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January, 2002

Dr. Bernard Schwetz
U.S. Food and Drug Administration
14-71 Parklawn Building
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20857
e-mail: bschwetz@oc.fda.gov

Dear Dr. Schwetz:

I am writing to express my concern about the Food and Drug Administration's ongoing evaluation of the labeling requirements for irradiated foods.

As you know, the FDA published an advanced notice for rulemaking and opened a docket on this issue in 1999 (Docket No. 98N-1038). The noticed called for the consideration of alternative labeling language such as "cold pasteurized" and "electronically pasteurized." The agency received nearly 20,000 comments on this issue, and according to the FDA's own tabulations, over 95% of the commenters rejected changing the current labeling requirements for irradiated foods.

But the FDA did not stop there. The agency impaneled focus groups of consumers this past summer in suburban Washington, DC; Sacramento, California; and Minneapolis, Minnesota. According to published reports, consumers in all three locations unanimously rejected the use of such terms as "cold pasteurization" and "electronic pasteurization" as substitutes for "irradiation."

I understand that the Congress has now instructed the agency to report how it intends to use those focus group results in any final rulemaking it conducts on food irradiation labeling.

What more does the FDA need? It seems that time, effort and resources are being squandered on an issue that should have been settled two years ago.

Therefore, I am requesting that the FDA maintains the current labeling requirements for irradiated foods, and rejects any attempts to use deceptive terms, such as "cold pasteurization" and "electronic pasteurization" as substitutes.

Sincerely,

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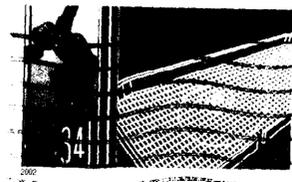
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It would also be nice to do more about glutamate, a potentially toxic neurotransmitter.

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