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USDA Actions

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USDA regularly implements operational and regulatory changes that affect the status of food and nutrition in the United States. Here are some relevant actions.

Standards for Canned Pineapple Juice.

USDA revised its standards for voluntary grading of canned pineapple juice. The revisions are designed to improve the standards and encourage uniform and consistent commercial trade practices. They were recommended by the Pineapple Growers' Association of Hawaii and will align U.S. grade standards with Food and Drug Administration (FDA) standards. The word "canned" or "canning" is eliminated and "processing" is substituted where appropriate. The revisions also redesignate the name U.S. Grade C to U.S. Grade B, establish grade standards and minimum soluble solids content for pineapple juice from concentrate, and clarify the standards for pineapple juice and pineapple juice from concentrate.

Sharwil Avocados. USDA now allows Sharwil avocados to move from Hawaii to Alaska without special treatments to destroy fruit flies and pests, providing the avocados are harvested and handled under specified conditions. The untreated avocados, however, will be distributed only in Alaska. USDA exempted avocados destined for Alaska from treatment because Mediterranean fruit flies, Oriental fruit flies, and melon flies, cannot live in Alaska's extreme cold and because host fruits are not grown there.

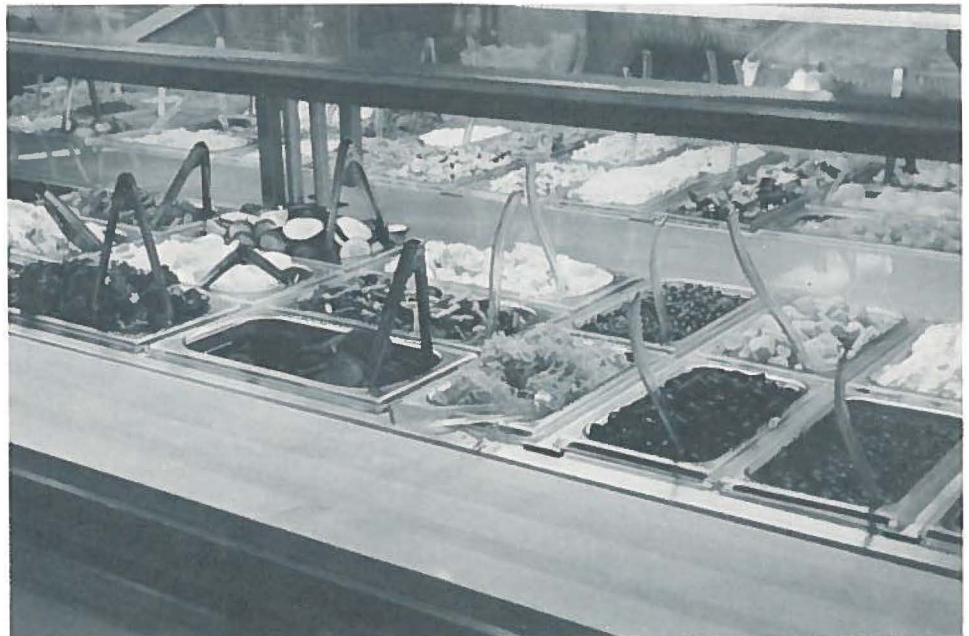
Cherries Purchased. USDA purchased 21.2 million pounds of frozen red tart pitted cherries to use in school lunch and other

domestic feeding programs. This purchase will help reduce the large reserves held by cherry growers while making cherries available to schools and other program recipients throughout 1988. The purchase of frozen tart cherries was made before the marketing order was terminated April 30.

Fruit and Vegetable Research. USDA has earmarked about \$2 million to research alternatives in preserving quality in salad bar fruits and vegetables. Fruits and vegetables begin to soften and brown shortly after they are cut, cored, or sliced. Scientists are exploring the inside makeup of these foods to find the cause of spoilage and develop techniques to slow it down. Sulfites, which had been used to prevent softening and browning were banned by the FDA in July because of their tendency to produce allergic reactions.

Retail Sales Exemption for Meat and Poultry Products. USDA increased the dollars limits that meat and poultry retailers can sell to hotels, restaurants, and similar institutions without undergoing Federal inspection. Such retailers are exempt from Federal inspection if they sell less than the annual limit set by USDA. Meat and poultry sales by these retailers to institutions must not exceed 25 percent of the firm's total annual sales.

Notification Process for Violations of Meat Inspection Act. USDA issued an interim rule which requires suspected Federal Meat Inspection Act violators to be notified when evidence is being transferred to the Department of Justice for possible criminal prosecution. The Processed Products Inspection Improvements Act of 1986 requires that suspected violators be notified and given an



USDA research will explore new ways of preserving freshness in salad bar fruits and vegetables.

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opportunity to present their case before the evidence is referred to the Justice Department. The Act, however, also allows USDA certain exemptions from the prior notice requirement. These include instances when:

- evidence might be altered or destroyed.
- disclosing evidence could result in injury to persons or property.
- there is reason to believe the suspected violator might flee to avoid prosecution.
- notification might compromise covert operations.
- the suspected violation involves suspicion of bribery and related offenses or clandestine slaughtering or processing operations.
- suspected violation of the meat inspection laws is part of a broader investigation involving other possible violators.

Sulfite Labeling on Meat and Poultry Products. USDA now requires meat and poultry processors to list sulfiting agents on product labels when the products contain confirmable levels of sulfur dioxide, sodium sulfite, sodium bisulfite, potassium bisulfite, sodium metabisulfite, or potassium metabisulfite. The substances are used to preserve foods, such as potatoes and other

ingredients, that may be added to processed meat and poultry products. The USDA policy, same as that of the FDA, requires sulfite labeling when products contain 10 parts-per-million or more of the preservative. The FDA approves ingredients for foods other than meat and poultry. Sulfites, which are prohibited in fresh meat and

poultry products, can be present in stews and other processed meat or poultry products.

Food Consumption Survey. In April, USDA began a 1-year nationwide survey of food consumption by Americans. The survey, the seventh evaluating food

Table 1. Targeted Export Promotion Industries

Participant	Commodities	Million dollars
Alaskan Seafood Marketing Institute	Salmon, pollack, and herring	1.50
American Plywood Association/ Hardwood Export Trade Council	Structural panel and lumber products, decorative hardwoods	1.98
American Seed Trade Association	Seeds for planting (forage, turf, field, and vegetable)	0.35
California Avocado Commission	Avocados	0.42
California Cling Peach Advisory Board	Processed cling peaches and fruit cocktail	5.60
California Kiwifruit Commission	Kiwifruit	0.50
California Pistachio Commission	Pistachios, shelled and in shell	0.20
California Prune Board	Prunes	4.50
California Raisin Advisory Board	Raisins	9.80
California Table Grape Commission	Table grapes	0.45
Cotton Council International	Cotton	6.80
Eastern U.S. Agricultural and Food Export Council	High-valued foods	1.00
Export Incentive Program (by application) ¹	Almonds	4.18
Export Incentive Program (by application) ¹	California and Arizona citrus	10.50
Florida Department of Citrus	Florida fresh and processed citrus (primarily fresh grapefruit)	7.00
Leather Industries of America	Leather (sheetgoods)	1.50

consumption in the U.S., is conducted at approximately 10-year intervals and gathers information on households and individual household members. It is the nation's primary source of information on the consumption of foods and nutrients and the dietary status of the U.S. population. The survey will focus on what households pay

for food and when, where, and with whom household members eat. Data from earlier surveys have been the principle statistical sources for evaluating and developing national food and nutrition policies.

New Export Program for Dairy Products. USDA is implementing a new export incen-

tive program to promote U.S. dairy products. The program will help promote exports of U.S. dairy products to 37 selected destinations. The products eligible are butter, butter oil, anhydrous milkfat, nonfat dry milk, whole milk powder, cheddar cheese, and bulk American cheese for manufacturing.

Targeted Export Assistance. USDA has allocated \$110 million in Target Export Assistance to fund 36 projects in fiscal year 1987 (table 1). The projects covered a wide range of U.S. agricultural commodities. The commodities were selected from proposals submitted by industry representatives. To be chosen, commodities had to have been the target of unfair trade practices that limited their exports. The ongoing program is jointly administered by USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service and industry representatives.

Egg Research and Promotion Program. USDA conducted a national referendum among egg producers between May 25 and June 19 on an advertising, research, and consumer education program for eggs and spent fowl (chickens no longer producing eggs and sold to food processing companies). The results which were released July 10, show that 57 percent of the 1,106 producers who voted turned the program down. The referendum was held as the result of public hearings across the United States between January and March 1986, and other comments received on the published proposal. □

Table 1. Targeted Export Promotion Industries, Cont.

Participant	Commodities	Million dollars
Mid-America International Agri-Trade Council	High-valued foods	1.20
National Hay Association	Hay and hay products	0.30
National Peanut Council	Peanuts and peanut products	4.50
National Potato Promotion Board	Potatoes	2.55
National Sunflower Association	Sunflowerseed and products	3.00
Northwest Horticultural Council	Fresh pears	0.40
	Fresh apples	1.50
	Fresh cherries	0.12
Southern U.S. Trade Association	High-valued foods	0.80
Tobacco Associates	Tobacco leaf	0.90
U.S. Dry Pea and Lentil Council	Dry peas and lentils	2.50
U.S. Feed Grains Council	Corn, sorghum, and barley	2.80
U.S. Meat Export Federation	Red meats, variety meats, and meat products	7.00
U.S. Mink Industry	Mink furskins (pelts)	1.50
U.S. Poultry and Egg Export Council	Poultry, eggs, and products	6.50
U.S. Rice Council	Rice	3.50
U.S. Wheat Associates	Wheat	3.10
Walnut Marketing Board	Walnuts	7.00
Western U.S. Agricultural Trade Association	High-valued foods	1.95
Wine Institute	Wine (California)	2.60

¹Grant awarded to a specific firm (occurred in cases where an industry did not submit a proposal, but the individual firm did).