



ALMONDS
BRAZILS
CASHEWS
HAZELNUTS
MACADAMIAS
PECANS
PINE NUTS
PISTACHIOS
WALNUTS

January 24, 2003

Kathleen C. Ellwood, Ph.D.
Acting Director
Division of Nutrition Science and Policy
Office of Nutritional Products, Labeling
and Dietary Supplements
Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition
Food and Drug Administration
5100 Paint Branch Parkway
College Park, MD 20749

REFERENCE: Docket 02P-0505


Dear Dr. Ellwood:

The International Tree Nut Council Nutrition Research & Education Foundation (INC NREF) has carefully reviewed FDA's recent Guidance for Industry entitled, "Qualified Health Claims in the Labeling of Conventional Foods and Dietary Supplements." We applaud the agency for providing additional flexibility in the communication of emerging information on health and nutrition, and believe that the new guidelines will promote the dissemination of information that will help consumers make informed dietary choices.

However, INC NREF continues to believe that the totality of scientific data on the ability of nuts, as a group, to reduce the risk of coronary heart disease (CHD) fully meets the Significant Scientific Agreement standard for health claims, and we do not believe a qualified claim in this area is necessary or appropriate. The epidemiologic and clinical evidence supporting the cardioprotective properties of nuts is exceptionally consistent and compelling, and a qualified claim would disparage these data. INC strongly recommends that FDA move swiftly to issue an interim final rule as requested by our petition entitled, "Authorization of a Health Claim for Nuts and Coronary Heart Disease," that was filed with your office on August 28, 2002.

Your assistance in this matter is sincerely appreciated, and we look forward to working with your office to finalize authorization of this important new health claim.

Sincerely,


Doug Youngdahl
Chair

INC Nutrition Research & Education Foundation

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