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Food and Nutrition Legislation

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The 101st Congress convened on January 3, 1989. Many food and nutrition bills have been introduced since then. Some of the legislation is described below.

Food Assistance

H.R. 81—Rep. Bob Carr (MI)

The Hunger Emergency Assistance and Relief Trust Act of 1989 would amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow individuals to direct part or all of their income tax refunds to a trust fund established for domestic and international hunger relief. The bill would also set up a commission to oversee distribution of the contributions.

Nutrition

H.R. 357—Rep. Robert Roe (NJ)

This bill would amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to include nutritional counseling, provided by or supervised by a registered dietitian, as a home health service.

H.R. 1608—Rep. E. (Kika) de la Garza (TX) and S. 253—Sen. Jeff Bingaman (NM)

These two bills are designed to improve national nutrition monitoring. H.R. 1608 would require the Secretaries of Agriculture and Health and Human Services to prepare and implement a 10-year plan to assess the dietary status of the U.S. population, support research on and development of nutrition monitoring, foster national nutrition education, and establish dietary guidelines. S. 253 would establish a research program, called the National Nutrition Monitoring and Related Research Program, and a comprehensive plan to assess the dietary status of the U.S. population and the nutritional quality of food consumed in this country.

Food Safety and Quality

H.R. 240—Rep. Joe Kolter (PA)

The bill would amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to require that manufacturers of foods making health or nutrition claims, foods for special dietary uses, and herbal foods maintain a toll-free telephone line for inquiries regarding the ingredients. H.R. 240 would also require the labels and advertising of these products to contain a reference to the hotline.

H.R. 514—Rep. Jim Cooper (TN)

The Fair Food Labeling and Advertising Act would require foods and drinks labeled "lite" or "light," or that make similar claims, to describe the product's fat, sodium, or calorie content on the label.

H.R. 1387—Rep. Byron Dorgan (ND)

The Mandatory Fish Inspection Act of 1989 would require USDA to establish a program to inspect commercial processing of freshwater and saltwater fish, shellfish, and their products used for human consumption. The program would be similar to existing meat and poultry inspection systems.

H.R. 1441—Rep. Dan Glickman (KS) and S. 623—Sen. Tom Harkin (IA)

The Low Cholesterol Consumer Education Act would require the Secretary of

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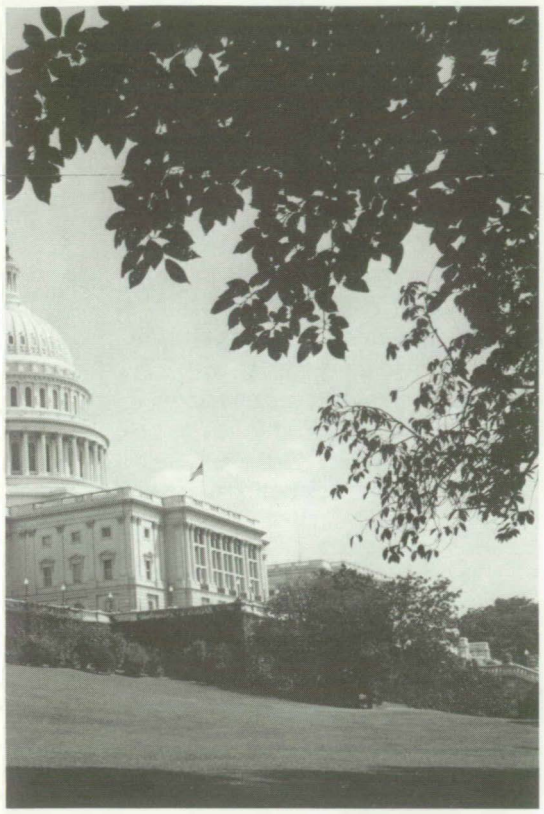

Health and Human Services to establish labeling requirements for foods containing vegetable oils. The purpose of such labeling would be to provide consumers with an awareness of the cholesterol content of each oil used.

H.R. 1508—Rep. Gerry Sikorski (MN)

The bill would require the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to end use of daminozide on fruits and vegetables.

H.R. 1684—Rep. William Dannemeyer (CA)

The Foods Are Not Drugs Act of 1989 would amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act. The bill would change the classification of foods used for special dietary purposes or for preventing or treating dietary deficiencies so that they would not be considered drugs.

S. 722—Sen. Edward Kennedy (MA) and H.R. 1725—Rep. Henry Waxman (CA)

The Food Safety Amendments of 1989 would amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to regulate pesticide residues in food. The bill would require EPA to establish residue tolerances for different population groups, such as infants and children.

Other

H.R. 84—Rep. Charles Bennett (FL)

The Veal Calf Protection Act would require the Secretary of Agriculture to set standards for the nutrient content of feed given calves to ensure a sufficient amount of nutritious ingredients and iron to maintain good health. The Secretary would have the option of offering training and educational programs to those engaged in raising and selling calves.

H.R. 586—Rep. Paul Henry (MI)

The Beverage Container Reuse and Recycling Act would require carbonated beverage containers to be recycled. Consumers would have to pay a deposit of at least 5 cents, which would be refunded upon return of the container. The beverage labels would be required to mention that such a program was in operation. Also, detachable parts on metal beverage containers would not be allowed. These regulations would supersede any State laws already in place.

H.R. 607—Rep. Neal Smith (IA)

The Small Business Preservation and Protection Act of 1989 would limit the activities of large meatpacking businesses by:

- Preventing them from operating retail meat outlets in the United States.
- Limiting their total slaughter.
- Prohibiting them from charging different prices for their meat products in the same marketing area.
- Forbidding them from selling any meat product below cost.

The bill would also forbid the officers responsible for filing the firms' annual reports to own or enter into any future livestock transaction or engage in any livestock futures contract activity or transaction, other than a bona fide hedge transaction. Violators would be subject to a fine of up to $500,000. ■