

Actually, "administrative guidelines" may be set for some heavy metals in foods, but not formal tolerances. Pesticide tolerances are the province of the Environmental Protection Agency, rather than FDA. The numbers of cattle tested for DES and the numbers of livers found positive have been periodically reported by the Agriculture Department. Results of FDA's marketplace surveys, along with specific details on how the surveys are made, have been reported in the Pesticides Monitoring Journal (See FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS, Nov. 8, Page 3).

Meanwhile, FDA's parent Department of Health, Education and Welfare recently reacted to President Nixon's Executive Order under which meetings of advisory committees will be open to the public (See FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS, May 8, Page 31). HEW told its agency directors that advisory committees are to be listed and that their meeting dates will be announced. Any committees which want to have closed meetings must obtain both the approval of the FDA Commissioner and the HEW Secretary.

COMPANY CITES NEW DATA IN OBJECTING TO PCB PACKAGING LIMITS

New data indicate little need for limitations on polychlorinated biphenyls in food packaging materials, the Hoerner Waldorf Corporation commented to the Food and Drug Administration on the agency's proposal for interim tolerances on PCBs (See FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS, June 5, Page 10).

Other comments on the proposal, for which the comment deadline is July 16, were from Agway, Inc., and the National Association of Printing Ink Manufacturers. Also last week, L. L. Ramsey of the FDA Bureau of Foods' Office of Compliance delivered a PCB status report before the Association of Food and Drug Officials of the U.S. (See stories, Pages 3 and 13) in which he reaffirmed FDA's view that "a principal source of PCB residues in foods packaged in paper products is PCBs in the packaging material."

Ramsey disclosed the results of a national milk survey for PCBs completed in late April (See FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS, March 13, Page 36). He noted:

"The over-all percentage of milk containing PCBs was 5.2%, and most of the PCBs were identified as Aroclor 1254. However, the sample is much too small to conclude that there is a real difference between milk for bottling and milk for manufacturing. It is noteworthy that only one sample out of the total 520 samples showed a residue in excess of 2.5 p.p.m., the recently proposed temporary tolerance. We are following up in all cases where the level of PCBs is 1.5 p.p.m. or higher in the fat in order to determine the source of PCB contamination."

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Ramsey also said that a recent Environmental Protection Agency study of the fatty tissue of 688 people detected PCBs in about 2/3rds. These positive findings, ranging from a trace to 1 p.p.m. in about 1/3rd of the 688 to about 2 p.p.m. in about 5% of the samples, were largely Aroclor 1254, but Aroclor 1260 also was "well represented."

Hoerner Waldorf's comment to FDA said Aroclor 1242 is the only PCB present in significant amounts in packaging material and that "evidence points to the fact that Aroclor 1242 is neither persistent nor cumulative." Urging separate consideration for this compound, the company said, "Quantities of Aroclor 1242 required to cause any short term effects would be unlikely to be attained through any food packaging transfer."

The National Association of Printing Ink Manufacturers also called for elimination of the 5 p.p.m. limit in food packaging and said a period of 90 days, rather than 30, should be allowed for compliance.

Agway, endorsing earlier comments by the American Feed Manufacturers Association, said it also would like to see more clarification of what is intended by the term PCBs, of which there are many specific types in the environment.

The company also objected to listing some tolerances in terms of a "fat basis," noting that the fat composition of products varies and that foods are consumed "as is."

USDA ENDORSES FDA'S NUTRITIONAL LABELING PROPOSAL

J. Phil Campbell, Under Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, said USDA has reviewed the nutritional labeling guidelines proposed by the Food and Drug Administration and, "Generally we feel the labeling will be of considerable benefit to consumers in selecting foods for a well-balanced diet."

Speaking before the National Turkey Foundation in Colorado Springs, Colo., June 26, Campbell gave USDA's seal of approval to the nutritional labeling plan, but opposed the concept of "pull dates for meat and poultry products," saying that the time "the product will remain wholesome is highly dependent upon the care exercised in the handling and selling at the retail level."

Further tests of nutritional labeling were asked by the Interagency Committee on Nutrition Education, which is composed of representatives from various agencies of USDA and the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, the Agency for International Development, the American Red Cross, the Office of Economic Opportunity, the Peace Corps, the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization, and the Pan American Health Organization.