

Appendix I
Letters of Support



BETH ISRAEL DEACONESS
MEDICAL CENTER

A member of CAREGROUP



A major teaching hospital
of Harvard Medical School

**George L.
Blackburn, M.D.,
Ph.D.**

May 2, 2000

**Harvard Medical
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Office of Food Labeling (HFS-465)
Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition
Food and Drug Administration
200 C Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20204

To the Food and Drug Administration:

I have been asked by Tropicana to provide comments on my views on the Company's petition for a health claim for potassium and the effects on blood pressure and the risk of stroke.

In my opinion, the association between increased potassium intake and reduced blood pressure and thus the reduced risk of stroke is well established. The data supporting this conclusion come from a wide variety of studies including epidemiological research, double blind placebo-controlled trials and animal basic science experiments. This conclusion was clearly stated by the National Research Council in their Report on *Diet and Health*

Given so few individuals actually consume the recommended level of potassium (3,500 mg/day) and given the data supporting a significant scientific agreement on the relationship of increased potassium to decreased blood pressure and reduced risk of stroke it is imperative that Americans be given this information in a way that they can take action. Allowing low sodium food products that are a significant source of potassium to communicate this relationship could have a significant impact on public health.

Having some appreciation for the Food and Drug Administration Modernization Act and subsequent actions by FDA to implement this Act, I believe this claim is exactly of the type envisioned by Congress to provide important information to consumers that could impact their health.

Sincerely,

George L. Blackburn, MD, Ph.D.

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June 21, 2000

Office of Food Labeling (HFS-465)
Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition
Food and Drug Administration
200 C Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20204

To the Food and Drug Administration

I am writing in support of the notification submitted by Tropicana for a health claim showing the relationship between potassium intake, and its effect on reducing blood pressure, thus potentially reducing the incidence of stroke.

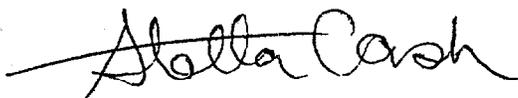
I am currently Program Director of the Didactic Program in Dietetics in the Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition at Michigan State University. As a Registered Dietitian with over thirty years experience in the field, I have held various leadership positions in both state and national dietetic organizations. Currently working as an educator, I have contact with many people from various socio-cultural backgrounds, levels of education, and varying ranges of age. Since stroke is prevalent in the African American population and among senior citizens, it is critical that the public be informed of the potential reduction of stroke risks as a result of high potassium intake. This information would serve as an excellent preventive health message for many Americans.

The science has long been reported supporting Tropicana's notification. Given very few foods provide potassium content information in the Nutrition Facts panel, hopefully this claim will provide incentive for more food manufacturers to provide this valuable nutrition information on their products.

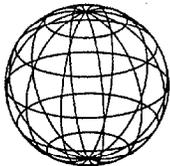
Finally, the petition appears to meet the requirements of the recently passed Food and Drug Administration Modernization Act which is intended to expedite the process by which the scientific basis for certain health claims is established. After 120 days after filing the notification, it then becomes the responsibility of food companies, commodity groups, public health, and dietitians to provide the American public with accurate information regarding the consumption of foods rich in potassium as a means of potentially reducing the risk of stroke.

Thank you for considering these comments.

Sincerely,



Stella Cash, MEd, MS, RD
Program Director of Dietetics
Senior Academic Specialist



DEPARTMENT OF
**FOOD SCIENCE AND
HUMAN NUTRITION**

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DEPARTMENT OF
FOODS AND NUTRITION

April 20, 2000

Office of Food Labeling (HFA-465)
Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition
200 C Street, SW
Washington, DC 20204

Dear Committee:

This letter supports a health claim for a diet rich in potassium-containing foods to be part of a healthy lifestyle and to promote maintenance of lower blood pressure. The DASH study (Appel et al. N. Engl. J. Med., 1997; 336:1117-24) recently showed the blood pressure lowering benefits of a diet rich in fruits and vegetables and low fat dairy products. It is widely held that dietary intake of cations of many Americans is not optimal in that potassium, calcium, and magnesium intakes are low while sodium intake is excessive. If the public is aware of a potassium rich food, it is usually bananas. Food labels that educate the public on potassium would serve a valuable educational role.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Connie M. Weaver".

Connie M. Weaver, Ph.D.
Professor and Department Head

CMW:deh