

● With this issue **FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS** starts its 26th year of publication ●

ASPARTAME-SWEETENED SOFT DRINKS will not be banned from sale in Arizona, the State's Health Services Director said last week. Don Mathis acknowledged that as little as 30 milliliters of methanol, produced when aspartame breaks down, can cause death, but said ingestion of that amount would require the "instantaneous consumption of approximately 1,200 12-ounce cans of soft drink totally sweetened with aspartame, an obvious physical impossibility." Aspartame's sale in Arizona had been challenged by Arizona State University's Dr. Woodrow Monte (See **FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS**, March 5, Page 31).

XYLAMATE carcinogenicity evaluation contract, which the FDA said it is negotiating with the National Academy of Sciences as "a noncompetitive procurement" for a period of 18 months, as published in the Feb. 27 issue of *Commerce Business Daily* (See **FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS**, Feb. 20, Page 2).

HEAVY DRINKERS who consumed 500 or more ounces a month (1.5 to 8 cans per day) had a three times greater chance of contracting cancer of the rectum than non-drinkers, according to researchers from the National Cancer Institute and the Kuakini Medical Center in Honolulu reporting in the March 8 issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine*. Whiskey or wine drinkers who consumed at least 50 ounces a week had twice as great a risk of developing lung cancer. No association between drinking and cancers of the stomach, colon, and prostate was found among 8,000 Japanese men in the Hawaiian study.

FDA-FINLAND Memo of Understanding scheduled to be signed last week by FDA's Bureau of Foods and Finland's Board of Customs will provide for inspection certification of Finnish exports destined for the U. S.

JOHN McCUTCHEON has been named Acting Deputy Administrator at USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service, filling the position vacated when Dr. Merlin Nelson retired recently (See **FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS**, March 5, Page 38). Bartie Woods, Director of Facilities, Equipment, and Sanitation, is filling McCutcheon's former post as Assistant Deputy Administrator on an acting basis, at least until the end of this week.

FDA ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER FOR SCIENCE new position was announced last week. The position will be filled after a personnel search is made. The new Office of Science, with a 9-person staff, is expected to upgrade the current Office of Science Coordination in the Office of the Commissioner. This office is headed by Dr. Allan H. Heim. The new Office is expected to advise the Commissioner on scientific issues, strengthen agency science by methods which will include fellowship and training programs, and represent FDA in other countries on scientific matters.

SMOKED FISH SAMPLES will be analyzed by FDA to determine whether Type E *Clostridium botulinum* spores are present in smoked fish processed at approximately 180° F for approximately 30 minutes. While conducting research, FDA's Bureau of Foods detected spores but no toxin in some samples. FDA has proposed revoking the Good Manufacturing Practice appendix for smoked fish (See **FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS**, Jan. 9, Page 42).

RODENT FILTH contaminated food samples have been requested from the field by FDA's Bureau of Foods for testing of a new method.

LOW-ACID canned food process evaluation Request for Proposal has been issued by FDA to continue work begun almost five years ago on checking the adequacy of sterilization processes submitted to the agency. The University of Minnesota has conducted the work on a contract due to expire Sept. 29, 1984. FDA-ers expect that it may take another three years to clean up the agency's files and become current with new process submissions.

MOST CANCERS are caused by environmental and lifestyle factors, rather than industrial chemicals and other synthetic substances, Edith Efron argues in a new book -- "The Apocalypitics: Politics, Science and the Big Cancer Lie" -- scheduled to be published this Spring by Simon and Schuster.

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