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## Food and Nutrition Actions by USDA

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

### Nutrition

- The Joint Nutrition Monitoring Evaluation Committee sponsored by USDA and the Department of Health and Human Services will report to Congress in November on the importance of monitoring the nutritional status of Americans. The report will cover nutrients and food substances no longer seriously deficient in our national diet, including protein, thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, iodine, and ascorbic acid, and those of current concern, such as calories, fat, calcium, iron, and vitamin A, vitamin D, sodium, potassium, fluoride, zinc, vitamin B<sub>6</sub>, folacin, fiber, sugar, and alcohol. The report will include information about the determinants of nutritional status, health-related nutrition problems, such as obesity, and make recommendations for the National Nutrition Monitoring System and for research.

### Food Safety

- USDA is proposing a new slaughter inspection system for broilers and cornish hens. Called New Line Speed (NELS), it could increase the number of birds inspected per minute from 70 to 91 where conditions and facilities permit.
- USDA has revised its policy on packaging materials used in federally inspected meat and poultry plants. Beginning July 17, 1984, plants must secure guarantees from suppliers showing that

each type of wrapper or container used for meat and poultry products complies with the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act.

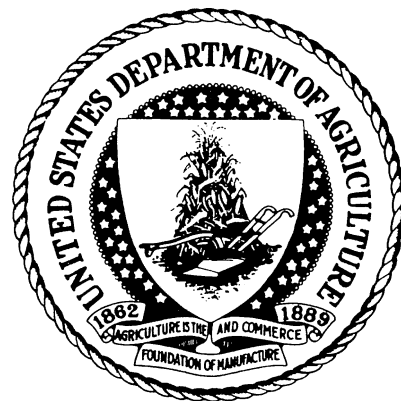
- On January 16, the United States declared Denmark officially free of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD). This will allow Denmark to ship fresh and frozen meat products to the United States that are certified as originating only from USDA-approved plants which handle only meats of Danish origin. USDA will continue to impose certain restrictions on meat from other sources in Denmark because that country has a common border with the Federal Republic of Germany which is not recognized as FMD-free.

- Effective February 29, 1984, USDA no longer permits kidneys from mature chickens and turkeys to be used in human food. Kidneys from mature poultry have been found to have high concentrations of the heavy metal cadmium. Young poultry are not affected.

### Food Assistance

- On January 13, USDA announced it would begin efforts to help stabilize cattle prices by buying canned beef to donate to soup kitchens and other charities. This is in response to provisions of the Dairy and Tobacco Adjustment Act of 1983 which require the Secretary of Agriculture to do all he can to help mitigate the price-depressing effect of increased slaughter of dairy cattle associated with provisions of the law which mandate reduced milk production.

- USDA has signed an agreement with the U.S. Secret Service, defining the responsibilities of the agencies in con-



ducting criminal investigations of Food Stamp Program violations. USDA's Office of the Inspector General will concentrate on persons who administer or benefit from the program, such as Federal or State employees, grocers, and food stamp recipients. The Secret Service will focus on outside criminal elements, such as food stamp thieves or counterfeiters, and persons suspected of trafficking in food stamps.

### International Food Assistance

- In January, USDA released its revised country and commodity allocations for fiscal year 1984 under titles I and III of Public Law 480, the Food for Peace Program. Current program plans provide for distribution of \$791 million in commodity shipments. Of this amount, \$738.5 million is presently allocated and \$52.5 million is being held in a reserve to furnish commodities for unforeseen needs during the remainder of the fiscal year. □