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Minneapolis, MN 55408
May 4, 2001

Bernard A. Schwetz, D.V.M., Ph.D.
Acting Principal Deputy Commissioner
U.S. Food and Drug Administration
Dockets Management Branch
5600 Fisher Lane
Rockville, MD 2857

Dear Dr. Schwetz:

As an industry option, irradiation may be a means of cold pasteurization. However, as a consumer option, irradiation is irradiation. Food labels need to state clearly if a product, or any ingredient, has been irradiated.

Personally, I have yet to decide if I would buy irradiated food. I have bought unpasteurized food, but I do not do so regularly because of the increased health risks. Even pasteurized products, if industrial error occurs, can cause illness or death in high-risk individuals. These risks are well known and identified. Unlike foods pasteurized with heat or left unpasteurized, we have yet to know well the consequences of irradiation.

Individuals know best their own dietary needs. I will read labels and have not selected food products for a variety of reasons. There are times, however, when I have to rush through a grocery store or deli. When that happens, I will glance at labels, but not think about what I see. I know that I easily could see "pasteurized" on a label and miss the "cold" part. It would be harder to miss "irradiated."

"Cold pasteurization" on a food label may be technically correct. However, food labels are for consumers, not for executives of food-related companies.

Yours truly,



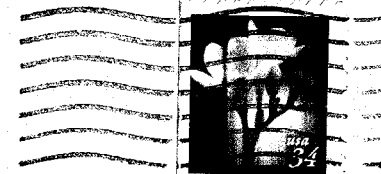
M. Rosalie Field

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