

New food labeling system requested

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. - The American Soybean Association has asked the federal government to develop procedures for a food labeling system that would provide consumers with clear information about the ingredients in their food purchases.

"Recent action by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration permits food labels to contain an optional listing of vegetable oils

which may or may not be contained in food products," said Nick Rose, a Roseland, Arkansas, soybean producer and ASA chairman of the board. "The labels of some food products list up to five or six vegetable oils which may or may not be used in the product. We believe these labels have created confusion and uncertainty and feel strongly that American consumers have the basic right to know the

contents of their food purchases without going through such a guessing game."

Rose presented his testimony in a Little Rock hearing held by the Food and Drug Administration, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Federal Trade Commission. He noted that soybean growers at their recent annual meeting had adopted a resolution calling for new food label

regulations which would provide food labels which list in descending order the oils or fats contained in food products.

"We recognize that source oil labeling may be an unnecessary burden to food manufacturers if required on all products containing fats and oils," Rose testified. "We suggest that specific source oil labeling not be required on foods where fats and oils are a nutritionally insignificant component of the food."

Rose pointed out that some in the medical profession recommend inclusion or avoidance of specific types of fats and oils in certain food diets for health reasons such as reduction or elimination of cholesterol and/or saturated fats.

"Soy oil is a healthful,

Food prices investigated

WASHINGTON, D.C. - House Agriculture Committee Members Fred Richmond (D-N.Y.), Richard Noland (D-Minn.), and John Jenrette (D-S.C.) have announced the release

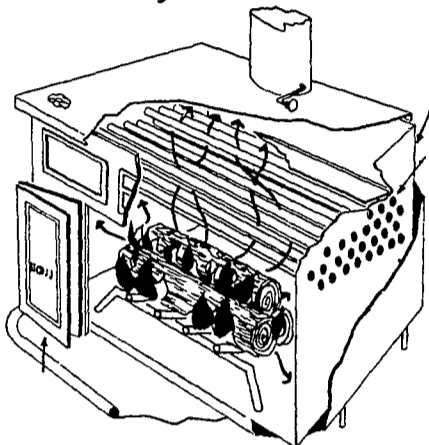
of a General Accounting Office report entitled "What Causes Food Prices to Rise and What Can Be Done About It." The report is the result of a three-year long GAO investigation into the widening farm-retail food price spread, and its impact on related food industry costs and profits.

nutritious oil that represents a very large market for American soybean growers," Rose said. "It is used in 78 per cent of all margarines, 75 per cent of all salad and cooking oils and 60 per cent of all food fats and oils consumed in the U.S. This consumption contributes more than \$4 billion to income to American soybean growers."

According to Richmond, the study indicates that the government can and should take stronger action to curb food price inflation and monitor food prices. In the report GAO calls upon Congress to enact legislation to monitor food production, processing, marketing, and pricing. In addition, the Secretaries of Agriculture and Transportation and the Interstate Commerce Commissioner are urged to re-evaluate regulations governing the transportation of food in the U.S.

Richmond, chairman of the House Agriculture Subcommittee on Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations and Nutrition, stated his intention to follow through on the GAO suggestion to develop a comprehensive system to monitor food prices and food industry profits by gaining access to confidential pricing policies. Richmond praised the report, saying it would form "the basis of our work on agricultural problems during the next two years."

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