By ABEL BANOV

FDA Cuts Lead Content to 0.06%

NEW YORK, March 16 — The Food and Drug Administration took the play away from the Senate last week and issued Title 21, Chapter I, Sub-chapter D, Part 19, dealing with hazardous substances. The FDA's ruling allows the industry until December 31, 1973, to limit the lead content of packaged paint to 0.06 per cent. The ruling, which literally sprung out of nowhere, came while a Senate committee, chaired by Senator Edward Kennedy, was holding hearings on a bill dealing with lead content limitations in paint as well as appropriations for detecting and removing accumulations of lead paint from old slum buildings.

The FDA acted only days after key members of its technical staff failed to endorse the poorly-based claim that a limit of 0.06 per cent was necessary. It appears entirely likely that the sudden shift was directed from elsewhere to take the public spotlight on the lead issue away from the Massachusetts Senator.

The question now that the FDA moved is how to cope with the extensive reformulation that will be necessary and the rigid, troublesome and costly testing that will be required to avoid violations of the rules. Elsewhere in this issue are presented the fruits of an extensive study of drier reformulation. One important detail in that study relates to a family of Schiff-base complexing agents developed in the early 1950's by Dr. Raymond Myers, head of the Paint Research Institute. These are likely candidates for overcoming the problems arising from the ban on lead driers, one of the results of the new rule. This material and others with various handicaps reduced the thrust of the problem, but time is needed for research and development, possibly a year or more if all goes well.

The industry needs to assemble its most imaginative brain power for an interplay of ideas so that froth can be stirred up on the road to creating substance.

— This Week's Developments —

Linseed Oil

NEW YORK, March 16 — Seasonal increases in demand for linseed oil house paint are reported.

The market, as far as sales to retailers are concerned, is expected to grow this year. Reports at the Eastern dealers this week are that heavy-bodied linseed oil demand is on the uptrend.

FOREIGN FLAXSEED — A downturn in per-acre production in Canada was reported recently.

This should mean further pressure on U.S. stocks later this year.

Dry Colors

NEW YORK, March 16 — The consensus of several paint manufacturers queried about the effects of the new limitations on lead content in packaged paints was that the consumer, if he wants yellow or green shades of the type once supplied through use of chrome yellow or green,

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