March 18, 2000

Mr. Steven A. Burd
President and CEO
Safeway, Inc.
5918 Stoneridge Mall Road
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Sir:

This is in response to your letter dated March 3, 2000. Your statement that many consumers now view irradiation of meat more favorably is absolutely false. Most people dread the insane use of irradiation when all that is necessary is to cook the meat thoroughly.

I am sure you have no idea what the irradiation process entails and the negative side effects created by this process. For your information, this process exposes food to radiation materials like cesium-137 and cobalt 60 which leads to the formation of toxic substances in foods, including benzene and formaldehyde.

A study conducted by Ralston Scientific Services for the U.S. Army and the USDA found that mice fed a diet of irradiated chicken had a higher incidence of tumors and died earlier.

Furthermore, foods that have been irradiated lose much of their nutritional value. For instance, the vitamin C content of potatoes was reduced by as much as 50 percent, according to a Japanese study. Also, irradiation plants pose hazards to workers as well as the community where they are located.

You stated in your letter that the FDA has developed labeling requirements for irradiated foods, but that is not entirely true. For example, commercially prepared foods may contain irradiated ingredients but they don't have to carry warnings.

I think it is unconscionable for the Food Industry and for the FDA to use this dreadful process for the sake of profit while ignoring all the negative aspects of it.

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Juana Larcelen

cc: Dr. Jane Henney, FDA

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