

22

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June 13, 2001

Mr. Joseph A. Levitt, Director
Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition
Food and Drug Administration
200 C St., S.W.
Washington, DC 20204

Dear Mr. Levitt:

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) published a final rule on December 5, 2000 requiring refrigeration and a safe handling statement for egg shells. I support FDA's action to protect consumers.

Separately, there is the issue of placement of the "safe handling" statement. As you may be aware, the National Egg Regulatory Officials (NERO) association, which oversees egg safety laws in the United States, has written encouraging FDA to allow "including the (safe handling) instruction on the inside lid of the carton." They further suggest that if this option is chosen, "there should continue to be a refrigeration statement prominently displayed on the principal display or information panel."

Representatives of the egg and egg carton industry report that flexibility of placement of the "safe handling" statement on the in-lid of the egg carton or on the top or sides would result in saving millions of dollars of new printing and related costs and thereby, likely contribute to long-term cost savings for consumers.

As you prepare for a final determination on placement of the "safe handling" statement, I trust the FDA will continue its procedure of including input from the variety of sectors affected by an agency decision.

Sincerely,



Richard G. Lugar
Ranking Minority Member

RGL/kl