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FDA Takes Steps to Reduce Trans Fat in Processed Foods



Food and Drug Administration's final determination that partially hydrogenated oils (PHOs) are not generally recognized as safe.

The finding is based on research into the effects of PHOs as well as input from stakeholders during a public comment period.

PHOs are the primary dietary source of artificial trans fat in processed foods. Removing them from processed foods could prevent thousands of heart attacks and deaths each year, according to the FDA.

Implementation

The FDA has set a compliance period of three years. This will allow food companies to either reformulate products and/or petition the FDA to permit specific uses of PHOs. Many companies have already been working to remove PHOs from processed foods.

It's important to note that trans fat will not be completely gone from foods because it

Food companies will need to make changes following the

occurs naturally in small amounts in meat and dairy products, and is present at very low levels in other edible oils.

The FDA encourages consumers seeking to reduce trans fat intake to check a food's ingredient list to determine whether it contains partially hydrogenated oil.

Background

In January 2006, the FDA required the food industry to declare the amount of trans fat in food on the nutrition facts label. FDA data indicate that many processed foods have been reformulated to reduce the amount of trans fat since the



requirement was instituted, but a substantial number of products still contain PHOs.

In November 2013, the FDA made a preliminary

determination that PHOs are not generally recognized as safe for use in food.

About trans fat

There are two sources of trans fat, also known as trans fatty acids:

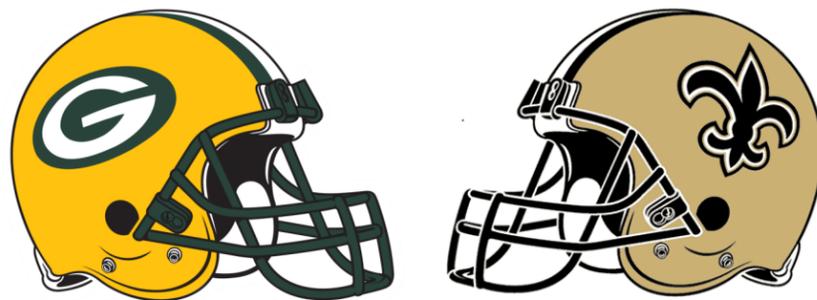
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- Wisconsin Cheese Makers
- Zoetis

Activists Attempt to Derail Federal GMO Labeling Bill



John Holevoet
Director of Government Affairs

The recently revised Safe and Accurate Food Labeling Act is coming under increasing fire from proponents of GMO labeling. Kansas Republican Mike Pompeo introduced a modified version of the bill this spring with support from 12 Republican and eight Democratic co-sponsors. The measure would create a federal standard for voluntary GMO labeling and preempts state and local governments for trying to enforce additional contradictory rules.

The bill's strong bipartisan backing has given it momentum and its prospects of passage in the House of Representative are decent. This comes after years of debate about whether and how Congress should address questions surrounding GMO labeling. The bill's positive forward movement has caused food activists to

mobilize heavily against it.

The bill would provide protection against a patchwork of conflicting standards that would arise if states were allowed to continue to pass laws regarding GMO labeling. It would also prevent the absurd result of requiring practically all of our food from having to be labeled. Industry estimates are that 70 to 80 percent of food we eat would have to be labeled, despite the complete lack of evidence that GMO food is in any way harmful. This type of labeling has previously been used to denote an exception, not to recognize the norm.



Pompeo's bill was just discussed at its first committee hearing. Even with a good chance of passing the House, it faces an uncertain future in the more Senate. Then, the bill could face Obama's veto pen. The president has made very few public statements about GMO food, so it is hard to know how he would come down on the legislation should it reach his desk.

Senate Clears Trade Bill

House Republicans have found a way to revive President Obama's trade bill after a majority of House members of his own party shot down legislation in a now failed attempt to block the passage of the trade package on June 12th. House leadership elected to separate the bills on June 18th which the House voted to send both the bills back to the Senate in an effort to individually pass the bills onto the President.

The chamber originally passed the fast-track trade negotiating authority (TPA) but the worker assistance bill (TAA) was defeated on the June 12th vote in efforts to block the passage of the entire trade package. The two bills were previously linked together, requiring both bills to be passed before being sent to the President, in a strategy to garnish support for the TPA from the House Democrats.

A Senate cloture vote on June 23rd passed the TPA with the required 60 votes and the following day the bill received the same number of votes to send the TPA to the President. Leaders in both chambers assure that now after the passage of the TPA, votes to move the TAA, which offers a safety net to those who lose their jobs following trade expansion, will come soon.

The Democratic Caucus, which has built up a strong opposition to the TPA, have now signaled support for the TAA, which has been a long held Democratic priority, in both chambers as House Democrats can't use the TAA to hold up the TPA as they did on the June 12th vote.

The TPA would give the President authority to negotiate final trade agreements and send the agreements to the legislature which could only vote passage without having the authority to amend or filibuster the agreement. The TPA is crucial to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations joining 12 countries with a broad trade agreement.

Reduce Trans Fat in Processed Foods, con't

(Continued from page 1)

- Trans fat formed naturally is produced in the gut of some grazing animals. That's why small quantities can be found in animal products like meat and milk products.
- Trans fat formed during food processing is created when hydrogen is added to vegetable oil (a process called hydrogenation) to make it more solid. PHOs are used by food manufacturers to improve the texture, shelf life and flavor stability of foods. About half of the trans fat Americans consume is formed during food processing and PHOs are the main source of this type of trans fat in the U.S.

Eating trans fat raises the level of low-density lipoprotein (LDL or "bad") cholesterol in the blood. An elevated LDL blood cholesterol level can increase the risk of developing cardiovascular disease. Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in both men and women in the U.S.

Fats in your diet

Limiting trans fats is one component of a healthful diet that also includes limiting saturated fat and dietary cholesterol.

Dietary fats are found in both plant and animal foods. Fat is a major source of energy for the body and aids in the absorption of vitamins A, D, E and K. Fat is also important for proper growth, development and maintenance of good health.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans notes that adults should consume no more than approximately one third of their calories from fat to reduce their risk of developing chronic diseases, such as cardiovascular disease, while providing for adequate intake of essential nutrients.

Infants and toddlers up to two years old have the highest energy needs per unit of body weight of any age group. Fats are an important source of calories and nutrients for these youngsters.

As a food ingredient, fat provides flavor, consistency and stability — and helps you feel full.

Russia Extends Import Embargo On Dairy, Other Foods

Russia has extended its embargo on food imports, including milk and dairy products, by a year until August 2016.

The food ban also includes beef, pork, fish, cheese, vegetables and fruit from the European Union, United States, Canada, Norway and Australia.

The move came after EU foreign ministers agreed to continue economic sanctions against Russia to January 2016 to ensure it fully implements Ukraine peace accords.

The extension by Russia remains a countermeasure dictated by economic motives, not political ones, said Dmitry Medvedev, the country's prime minister.

Officials previously said the sanctions had proved a boon for Russian domestic industries, but agricultural producers said they needed the ban to be in place for a long time for them to benefit from it.

Russia's agriculture minister suggested that the ban may be expanded to include flowers, confectionery and canned fish, saying his ministry was putting together a proposal to that effect.

Efforts by Russia and the European Union are key to putting an end to the so-called "sanction war," Medvedev said. However, so far there are no significant efforts from the West, he added.

Earlier, the EU also extended sanctions against Crimea for another year.

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