspection and certification criteria outlined in the MAFF regulations.

WSDA certified organic products destined for export sale to Japan in 2001 will be planted and harvested in the next 4-9 months. Producers and processors need to know whether their WSDA organic certification will meet Japanese regulations. Organic products certified by WSDA will not be legal for sale in Japan unless one of the following conditions are met.

1. WSDA establishes an organic certification organization in Japan that meets the MAFF requirements.
2. WSDA certified organic producers and processors obtain certification from an MAFF approved organic certification agent at an estimated cost of \$2,300 per farm site plus travel costs.
3. USDA finalizes the National Organic Program (NOP), accredits the WSDA program, and Japan accepts the USDA National Organic Program as equivalent to Japan's organic standards.

USDA plans to publish proposed organic rules in late February or March. However, it is highly unlikely that the National Organic Program will be implemented prior to the April 1, 2001 deadline.

*Source: Miles McEvoy, Japanese Organic Regulation Report*



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## ***Seafood HACCP and LACF Seminars***

**February 23, Anchorage, AK HACCP Encore! Course** (includes AFDO certification).

Contact: Don Kramer Phone: 907/274-9691 Fax: 907/277-5242

**February 22-25, Low-Acid Canned Foods Better Process Control School**

Contact: UC Davis University Extension Phone: 530/757-8777 Fax: 530/757-8558

**March 13-16, Low-Acid Canned Foods Better Process Control School**

Seattle, WA, Radisson Hotel, Seattle Airport, Contact: Ann Brelford

Phone: 509/335-292 Fax: 509/335-2959 E-mail: annb@wsu.edu

**March 28-30, Bothell, WA HACCP Course** (AFDO certification pending)

Contact: Verne Hedlund Phone: 360/902-1860 E-mail: VHedlund@agr.wa.gov

**March 30-April 1, Sitka, AK HACCP Course** (AFDO certification pending)

Contact: Don Kramer Phone: 907/274-9691 Fax: 907/277-5242