

Meat Industry Executive Blasts Heart Association

CHICAGO, ILL — A meat industry executive leveled a counterattack on the American Heart Association recently, saying he was "... particularly disturbed and frustrated by the unscientific approach of an otherwise scientific and respected organization."

The AHA and the livestock and meat industry have been at odds for years over the issue of fats and oils in the diet as they are purported to relate to heart disease.

In particular, David H Stroud, president of the National Live Stock and Meat Board headquartered here,

single out comments last week of Dr. Jeremiah Stamler. Stamler is with the Chicago Board of Health and spoke Thursday at the opening session of the AHA meeting in Miami, Fla.

"Dr. Stamler has accused the Food and Drug Administration of being 'unscientific, unrealistic, harsh and archaic' because FDA has refused to jump on the Heart Assn. bandwagon," Stroud said. "Rather, it is the AHA which has taken an alarmingly nonscientific position in the 'saturated vs. polyunsaturated fat' controversy. In fact, they've created the controversy. Without valid research data, other than much statistically concluded information, Dr. Stamler and the AHA would have the entire American public change its meat-eating habits," he added.

"Further," Stroud said, "these heart people have been advising the general public, as well as physicians, for years on this presumed 'need' to cut down on consumption of products from animal origin. They've succeeded in adding to a confused public mind and either inadvertently or intentionally have encouraged some manufacturers to make unwarranted misleading health claims for food products containing polyunsaturated oils," he said.

He added that he knows the heart people have a good deal of evidence to prove their claims, but that such evidence is "invalid and specious." "Even physicians we know

are confused," Stroud said. On one hand is the AHA saying cut down on meat, eggs, dairy products, etc., and on the other is the government and all other reputable medical-health organizations saying this doesn't appear necessary."

"And I'm particularly disturbed and frustrated by the unscientific approach of an otherwise scientific organization like AHA when it gives medical advice for procedures which are unproven," the meat executive said.

"Implausible as it seems, it appears to me that the AHA is attempting an experimental diet program, using the entire 200 million person population of the U.S. for its guinea pigs," Stroud said. "It borders on quackery," he added.

"Thank heavens the government's FDA officials have had the courage to demand and seek valid clinical or laboratory evidence before making or approving recommendations to the public on changing its eating habits. It's this admirable insistence for adherence to professional standards that Dr. Stamler calls 'archaic' and 'unrealistic,'" Stroud said, "when, in fact, the FDA and other medical authority simply is demanding valid proof before permitting food manufacturers to label their products or make health claims for possible beneficial effects of polyunsaturated fat content."

The Meat Board official said that all of the animal agriculture

industry shares the fervor of the physician in wanting Americans to eat a sound, basic, correct diet. "We want the answers to causes of heart disease every bit as much as does the AHA," he insisted, "so we can, through breeding and manufacture, bring our public the product it wants as well as 'needs'."

Stroud acknowledged what most medical men already agree on — that in general, "... our public overeats, is overweight or downright obese and has poor eating habits. We don't get a fraction of the exercise we should. We smoke too much on top of that. But it appears clearly to many medical scientists to be these factors, rather than the unproven and unvalidated 'cholesterol theory', that's responsible for the rate of heart disease", he said.

"During the period that heart disease has been on the up-

swing," he said, "the general public's consumption of saturated fats has indeed been steadily decreasing and consumption of polyunsaturated fats has increased dramatically. Yet heart disease is increasing. This knowledge alone ought to indicate that AHA has its cholesterol shoe on the wrong foot," he said. "But they keep whacking away at saturated fats and meat, despite contrary evidence and despite the fact that our livestock producer and meat processor now is delivering products of much greater lean-to-fat ratio than ever before"

The Meat Board head said that for years his organization and others in the industry had been reluctant to publicly call the AHA to task for what he termed "... its failure to produce valid evidence or encourage proper objective re-

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