Standards for jams, jellies, preserves, and marmalades were advanced to Step 3 for initial government comments, but the standard for table olives was returned to Step 2 for revision.

The U.S. delegation to the committee meeting proposed amendment of the Codex standard for canned tomatoes to provide for up to .07% of calcium in diced, sliced and wedge form tomatoes. The Food and Drug Administration's standard for Canned Tomatoes was recently amended to provide for an increased level of calcium salts in cut forms. The proposed Codex amendment, along with a U.S. proposal to amend the Step 9 standard for Canned Pineapple to define excessive trim, will go out for government comments at Step 3.

A proposal by The Netherlands for revising the Step 9 standard for Green Beans will be studied by the Committee next year.

The Committee accepted and will recommend to the Commission a U.S. proposal to amend the Canned Peach draft standard to provide for use of ascorbic acid (See story, Page 27).

There was much discussion at the meeting, according to NCA, about metallic contaminants in canned foods, and data will be collected on the levels of these.

Meanwhile, the Codex Committee on Processed Meat Products asked that further comments on a number of Step 6 draft standards be submitted by July 20. Among the subjects to be covered by the comments are:

Canned Hams - - "If it is considered that artificial flavourings and artificial smoking agents should be allowed in this product, it is necessary that interested Governments should supply the Committee with information concerning their designation, specification, level of use and, where possible, references to their toxicological evaluation."

Canned Luncheon Meat - - "Governments are . . . requested to specify the artificial flavourings, extracts and essences, level of use, and, where possible, references to their toxicological evaluation. The view of Governments is also sought with respect to the question of addition of colouring matter when technologically necessary."

The Committee had been a subcommittee of the Codex Committee on Meat and Meat Products, but the Codex Commission has established separate Committees on Meat and on Processed Meat Products.

FDA FINDS PCB'S IN FOOD PRODUCTS

Three Food and Drug Administration District Offices have reported the presence of polychlorinated biphenyls in samples of milk, cottage cheese, crabmeat, fish, and fish-meal.

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The report on PCB's was contained in FDA's activities report for the third-quarter of fiscal year 1970 (See FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS, April 27, Page 8). FDA said that it had distributed a method for PCB's and had asked the Districts for any findings in samples.

The report noted that nine samples of milk collected by the Baltimore District showed PCB's ranging from 0.3 to 12.5 p.p m. on a fat basis. A sample of cottage cheese was detected with 0.3 p.p m. PCB and a crabmeat sample also contained 0.3 p.p.m.

The New Orleans District reported six samples of fish meal containing 0.45 - 0.80 p.p.m. of PCB's and the Cincinnati District reported one sample of white perch with 10.6 p.p.m. of PCB's and 10 samples of Tennessee River catfish and buffalo fish containing from 0.5 - 12.0 p.p.m.

FDA said that because of the increased concern over the presence of PCB's in the environment and confirmed report of their presence in milk and human fat tissues, toxicity studies are being conducted to evaluate their hazard.

In another portion of the report, FDA reported results from acute oral toxicity studies of the polychlorinated biphenyls, Aroclor "1254" and Aroclor "1260" in rats. The agency said that the LD-50 for each of these compounds is about 5,000 to 10,000 mg/kg and there was considerable variation in mortality with some rats killed with dosage levels as low as 1000 mg/kg.

Signs of poisoning observed in these rats were depression and diarrhea with periods of hyper-excitability and anorexia, the report said. A number of effects were seen on autopsy, but FDA said the principle gross effect observed in the organs was a significant increase in liver weight.

FDA has apparently aided two States that have taken action against milk with PCB residues. A interim guideline for action is being worked on in the agency and will be included in a program when it is issued to the field for full implementation.

In the report FDA noted that work is continuing on the analysis of mercury in a wide variety of products and human tissues. The agency also disclosed that studies of heavy metal pollution from smelter plants in Montana, and a look at pollution by fluorides from aluminum reduction plants is underway. FDA said some samples of alfalfa hay showed residues of fluorides exceeding 100 p.p.m. Final results of both studies are currently being reviewed, the report said.

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FDA Continuing Heavy Metals Surveillance

FDA-ers apparently are finding mercury in a variety of waterways throughout the country and have under consideration some seizures of fish with mercury above the .5 p.p.m. interim guideline for action. Working with State officials and the Interior Department's Federal Water Quality Administration, the FDA has been attempting to alert sports fishermen to the problems in areas where mercury may be present.

A similar type of approach is being used for control of residues from pesticides through cooperative efforts with State and local authorities, according to the third-quarter report of activities.

FDA said the field is increasingly meeting with success in joining with State regulatory officials in agreements which provide for collection of samples by the States and analysis by FDA's District laboratories. Through this approach, the report noted, FDA coverage is expanded, the States are involved in substantive surveillance, and initial corrective steps are hastened. Among the major problems listed in the area of pesticides, the report pointed out that approximately half of the annual raisin crop in California is "suspect" due to residues from malathion-treated paper drying trays (See FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS, June 1, Page 23). FDA said samples representing approximately 100,000 tons of raisins are now being analyzed for appropriate action.

Meanwhile, Rep. Obey (D-Wisc.) last week congratulated Interior Secretary Hickel on his recently announced ban of the use of 16 pesticides on USDI land. (See FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS, June 22, Page 15), and he urged Agriculture Secretary Hardin to take the same action "at least as far as DDT is concerned."

Obey also revealed that he and 39 House colleagues had written a letter to President Nixon urging that DDT be suspended immediately.

"There is no single act which could better reverse past abuses and establish new criteria for the enhancement of our environment than a decision by you and the Secretary of Agriculture to delay no further an immediate end to the use of DDT in this country," Obey wrote for himself and 39 Congressmen, adding, "the decision is in your hands and we urge that you make it in favor of environmental protection." The Democrat from Wisconsin said that even USDA officials told Congress that pesticide control laws require tightening (See FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS, June 22, Page 7).

NEW WASHINGTON FOOD UNIT IS FORMED

A new Conference of Food Processor Associations has been formed in Washington to discuss informally the problems of legislative and regulatory matters involving these groups. The Conference, which has been meeting once every two or three weeks for the past several months, intends to exchange information and views, but will not take a position on any legislative or regulatory problem.

Under terms of their informal arrangements, the groups will just meet and exchange ideas but each will have to decide, act and speak only for themselves on matters of regulatory or legislative importance. Problems of dating of perishable foods and labeling have been among those discussed at early meetings.

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quotes

"In one instance, in the objections filed to our implementation of the NAS-NRC recommendations, there was submitted a list of more than 100 so-called scientific studies and reports purporting to show something regarding a particular drug. It took considerable time for our legal and scientific staffs to establish that this evidence was mostly irrelevant and obviously inadequate.

"Such a submission does a disservice to the Food and Drug Administration (even if we prevail), to you who are upholding professional standards, and to the public for whom we should all be spending our time more productively, and finally to the drug industry."

John Jennings, M.D., Assistant to the Commissioner for Medical Affairs, at the 93rd Annual Meeting of the American Bar Association, St. Louis, Missouri, August 12, 1970.

"The GRAS list has been the point of focus for concerns over food safety. The cyclamate incident of last October heightened this concern. In its wake, the President directed the Agency to review the entire list to be assured that consumer safety is being adequately protected. There will, no doubt, be a harder look at these food additives. There will, no doubt, be some deletions from the list. But the list is not a hiding ground for a variety of chemicals of unknowns or uncertain toxicity. It includes nutrients, such as ascorbic acid.

"What is needed right now is for the producers and the users of these substances to take a careful look at the evidence of safety on which they market or use the ingredients. Just as the evidence to support drug promotional claims is thin in many instances, the evidence to support GRAS status of several substances is likely to be equally thin at least in some instances. Industry ought to take the initiative here. But will it? Or will it wait to react to the processes of public examination of its practices?"

William W. Goodrich, Assistant General Counsel, Food, Drug, and Environmental Health Division, DHEW, at the 93rd Annual Meeting of the American Bar Association, St. Louis, Missouri, August 12, 1970.

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Section 705 [375] of the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act.

(a) The Secretary shall cause to be published from time to time reports summarizing all judgments, decrees, and court orders which have been rendered under this Act, including the nature of the charge and the disposition thereof.

(b) The Secretary may also cause to be disseminated information regarding food, drugs, devices, or cosmetics in situations involving, in the opinion of the Secretary, imminent danger to health, or gross deception of the consumer. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit the Secretary from collecting, reporting, and illustrating the results of the investigations of the Department.

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