



*Sfpa*

# FOOD FORUM

SOUTHEASTERN FOOD PROCESSORS ASSOCIATION

JUNE 2007

<http://www.sfpa-food.org>

Lisa Gordon - 919-515-2956

## SFPA 33rd Annual Conference Hilton Head Island November 8 - 11, 2007



It's never too early to get your reservations into **Sea Pines Resort in Hilton Head** for the annual meeting. Your Board of Directors has been working diligently to

bring you an excellent program in an outstanding location. **Once again, we cannot over emphasize the importance of making your reservations early.** Our block of rooms will only be held at the rate of \$144.00 until September 21. This will be a great place to bring your spouse and to reunite with old friends and colleagues. To book your room contact, **Catherine Burrison at 888-607-2966 or 843-842-1870** and ask for the SFPA rate of \$144.00 per night. With your early reservation you will help secure this wonderful location exclusively for our organization.

### President's Message

This is the time of year that many of us attend a grade school, high school or college graduation. Graduates are often asked to reflect on their successes and failures. They are reminded that as they close this chapter of their lives, a new one awaits that offers new challenges and choices.

Every year the food industry also opens a new chapter that brings fresh challenges. We have seen our most significant trials since 9/11. Some examples have been developing new programs and procedures for our companies for government and industry audits, and dealing with major national recalls in both fresh and processed foods. This year's challenges appear to be ethanol production and droughts in many parts of the

country. Both are driving up material costs in the food industry and putting open acreage at a premium.

The SFPA, in its 33<sup>rd</sup> year, has dedicated itself to the food industry and has worked to keep our membership well informed concerning the most pressing issues. Our conventions present knowledgeable speakers to discuss those issues and other topics important to our members. Your Board is working hard to put the final touches on the SFPA convention in November to make it an informative and productive event for you.

As we begin to write new chapters, the stronger the SFPA is, the better the SFPA can help you. Help us strengthen our organization by talking to your customers and suppliers about becoming a member and attending our annual convention. We have chosen an exclusive location in Hilton Head at the Inn in Harbour Town. Don't forget to make your reservations early. Contact Catherine at 843-842-1870 for details.

Mike Caminiti  
Ball Corporation  
President, Southeastern Food Processors Association

#### HACCP Training Announcement

FDA HACCP Regulation Compliance  
Fulfills requirements of 21CFR120  
August 21-23, 2007  
Haynes Conference Center  
A-B Tech Enka campus  
Asheville, NC

Sponsored by:

- North Carolina State University , Dr. John Rushing, Instructor
- The University of Tennessee, Dr. Bill Morris, Instructor
- Blue Ridge Food Ventures

Cost:\$250.00, Registration Questions:  
Lisa Gordon, 919-515-2956 or  
[lisa\\_gordon@ncsu.edu](mailto:lisa_gordon@ncsu.edu)

## FDA Posts Melamine Risks

The U.S. FDA has posted an interim melamine and analogues safety/risk assessment that describes the risk to human health associated with eating pork, chicken, fish and eggs from animals that had been inadvertently fed animal feed that may have been adulterated with melamine and its analogues. FDA developed the safety/risk assessment in response to their ongoing investigation of contaminated vegetable protein products imported from China that were mislabeled as "wheat gluten" and "rice protein concentrate." Based on currently available data and information, the results of the safety/risk assessment indicate that the consumption of pork, chicken, domestic fish, and eggs from animals inadvertently fed animal feed contaminated with melamine and its analogues is very unlikely to pose a human health risk.

## Claiming Unsaturated Fat

The U.S. FDA is allowing food manufacturers to make a health claim for the substitution of saturated fat in the diet with unsaturated fatty acids and reduced risk of heart disease. On January 24, the FDA received a notification from Frito-Lay, Inc. regarding a health claim for the relationship between dietary substitution of saturated fat with unsaturated fatty acids (UFAs) and reduced risk of heart disease.

Since the mandatory 120 days have passed since the claim was filed, companies may use the claim until FDA issues a regulation prohibiting or modifying the claim or finding that the requirements for making the claim have not been met, or a district court in an enforcement proceeding has determined that the requirements for making the claim have not been met.

Companies may use the claim specified in the notification, as modified by the notifier in a letter to FDA dated May 11, 2007, on the label and in labeling of any food product that meets the eligibility criteria described below:

The following statements from the 1989 NAS report titled Diet and Health: Implications for Reducing Chronic Disease Risk listed in the January 24 notification are considered authoritative statements.

"Clinical and animal studies provide firm evidence that omega-6 polyunsaturated fatty acids when substituted for saturated fatty acids result in a lowering of serum total cholesterol and LDL cholesterol and usually also some lowering of HDL cholesterol levels."

"Clinical studies indicate that substitution of monounsaturated for saturated fatty acids results in a reduction of serum total cholesterol and LDL cholesterol without a reduction in HDL cholesterol." The claim

language proposed by Frito-Lay was modified in the May 11 letter to read as follows: "Replacing saturated fat with similar amounts of unsaturated fats may reduce the risk of heart disease. To achieve this benefit, total daily calories should not increase."

According to the January 24 notification, Frito-Lay intends to apply the claim to vegetable oils, spreads, and shortenings that have a total unsaturated fat content of 80% or more of total fat. The notification also proposes to apply the claim to oil-containing foods in the following categories: crackers, salad dressings, salads, sauces and dips and grain, vegetable and fruit-based snacks.



## Long-Term US Agricultural Projections

Each year, USDA makes 10-year economic projections for the food and agriculture sector. Long run developments for global agriculture reflect increased demand for biofuels, particularly in the United States and the European Union (EU). U.S. agricultural projections are for large increases in corn-based ethanol production, which affects production, use, and prices of farm commodities throughout the sector. Expansion of biodiesel use in the EU raises demand for vegetable oils in global markets. Additionally, steady domestic and international economic growth in the projections supports gains in consumption, trade, and prices. On average, consumer food prices are projected to rise more slowly than the general rate of inflation over the next decade, although increases in meat prices push food prices up faster in some years.

## **Coca-Cola Acquires Energy Brands**

The Coca-Cola Company today announced that it has reached an agreement to acquire Energy Brands, Inc., known as glacéau, and its full range of fast-growing, enhanced water brands, including vitamin water. The acquisition, for \$4.1 billion in cash, provides The Coca-Cola Company with a strong platform to grow its active lifestyle beverages.

The company said that the acquisition of glacéau will expand its ability to meet consumers' needs further across the entire spectrum of sparkling and still beverages. With its vitaminwater, smartwater, fruitwater, and vitaminenergy brands, glacéau is uniquely positioned in key market categories, with a leading position in enhanced water and attractive brands in water and energy drinks. These categories are expected to make up a large portion of the beverage industry's volume and gross profit growth in North America through 2010.

## **Monitoring Functional Foods**

Functional foods are foods that claim to improve well-being or health. The health claim may be implicit ("rich in vitamin C"), or vague ("strengthens the body's defense system"), but invariably the product is presented with the suggestion of a benefit. Sales of such products are huge and growing. What ingredients do such foods contain—and who safeguards the truth of claims?

Many functional foods contain added vitamins, minerals, and other essential nutrients. Some of these added nutrients indeed promote health: folic acid reduces the risk of neural tube defects, table salt with potassium reduces blood pressure, and polyunsaturated fatty acids reduce the risk of heart disease. But other claims are more dubious—for example, that zinc lozenges protect against colds or that drinks rich in vitamin C protect against cardiovascular disease.

The lack of proper regulatory oversight has led to some functional foods that have false claims, while at the same time other functional foods do promote health and prevent disease. The potential for effective functional foods is certainly there. Major food companies are eager to expand into health promoting foods, but there is no incentive to underpin such health effects with solid research when products can be successfully marketed on the basis of vague allusions alone. But there is hope. After more than 20 years of deliberations the European Commission recently agreed on new regulations that would prohibit vague claims and that would allow hard claims of disease reduction for

foods if the evidence is solid. The commission even wants to grant companies seven years of exclusivity for truly novel claims backed up by solid data. If the European Parliament accepts these proposals it would be a step in the right direction.

## **Future of Food Regulation**

Catherine Adams, corporate vice president for Worldwide Quality, Food Safety and Nutrition for the McDonalds Corporation, will address the members of the IFT Food Laws and Regulations Division on July 31, 2007 in Chicago during the Division Annual Business Meeting and Luncheon on the topic "Food Regulation and You".

She will take a look at what we can do about the safety of the food supply, the robustness of food safety regulatory agencies, and consumer confidence in the safety of their food. Adams has noted that "the regulatory and industry landscape has been changed by E.coli O157:H7 in spinach, Salmonella in peanut butter and melamine in pet food. Just at the time we are promoting more fresh produce for our health, feeling good about making our children a peanut butter sandwich for their school lunch and wanting to pamper our pets with premium cat and dog food; we have on our hands a population of skeptical consumers. No one is well served when an American consumer wakes up in the morning wondering if their food is safe. In the face of this seemingly chronic crisis, consumers want to know two things: 'Am I going to be OK?,' and 'What are you going to do about it?' ..."

The event will be held Tuesday, July 31 at the Hilton Chicago Hotel.

## **Ingredient Companies Form Alliance**

Novel Ingredient Services and The Ingredient House announced today that they will form a strategic alliance within the food, beverage and dietary supplement markets. Over the last few years, these markets have seen an explosive demand growth for ingredients from low cost country sources. The objective by North American manufacturers to lower product costs can only be successful long term, if the quality and overall support services for these ingredients are secured. An area where Novel Ingredient Services and The Ingredient House excel and the basis for the partnership.

Novel Ingredient Services was established in 2001 and has developed a strong reputation in the dietary supplement market for delivering quality ingredients on time with a dedication to first class customer service. The company has significant expertise in sourcing from low cost country manufacturers with GMP facilities, and delivering value to its broad base of customers.

The Ingredient House was formed in 2006 with an initial focus on high intensity and bulk sweeteners for the food and beverage sectors. Beyond these traditional ingredients the company has recognized the industry move towards, and the opportunities of, “better for you” and “nutritional enhanced” food and beverage products. Both Novel Ingredient Services and The Ingredient House see significant opportunities to leverage their sourcing and customer contact network to capture and participate in these new developments.

According to the reports, Ukec threatened to cut off imports of gum arabic, while waving a soft drink bottle around. "I want you to know that the gum arabic, which runs all the soft drinks all over the world, including the United States, mainly 80 percent is imported from my country," Ukec said. "I can stop that gum arabic and all of us will have lost this," he said.

The U.S. Commerce Department indicates that the United States has decreased its reliance on the Sudanese product over the last several years.

In 2006, America imported 12 percent, or \$6.2 million worth, of its gum arabic from Sudan. That figure represents a 54 percent drop year over year from 2005. Most gum arabic, nearly 38 percent, is now imported from Chad.



## **SFPA Scholarship Awardees**

- Clemson - Saka Kolodzaike and Ruby Poon
- University of Georgia - Ali McDaniel
- NC State University - Rachel E. Campbell and Jonathon R. Layfield
- University of Tennessee - Colleen Cruze



## **Sudan Threatens to Cut Off Gum Arabic**

According to news reports, the Sudanese Ambassador to the U.S., John Ukec Lueth Ulec denied government-funded militias were killing civilians in Darfur and threatened to cut off exports of gum arabic if the Bush administration imposed economic sanctions. The Sudanese ambassador was speaking at a press conference held at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. on May 30. Acacia gums are widely used in the food and pharmaceutical industry for their functional properties such as emulsification and stabilization.

## **Seafood from China Causes a Threat?**

A new study on the safety of seafood from China found samples from markets that contained concentrations of contaminants in shellfish high enough to pose threats to human health. China is the world's largest producer and exporter of fish and fish products.

Organochlorine pesticides such as DDT can accumulate in top predators, including humans. Though these pesticides were officially banned in 1983, China had been using them for decades prior to the ban. Twenty-five years later, there is evidence that new sources, particularly of DDT, may be present and contaminating seafood.

The current study focused on seafood from markets in eleven coastal cities in Guangdong Province. Rapid industrialization, urbanization, and conversion of agricultural lands to commercial use have accelerated the environmental deterioration in this region.

Samples of shrimps, crabs, and mollusks were analyzed for twenty-one organochlorine pesticides. Of those, DDT and HCH (hexachlorocyclohexane) were detected most frequently and measured at the highest concentrations. Mollusks, specifically oysters, mussels, and squid, showed the highest levels. The authors said that concentrations of DDT in some of this seafood were high enough to pose human health threats, and that other organochlorine pesticides present were at concentrations high enough to pose human cancer risks.

## **Food Ingredients Can Cost Less If Manufacturing Standards are Skipped**

As we write this column, the story of the melamine laced wheat gluten continues to unfold. On May 7, 2007, the USDA reported that scientists representing five agencies concluded that “there is very low risk to human health from consuming meat from hogs and chickens known to have been fed animal feed supplemented with pet food scraps that contained melamine and melamine-related compounds.” The next day we learned from a USDA media briefing that the wheat gluten and rice protein was neither wheat gluten nor rice protein. In both cases, the “manufacturers” in China may have simply supplemented wheat flour with melamine and melamine-related compounds to raise the nitrogen level to give both tainted products the appearance of having a higher protein level than they actually did. At that media briefing, Dr. David Atchison, Assistant Commissioner for Food Protection with the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) also announced “that a portion of the mislabeled wheat gluten from the Chinese firm was sent to Canada and when in Canada was used to manufacture [fish feed], and that that [fish feed] was then imported back into the United States for use in feeding fish in certain industrial aquaculture type situations.” Two days later the USDA and the FDA held another media briefing at which it was announced that the US has imposed a “countrywide import alert for bulk vegetable protein products from China for which all of those shipments are screened for and targeted 100 percent sampling. That puts the burden on the importer or ultimate firm to demonstrate that the product does not contain melamine or related compounds to the agency.” While following this story, we ran across a New York Times article on Wednesday, May 9, 2007 by Walt Bogdanich and Jake Hooker telling the story of 100 confirmed deaths in Panama as the result of diethylene glycol (an antifreeze ingredient) poisoning. It seems that a firm in China substituted sweet tasting diethylene glycol for sweet tasting glycerin. The diethylene glycol was then mixed into “260,000 bottles of cold medicine—with devastating results. Families have reported 365 deaths from the poison.” Over the years we have read stories of the results of contaminated or mislabeled products being sold to Chinese citizens, sometimes with deadly results. Sometimes it is infant formula, other times it is seeds or fertilizer or pesticides. The problem is common enough that one can run across Chinese jokes about contaminated products. In a growing economy, China has yet to have in place the kind of quality control system that we take for granted. And it is at that point that we can draw a few lessons. When we prepare a meal, we do not feel the need to test the flour, the salt, the spices—all of the ingredients—to make sure that they are properly labeled. We trust the laws, the testing agencies, and the manufacturers to ensure that the products we purchase are properly labeled. This trust allows the system to operate with a great degree of efficiency, avoiding constant retesting. At the same time it needs to be recognized that this system imposes costs on US manufacturers and processors. As we have moved to a global market, sourcing food products from a large number of countries and suppliers, we seem to have assumed that the products we import come from a system that is as trustworthy as ours and that they are properly labeled. As a result we have only tested about 1 percent of the products coming into the country. It now appears that our trust may have been misplaced. One of the reasons for sourcing products from overseas rather than from domestic sources is because they are cheaper. To the extent that the lower cost of imported products like wheat gluten is the result of less stringent manufacturing and testing requirements, the simple cost comparison may be like the proverbial comparison of apples and oranges. It would seem that in those highly publicized cases we may have traded lower costs for increased risk.

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## Food Facts

- **100-Calorie Cut-Offs:** Consumers concerned about weight are shifting back to lower-calorie and reduced-portion-sized products in their diets
- **Phytochemicals:** Food with antioxidants is cutting into supplement sales.
- **Multi-Benefits:** Most consumers are lacking in some nutritional value and are becoming aware of this.
- **Healthy Fats:** Consumers are looking for healthier oils and avoiding certain types of fat
- **Mature Age:** Over 100 million Americans are expected to live to 50+ by the year 2010.
- **Natural Solutions:** Consumers are shifting more towards organic (naturally grown) food.

## Spice Notes

- Heavy rain leads to higher cumin prices. Due to recent heavy rain in Rajasthan and Guharat, India, the price of cumin has been bid up. Next year's crop will fall short of typical demand, leaving little to export.
- Jet black sesame seed is rather short this year. India is selling out due to strong demand from the Far East.
- Spot red pepper is demanding high prices and our U.S. market is bare. For the next few months, prices will remain high.
- In China there will be very few chilies this season. Last year's crop was small and there was no carryover from the year before. Prices from last year have also doubled since the year before. China is now buying heavily in India because of strong internal demand.

## Atomic Force Microscopy to Study Food

A review in the *Journal of Food Science* examines using a method provided by atomic force microscopy (AFM) to detect nanoscale structural information. The article discusses applications of the technique in food science and technology research, including qualitative macromolecule and polymer imaging, complicated or quantitative structure analysis, molecular interaction, molecular manipulation, surface topography, and nanofood characterization. The results suggest that AFM could bring insights about food properties, and the AFM analysis could be used to illustrate some mechanisms of property changes during processing and storage.



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