

## SUBCHAPTER B—FOOD FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION (CONTINUED)

### PART 170—FOOD ADDITIVES

#### Subpart A—General Provisions

Sec.

170.3 Definitions.

170.6 Opinion letters on food additive status.

170.10 Food additives in standardized foods.

170.15 Adoption of regulation on initiative of Commissioner.

170.17 Exemption for investigational use and procedure for obtaining authorization to market edible products from experimental animals.

170.18 Tolerances for related food additives.

170.19 Pesticide chemicals in processed foods.

#### Subpart B—Food Additive Safety

170.20 General principles for evaluating the safety of food additives.

170.22 Safety factors to be considered.

170.30 Eligibility for classification as generally recognized as safe (GRAS).

170.35 Affirmation of generally recognized as safe (GRAS) status.

170.38 Determination of food additive status.

170.39 Threshold of regulation for substances used in food-contact articles.

#### Subpart C—Specific Administrative Rulings and Decisions

170.45 Fluorine-containing compounds.

170.50 Glycine (aminoacetic acid) in food for human consumption.

170.60 Nitrites and/or nitrates in curing pre-mixes.

#### Subpart D—Premarket Notifications

170.100 Submission of a premarket notification for a food contact substance (FCN) to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

170.101 Information in a premarket notification for a food contact substance (FCN).

170.102 Confidentiality of information in a premarket notification for a food contact substance (FCN).

170.103 Withdrawal without prejudice of a premarket notification for a food contact substance (FCN).

170.104 Action on a premarket notification for a food contact substance (FCN).

170.105 The Food and Drug Administration's (FDA's) determination that a premarket notification for a food contact substance (FCN) is no longer effective.

170.106 Notification for a food contact substance formulation (NFCFSF).

#### Subpart E—Generally Recognized as Safe (GRAS) Notice

170.203 Definitions.

170.205 Opportunity to submit a GRAS notice.

170.210 How to send your GRAS notice to FDA.

170.215 Incorporation into a GRAS notice.

170.220 General requirements applicable to a GRAS notice.

170.225 Part 1 of a GRAS notice: Signed statements and certification.

170.230 Part 2 of a GRAS notice: Identity, method of manufacture, specifications, and physical or technical effect.

170.235 Part 3 of a GRAS notice: Dietary exposure.

170.240 Part 4 of a GRAS notice: Self-limiting levels of use.

170.245 Part 5 of a GRAS notice: Experience based on common use in food before 1958.

170.250 Part 6 of a GRAS notice: Narrative.

170.255 Part 7 of a GRAS notice: List of supporting data and information in your GRAS notice.

170.260 Steps you may take before FDA responds to your GRAS notice.

170.265 What FDA will do with a GRAS notice.

170.270 Procedures that apply when the intended conditions of use of a notified substance include use in a product or products subject to regulation by the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) of the United States Department of Agriculture.

170.275 Public disclosure of a GRAS notice.

170.280 Submission of a supplement.

170.285 Disposition of pending GRAS affirmation petitions.

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#### Subpart A—General Provisions

##### § 170.3 Definitions.

For the purposes of this subchapter, the following definitions apply:

(a) *Secretary* means the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

## § 170.3

## 21 CFR Ch. I (4–1–23 Edition)

(b) *Department* means the Department of Health and Human Services.

(c) *Commissioner* means the Commissioner of Food and Drugs.

(d) As used in this part, the term *act* means the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act approved June 25, 1936, 52 Stat. 1040 *et seq.*, as amended (21 U.S.C. 301–392).

(e)(1) *Food additives* includes all substances not exempted by section 201(s) of the act, the intended use of which results or may reasonably be expected to result, directly or indirectly, either in their becoming a component of food or otherwise affecting the characteristics of food. A material used in the production of containers and packages is subject to the definition if it may reasonably be expected to become a component, or to affect the characteristics, directly or indirectly, of food packed in the container. “Affecting the characteristics of food” does not include such physical effects, as protecting contents of packages, preserving shape, and preventing moisture loss. If there is no migration of a packaging component from the package to the food, it does not become a component of the food and thus is not a food additive. A substance that does not become a component of food, but that is used, for example, in preparing an ingredient of the food to give a different flavor, texture, or other characteristic in the food, may be a food additive.

(2) *Uses of food additives not requiring a listing regulation.* Use of a substance in a food contact article (e.g., food-packaging or food-processing equipment) whereby the substance migrates, or may reasonably be expected to migrate, into food at such levels that the use has been exempted from regulation as a food additive under §170.39, and food contact substances used in accordance with a notification submitted under section 409(h) of the act that is effective.

(3) A *food contact substance* is any substance that is intended for use as a component of materials used in manufacturing, packing, packaging, transporting, or holding food if such use is not intended to have any technical effect in such food.

(f) *Common use in food* means a substantial history of consumption of a

substance for food use by a significant number of consumers.

(g) The word *substance* in the definition of the term “food additive” includes a food or food component consisting of one or more ingredients.

(h) *Scientific procedures* include the application of scientific data (including, as appropriate, data from human, animal, analytical, or other scientific studies), information, and methods, whether published or unpublished, as well as the application of scientific principles, appropriate to establish the safety of a substance under the conditions of its intended use.

(i) *Safe or safety* means that there is a reasonable certainty in the minds of competent scientists that the substance is not harmful under the conditions of its intended use. It is impossible in the present state of scientific knowledge to establish with complete certainty the absolute harmlessness of the use of any substance. Safety may be determined by scientific procedures or by general recognition of safety. In determining safety, the following factors shall be considered:

(1) The probable consumption of the substance and of any substance formed in or on food because of its use.

(2) The cumulative effect of the substance in the diet, taking into account any chemically or pharmacologically related substance or substances in such diet.

(3) Safety factors which, in the opinion of experts qualified by scientific training and experience to evaluate the safety of food and food ingredients, are generally recognized as appropriate.

(j) The term *nonperishable processed food* means any processed food not subject to rapid decay or deterioration that would render it unfit for consumption. Examples are flour, sugar, cereals, packaged cookies, and crackers. Not included are hermetically sealed foods or manufactured dairy products and other processed foods requiring refrigeration.

(k) *General recognition of safety* shall be in accordance with §170.30.

(l) *Prior sanction* means an explicit approval granted with respect to use of a substance in food prior to September

## Food and Drug Administration, HHS

## § 170.3

6, 1958, by the Food and Drug Administration or the United States Department of Agriculture pursuant to the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, the Poultry Products Inspection Act, or the Meat Inspection Act.

(m) *Food* includes human food, substances migrating to food from food-contact articles, pet food, and animal feed.

(n) The following general food categories are established to group specific related foods together for the purpose of establishing tolerances or limitations for the use of direct human food ingredients. Individual food products will be included within these categories according to the detailed classifications lists contained in Exhibit 33B of the report of the National Academy of Sciences/National Research Council report, "A Comprehensive Survey of Industry on the Use of Food Chemicals Generally Recognized as Safe" (September 1972), which is incorporated by reference. Copies are available from the National Technical Information Service (NTIS), 5285 Port Royal Rd., Springfield, VA 22161, or at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). For information on the availability of this material at NARA, call 202-741-6030, or go to: [http://www.archives.gov/federal\\_register/code\\_of\\_federal\\_regulations/ibr\\_locations.html](http://www.archives.gov/federal_register/code_of_federal_regulations/ibr_locations.html).

(1) Baked goods and baking mixes, including all ready-to-eat and ready-to-bake products, flours, and mixes requiring preparation before serving.

(2) Beverages, alcoholic, including malt beverages, wines, distilled liquors, and cocktail mix.

(3) Beverages and beverage bases, nonalcoholic, including only special or spiced teas, soft drinks, coffee substitutes, and fruit and vegetable flavored gelatin drinks.

(4) Breakfast cereals, including ready-to-eat and instant and regular hot cereals.

(5) Cheeses, including curd and whey cheeses, cream, natural, grating, processed, spread, dip, and miscellaneous cheeses.

(6) Chewing gum, including all forms.

(7) Coffee and tea, including regular, decaffeinated, and instant types.

(8) Condiments and relishes, including plain seasoning sauces and spreads, olives, pickles, and relishes, but not spices or herbs.

(9) Confections and frostings, including candy and flavored frostings, marshmallows, baking chocolate, and brown, lump, rock, maple, powdered, and raw sugars.

(10) Dairy product analogs, including nondairy milk, frozen or liquid creamers, coffee whiteners, toppings, and other nondairy products.

(11) Egg products, including liquid, frozen, or dried eggs, and egg dishes made therefrom, i.e., egg roll, egg foo young, egg salad, and frozen multicourse egg meals, but not fresh eggs.

(12) Fats and oils, including margarine, dressings for salads, butter, salad oils, shortenings and cooking oils.

(13) Fish products, including all prepared main dishes, salads, appetizers, frozen multicourse meals, and spreads containing fish, shellfish, and other aquatic animals, but not fresh fish.

(14) Fresh eggs, including cooked eggs and egg dishes made only from fresh shell eggs.

(15) Fresh fish, including only fresh and frozen fish, shellfish, and other aquatic animals.

(16) Fresh fruits and fruit juices, including only raw fruits, citrus, melons, and berries, and home-prepared "ades" and punches made therefrom.

(17) Fresh meats, including only fresh or home-frozen beef or veal, pork, lamb or mutton and home-prepared fresh meat-containing dishes, salads, appetizers, or sandwich spreads made therefrom.

(18) Fresh poultry, including only fresh or home-frozen poultry and game birds and home-prepared fresh poultry-containing dishes, salads, appetizers, or sandwich spreads made therefrom.

(19) Fresh vegetables, tomatoes, and potatoes, including only fresh and home-prepared vegetables.

(20) Frozen dairy desserts and mixes, including ice cream, ice milks, sherbets, and other frozen dairy desserts and specialties.

(21) Fruit and water ices, including all frozen fruit and water ices.

(22) Gelatins, puddings, and fillings, including flavored gelatin desserts,

### § 170.3

puddings, custards, parfaits, pie fillings, and gelatin base salads.

(23) Grain products and pastas, including macaroni and noodle products, rice dishes, and frozen multicourse meals, without meat or vegetables.

(24) Gravies and sauces, including all meat sauces and gravies, and tomato, milk, buttery, and specialty sauces.

(25) Hard candy and cough drops, including all hard type candies.

(26) Herbs, seeds, spices, seasonings, blends, extracts, and flavorings, including all natural and artificial spices, blends, and flavors.

(27) Jams and jellies, home-prepared, including only home-prepared jams, jellies, fruit butters, preserves, and sweet spreads.

(28) Jams and jellies, commercial, including only commercially processed jams, jellies, fruit butters, preserves, and sweet spreads.

(29) Meat products, including all meats and meat containing dishes, salads, appetizers, frozen multicourse meat meals, and sandwich ingredients prepared by commercial processing or using commercially processed meats with home preparation.

(30) Milk, whole and skim, including only whole, lowfat, and skim fluid milks.

(31) Milk products, including flavored milks and milk drinks, dry milks, toppings, snack dips, spreads, weight control milk beverages, and other milk origin products.

(32) Nuts and nut products, including whole or shelled tree nuts, peanuts, coconut, and nut and peanut spreads.

(33) Plant protein products, including the National Academy of Sciences/National Research Council "reconstituted vegetable protein" category, and meat, poultry, and fish substitutes, analogs, and extender products made from plant proteins.

(34) Poultry products, including all poultry and poultry-containing dishes, salads, appetizers, frozen multicourse poultry meals, and sandwich ingredients prepared by commercial processing or using commercially processed poultry with home preparation.

(35) Processed fruits and fruit juices, including all commercially processed fruits, citrus, berries, and mixtures; salads, juices and juice punches, con-

### 21 CFR Ch. I (4-1-23 Edition)

centrates, dilutions, "ades", and drink substitutes made therefrom.

(36) Processed vegetables and vegetable juices, including all commercially processed vegetables, vegetable dishes, frozen multicourse vegetable meals, and vegetable juices and blends.

(37) Snack foods, including chips, pretzels, and other novelty snacks.

(38) Soft candy, including candy bars, chocolates, fudge, mints, and other chewy or nougat candies.

(39) Soups, home-prepared, including meat, fish, poultry, vegetable, and combination home-prepared soups.

(40) Soups and soup mixes, including commercially prepared meat, fish, poultry, vegetable, and combination soups and soup mixes.

(41) Sugar, white, granulated, including only white granulated sugar.

(42) Sugar substitutes, including granulated, liquid, and tablet sugar substitutes.

(43) Sweet sauces, toppings, and syrups, including chocolate, berry, fruit, corn syrup, and maple sweet sauces and toppings.

(o) The following terms describe the physical or technical functional effects for which direct human food ingredients may be added to foods. They are adopted from the National Academy of Sciences/National Research Council national survey of food industries, reported to the Food and Drug Administration under the contract title "A Comprehensive Survey of Industry on the Use of Food Chemicals Generally Recognized as Safe" (September 1972), which is incorporated by reference. Copies are available from the National Technical Information Service (NTIS), 5285 Port Royal Rd., Springfield, VA 22161, or at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). For information on the availability of this material at NARA, call 202-741-6030, or go to: [http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/code\\_of\\_federal\\_regulations/ibr\\_locations.html](http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/code_of_federal_regulations/ibr_locations.html).

(1) *Anticaking agents and free-flow agents*: Substances added to finely powdered or crystalline food products to prevent caking, lumping, or agglomeration.

(2) *Antimicrobial agents*: Substances used to preserve food by preventing

growth of microorganisms and subsequent spoilage, including fungistats, mold and rope inhibitors, and the effects listed by the National Academy of Sciences/National Research Council under "preservatives."

(3) *Antioxidants*: Substances used to preserve food by retarding deterioration, rancidity, or discoloration due to oxidation.

(4) *Colors and coloring adjuncts*: Substances used to impart, preserve, or enhance the color or shading of a food, including color stabilizers, color fixatives, color-retention agents, etc.

(5) *Curing and pickling agents*: Substances imparting a unique flavor and/or color to a food, usually producing an increase in shelf life stability.

(6) *Dough strengtheners*: Substances used to modify starch and gluten, thereby producing a more stable dough, including the applicable effects listed by the National Academy of Sciences/National Research Council under "dough conditioner."

(7) *Drying agents*: Substances with moisture-absorbing ability, used to maintain an environment of low moisture.

(8) *Emulsifiers and emulsifier salts*: Substances which modify surface tension in the component phase of an emulsion to establish a uniform dispersion or emulsion.

(9) *Enzymes*: Enzymes used to improve food processing and the quality of the finished food.

(10) *Firming agents*: Substances added to precipitate residual pectin, thus strengthening the supporting tissue and preventing its collapse during processing.

(11) *Flavor enhancers*: Substances added to supplement, enhance, or modify the original taste and/or aroma of a food, without imparting a characteristic taste or aroma of its own.

(12) *Flavoring agents and adjuvants*: Substances added to impart or help impart a taste or aroma in food.

(13) *Flour treating agents*: Substances added to milled flour, at the mill, to improve its color and/or baking qualities, including bleaching and maturing agents.

(14) *Formulation aids*: Substances used to promote or produce a desired physical state or texture in food, including

carriers, binders, fillers, plasticizers, film-formers, and tableting aids, etc.

(15) *Fumigants*: Volatile substances used for controlling insects or pests.

(16) *Humectants*: Hygroscopic substances incorporated in food to promote retention of moisture, including moisture-retention agents and anti-dusting agents.

(17) *Leavening agents*: Substances used to produce or stimulate production of carbon dioxide in baked goods to impart a light texture, including yeast, yeast foods, and calcium salts listed by the National Academy of Sciences/National Research Council under "dough conditioners."

(18) *Lubricants and release agents*: Substances added to food contact surfaces to prevent ingredients and finished products from sticking to them.

(19) *Non-nutritive sweeteners*: Substances having less than 2 percent of the caloric value of sucrose per equivalent unit of sweetening capacity.

(20) *Nutrient supplements*: Substances which are necessary for the body's nutritional and metabolic processes.

(21) *Nutritive sweeteners*: Substances having greater than 2 percent of the caloric value of sucrose per equivalent unit of sweetening capacity.

(22) *Oxidizing and reducing agents*: Substances which chemically oxidize or reduce another food ingredient, thereby producing a more stable product, including the applicable effect listed by the National Academy of Sciences/National Research Council under "dough conditioners."

(23) *pH control agents*: Substances added to change or maintain active acidity or basicity, including buffers, acids, alkalies, and neutralizing agents.

(24) *Processing aids*: Substances used as manufacturing aids to enhance the appeal or utility of a food or food component, including clarifying agents, clouding agents, catalysts, flocculents, filter aids, and crystallization inhibitors, etc.

(25) *Propellants, aerating agents, and gases*: Gases used to supply force to expel a product or used to reduce the amount of oxygen in contact with the food in packaging.

(26) *Sequestrants*: Substances which combine with polyvalent metal ions to

## § 170.6

## 21 CFR Ch. I (4–1–23 Edition)

form a soluble metal complex, to improve the quality and stability of products.

(27) *Solvents and vehicles*: Substances used to extract or dissolve another substance.

(28) *Stabilizers and thickeners*: Substances used to produce viscous solutions or dispersions, to impart body, improve consistency, or stabilize emulsions, including suspending and bodying agents, setting agents, jellying agents, and bulking agents, etc.

(29) *Surface-active agents*: Substances used to modify surface properties of liquid food components for a variety of effects, other than emulsifiers, but including solubilizing agents, dispersants, detergents, wetting agents, rehydration enhancers, whipping agents, foaming agents, and defoaming agents, etc.

(30) *Surface-finishing agents*: Substances used to increase palatability, preserve gloss, and inhibit discoloration of foods, including glazes, polishes, waxes, and protective coatings.

(31) *Synergists*: Substances used to act or react with another food ingredient to produce a total effect different or greater than the sum of the effects produced by the individual ingredients.

(32) *Texturizers*: Substances which affect the appearance or feel of the food.

[42 FR 14483, Mar. 15, 1977, as amended at 47 FR 11835, Mar. 19, 1982; 53 FR 16546, May 10, 1988; 54 FR 24896, June 12, 1989; 60 FR 36595, July 17, 1995; 67 FR 35729, May 21, 2002; 81 FR 55047, Aug. 17, 2016]

### § 170.6 Opinion letters on food additive status.

(a) Over the years the Food and Drug Administration has given informal written opinions to inquiries as to the safety of articles intended for use as components of, or in contact with, food. Prior to the enactment of the Food Additives Amendment of 1958 (Pub. L. 85–929; Sept. 6, 1958), these opinions were given pursuant to section 402(a)(1) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, which reads in part: “A food shall be deemed to be adulterated if it bears or contains any poisonous or deleterious substance which may render it injurious to health”.

(b) Since enactment of the Food Additives Amendment, the Food and Drug Administration has advised such inquirers that an article:

(1) Is a food additive within the meaning of section 201(s) of the act; or

(2) Is generally recognized as safe (GRAS); or

(3) Has prior sanction or approval under that amendment; or

(4) Is not a food additive under the conditions of intended use.

(c) In the interest of the public health, such articles which have been considered in the past by the Food and Drug Administration to be safe under the provisions of section 402(a)(1), or to be generally recognized as safe for their intended use, or to have prior sanction or approval, or not to be food additives under the conditions of intended use, must be reexamined in the light of current scientific information and current principles for evaluating the safety of food additives if their use is to be continued.

(d) Because of the time span involved, copies of many of the letters in which the Food and Drug Administration has expressed an informal opinion concerning the status of such articles may no longer be in the file of the Food and Drug Administration. In the absence of information concerning the names and uses made of all the articles referred to in such letters, their safety of use cannot be reexamined. For this reason all food additive status opinions of the kind described in paragraph (c) of this section given by the Food and Drug Administration are hereby revoked.

(e) The prior opinions of the kind described in paragraph (c) of this section will be replaced by qualified and current opinions if the recipient of each such letter forwards a copy of each to the Department of Health and Human Services, Food and Drug Administration, Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition, 5001 Campus Dr., College Park, MD 20740, along with a copy of his letter of inquiry, on or before July 23, 1970.

(f) This section does not apply to food additive status opinion letters pertaining to articles that were considered by the Food and Drug Administration