

# Pizza Lovers Buy Blindfolded

STRONGSVILLE, Ohio — You may as well be blindfolded when you buy frozen meat pizza. Why? Because 75 percent of those pizzas use fake cheese - but consumers are not aware of it.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) controls the content and labeling of frozen meat pizzas. Current USDA policy permits manufacturers to use 90 percent fake cheese and only 10

percent real cheese. Only the ingredient list must indicate that this imitation or substitute cheese is used. But the ingredient list is not required to say how much of the cheese is fake.

According to USDA studies, most consumers do not read ingredient lists. Even if consumers did read ingredient lists, they would have to be dedicated to wade through the typical frozen meat

pizza label. Some run nearly a foot in width and an inch long and contain 150 words or more.

This consumer deception could end if enough interested people tell USDA what they want. USDA has proposed a new policy. The new policy would require a stated minimum amount of cheese on frozen meat pizza, and half that minimum would have to be real cheese. If any fake cheese is used, the name of the product must say so.

The pizza manufacturing industry is divided over this issue. Manufacturers who use mostly imitation or substitute cheese do not like the idea of telling consumers this on the front of the package where it is clearly visible.

Pizza makers who use only 100 percent cheese strongly support the government's new proposal. They believe consumers ought to know exactly what they are buying.

The dairy industry likes the proposal too. While real cheese sales would only be marginally increased under the plan, an industry representative Gordon Riehl, general manager of Milk Marketing Inc. (MMI), a regional dairy marketing cooperative, said, "It's time this deception ends. Without a declaration on the front of a food package where people will notice it, very few people know they're buying pizza with fake cheese. If that's what they truly want, that's okay, but they should

be able to tell without a magnifying glass and a degree in food science. We applaud USDA for this new proposal."

USDA is now collecting opinions for their new cheese regulation. Interested consumers should write to USDA before April 2, 1984. Contact: USDA Regulations Office, Annie Johnson, FSIS Hearing Clerk, Docket No. 78-733E, Food Safety & Inspection Service, USDA, Room 2637, South Agriculture Bldg., Washington, D.C. 20250.

## FFA officers tour N.J.

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J. — Steven P. Gruenberg, N.J. State FFA President, joined the National FFA Secretary, Bill Caraway, the National FFA Vice-President - Central Region, Rhonda Schulen and the Star American Farmer, Jim Tugend, on a business and industry tour in New Jersey during FFA Week.

Businesses and industries are visited by the officers as a part of their training for a year of service to the FFA. They gain knowledge of corporate settings by visiting with executives while the executives gain an understanding of the largest school youth organization - the FFA.

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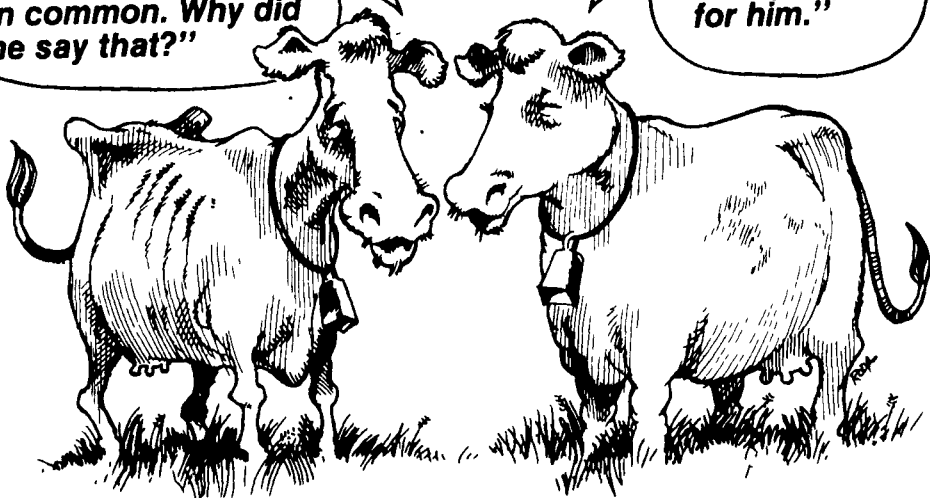
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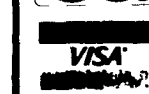
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