

May 29, 2002

Mr. John Morrall
Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs
Office of Management and Budget
NEOB, Room 10235
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20503

Dear Mr. Morrall:

On behalf of our 800,000 members, I write (in response to your March 28 Federal Register Notice) to urge that the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs “prompt” the Food Safety and Inspection Service (“FSIS”) of the United States Department of Agriculture to issue a final rule on nutrition labeling of ground or chopped meat and poultry products (Docket Number 98-005P). The FSIS published the proposed rule in January 2001, and the comment period closed August 17, 2001.

In January 1993, the Food and Drug Administration issued final regulations for nutrition labeling of packaged foods, and at the same time the FSIS issued parallel regulations for processed meat and poultry. The absence of similar labeling requirements for fresh meat and poultry means there is a major gap in the Federal government’s nutrition labeling regulations.

There are important public health reasons for providing consumers greater nutrition information about specific types of fresh meat and poultry. Meat and poultry are major sources of fat, saturated fat, and calories in the American diet. Diets high in saturated fat increase the risk of coronary heart disease, which kills more Americans than any other disease. Diets rich in red meat also may raise the risk of prostate and colorectal cancer. Excess calories cause obesity, which raises the risk of diabetes, heart disease, stroke and other illnesses.

In January 2001 the FSIS estimated the benefits of the proposed rule at \$918 million and the costs as ranging from \$660 million to \$927 million (using a seven percent discount rate over 20 years).

We would, of course, be happy to give you addition information about this important public health matter.

Sincerely,



Margo G. Wootan, D.Sc.
Director, Nutrition Policy



Suite 300
1875 Connecticut Ave., N.W.
202-777-5728

Michael F. Jacobson, Ph.D.
Executive Director

11-0-8

7/11/2002 332-9110