



**NATIONAL  
FISHERIES  
INSTITUTE**

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August 18, 2000

Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305)  
FDA, Room #1061  
5630 Fishers Lane  
Rockville, MD 20852

RE: Docket No. 00N-1351  
Food Labeling; Use of the Term "Fresh" for Foods Processed With Alternative  
Nonthermal Technologies

Dear Sirs or Madams:

The National Fisheries Institute appreciates the opportunity to comment on the use of the term "fresh" on the labeling of foods processed with nonthermal technologies. The National Fisheries Institute (NFI) is the nation's largest non-profit trade association representing the diverse fish and seafood industry. In addition to fishing and aquaculture companies, NFI members include processors, wholesalers, distributors, retailers, foodservice operators, brokers, importers & exporters, academic institutions and members of allied support industries. The NFI acts to ensure an ample, sustainable, and safe seafood supply for consumers.

The NFI believes the term fresh unqualified generally implies no appreciable change in organoleptic characteristics of the food has occurred due to the processing it has undergone. We agree with the FDA in its determination that the use of waxes or coatings, post-harvest washings or irradiation at low levels should not preclude food from carrying the "fresh" label. The same allowance should also be extended to new and emerging technologies.

The NFI believes that food products processed with new and emerging technologies that produce minimal thermal effects should be able to use the "fresh" label. Several of these technologies enhance the microbial safety of food products and/or provide added value or convenience to the consuming public. Label restrictions should not be placed on food processed by technologies that provide these benefits. Restrictions on the use of the term fresh could constrict the proliferation of foods that have been processed to eliminate or reduce pathogens.

High-pressure/ultra high-pressure (uhp) processing, pulsed light and pulsed electric field, among other emerging technologies, are non-thermal or produce only a negligible amount

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of heat during processing. Therefore, the food processed by these technologies is not preserved.

In closing, the use of the term "fresh" on the label of food products processed by the aforementioned technologies is acceptable and can be placed on labels without misleading consumers.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely

Robert Collette  
V.P. of Science and Technology

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