

Statement by

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Atomic Energy Commission

at

Meeting of Interdepartmental Committee on Radiation Preservation of Food
November 24, 1959

1. We wish to present suggestions for consideration by the Committee relative to future conduct of the national radiation preservation of food program.
2. Our first recommendation is that the term "irradiated food" be discontinued - psychologically this engenders a negative mental attitude. We propose that the Committee formally adopt a new term and we suggest "ray processed food" or "radiation processed food".
3. The program has received considerable adverse publicity through misinterpretation of the Army decision to defer USAIRC. It is our view, however, that nothing has occurred which reflects adversely in any way upon the merit of a national radiation processed foods program.
4. Certain factors, in our opinion, render essential a reaffirmation by the Government of its position concerning the radiation processed foods program:
 - a. The U. S. has assumed world leadership in development of radiation preservation of food technology. The Army Ionizing Radiation Center and, in particular, the HIFI project became the focal point of world interest.
 - b. The radiation preservation of food program is a true expression of the Nation's Atoms-for-Peace Policy. The prospects of this program have excited the whole world with a reduction of food spoilage and an improvement in world food supplies. Throughout Latin America, Europe and Asia interest is being stimulated.
5. The most significant civilian application of radiation to preserve foods, both from a technical and economic viewpoint, is low dose treatment to ex-

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tend shelf life of perishable foods. In the U. S. and abroad food losses are most substantial in the chain of supply between producer and consumer; therefore, extension of shelf life for a few days of such items as meats, fish, vegetables, and fruits is required in the civilian economy rather than long-term preservation.

6. In view of the foregoing considerations, it is our opinion that:
 - a. The national civilian program for radiation preservation of food should emphasize low dose radiation treatment of foods with direct orientation to the civilian economy.
 - b. Required development programs should be initiated promptly to permit early introduction into the free economy upon obtainment of wholesomeness clearance.
7. Such a government effort apparently is not within the mission of the Department of the Army. It would entail fuller participation by other concerned agencies of the government, including the Commission, Department of Agriculture, Department of Commerce, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, and the Department of the Interior with earliest possible participation by industry.
8. Accordingly, we believe it highly desirable for the Interdepartmental Committee to take the initiative in developing the elements of a revised national civilian radiation processed foods program. We propose establishment of an ad hoc working group to draft such a program.
9. As a basis for discussion by the ad hoc group we have prepared a working draft of a national civilian program. We propose that the ad hoc group review this and meet at an early date to prepare a mutually agreeable document for consideration by the Interdepartmental Committee. We pro-

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pose that the Committee convene a special meeting, if possible in January, to consider this document.

10. In conclusion, we should like to indicate AEC willingness to consider coordinating, implementing, and budgeting for a national civilian radiation processed food program on behalf of the Interdepartmental Committee and its member agencies.

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