SAFETY OF MEAT FROM THE CONSUMER'S STANDPOINT

Meat Cut Switch Costs Consumers $85 Million Yearly

Rep. Wayne C. Hartmire, Jr., Chairman of the Committee, announced today that Safeway had been charged with mislabeling meat cuts, thereby defrauding their customers by paying premium prices for their meat and misrepresenting the quality of the meat they purchased.

Safeway's mislabeling practice is consistent across all standard cuts of beef, pork, lamb, veal, and poultry. The practice has been going on for several years and has been consistent across the country.

A later investigation by the same Task Force for Consumer Protection revealed that Safeway's mislabeling of whole meat cuts was even more deceptive and fraudulent, prompting the Task Force to file another $33 million suit on these charges April 6, 1979.

The results of the inquiry showed that Safeway was paying premium prices for their meat and misrepresenting the quality of the meat they purchased. The company was also charging for the cut which was actually the tail end of the roll, thereby defrauding their customers.

In Washington, D.C. area.

Los Angeles, California—Safeway Stores, Inc. has been charged with a $70 million class action lawsuit by the Interfaith Committee to Aid Farm Workers in their investigation of Safeway's mislabeling of meat cuts.

The suit is based on laboratory tests of Safeway's meat at the Department of Health and Hospitals of Los Angeles and the Los Angeles County Food Laboratory. The tests showed that the mislabeled cuts of meat were higher in price than the price which the store had paid for them.

The suit was filed against Safeway by the Task Force for Consumer Protection of Denver, Colorado. The suit was based on laboratory tests of Safeway's meat at the Department of Health and Hospitals of Los Angeles and the Los Angeles County Food Laboratory. The tests showed that the mislabeled cuts of meat were higher in price than the price which the store had paid for them.

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Rev. Chris Hartmire of the Interfaith Committee to Aid Farm Workers shows a mislabeled cut of meat next to the press.

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SAFEWAY: A National Disgrace

Los Angeles

HEALTH DEPARTMENT CONFIRMS INSECTS IN SAFEWAY COOKIES

In a report to Al Lavers, Chief of the Division of Consumer Protection for Los Angeles County, the Acting Health Officer, Senior Biologist-Entomologist for the Los Angeles County Department of Health, confirmed that Safeway Stores in the area had marketed cookies infected with various kinds of insects and their larvae.

"Insect evidence such as webbing, traces, immature moth larvae, and mature Indian Meal Moth adults, were observed in many of the cookie packages investigated," Waldron said in his official report.

"At my suggestion, Mr. Jerry Van Dorne, Distribution Manager for Safeway Stores Inc., was issued a written notice to eliminate all the cookie cases in the storage areas," Waldron continued. "The van when emptied, while the food products were being transferred with methyl bromide, was then to be sprayed on the inside with a non toxic insecticide."

The Health Department investigation was the direct result of a $50,000 lawsuit filed against Safeway by the Los Angeles Interfaith Committee to Aid Farm Workers, with the assistance of the Los Angeles County Public Health Physician, who stated it is, in his professional opinion, that the presence of such insects in the packages of cookies and bakery products which were examined constitutes a potentially extreme hazard to the health of any person consuming same.

SANITATION SURVEY HITS SAFEWAY

A survey of 34 Safeway stores in the Los Angeles area revealed sanitation conditions considerably less than satisfactory.

Among the most common violations listed were:

- "Filthy employee toilet facilities;"
- "Damaged and/or defective equipment in the refrigerator section; improper refrigeration conditions which allow rapid growth of bacteria on meat and dairy products;"
- "Rat poison located in the floor section of the store. Mice and/or rat droppings in the next case, and on grocery shelves. Filled rat trap up in aisle;"
- "Floors, shelves, baskets filthy, spilled flour and sugar left on shelves and floors;"
- "Broken bottles of chemicals on shelves in the meat case, and on grocery shelves.

San Francisco

PUTRID PORK CHOPS

A $27 million class-action suit against Safeway stores, Inc., charges the giant chain with selling pork chops composed in part of diseased, contaminated, filthy, putrid or decomposed materials, claiming such pork is sold in unsanitary conditions which rendered them unwholesome, diseased and injurious to health.

In a suit reporting the outcome, the suit, done, by Bake Schiele Labs of Berkeley, cites one sample "induced by a putrid substance" which the scientists say if produced by an "organism associated with local contamination resulting from mishandling of the meat."

The suit was filed in Alameda Co. Superior Court with two consumers, James H. Gaskas and Cathryn A. Perceca as plaintiffs. Chuck Farnsworth, an attorney for the two plaintiffs, says that news reports about the suit prompted several confectioners to withdraw their products from Safeway's pork chops.

MISSING USDA LABELS

Safeway has been charged with—and has admitted—missing "USDA choice" and "USDA prime" labels on some of its meat products.

Such labels are by law supposed to be attached to prime and choice meat products, but only. However, investigators found that Safeway had been selling extensives of milk and cheese which were given labels of their choice and special quality. In an investigation into Safeway Stores, Inc., 1971 resulted in convictions and fines of Safeway officials, as has a recent case in El Paso, a recent indictment in the Dallas area is still pending.

Government evidence in the 1971 case in the Dallas area included black and white and color photographs showing the warehouse interior littered with debris from sinks and carcasses stained by rats. Government exhibits also showed rats amid floor scraps and a nest of newborn rats (see picture). The government alleges in the recent Dallas case that food at the warehouse is contaminated by the rats' urine and fecal droppings. The federal indictment names Safeway and three of its vice presidents, Horace A. Justice, Safeway's division manager for the Dallas area, as defendants.

In the El Paso case, a U.S. District Court fined Safeway and three of its officials a total of $7,500 for storing bags of flour in a warehouse where they were exposed to contamination by rodents and birds.

Washington D.C.

TOO MUCH FAT IN HAMBERGER

Safeway has been warned by city food inspectors here that it is selling ground beef with a fat content higher than that allowed by city law.

City inspectors found that 5 to 7 ounces of Safeway ground hamburger contained from 21 to 23 percent of fat. Only 15 percent of ground beef is allowed by D.C. law.

Washington

SAFEWAY BEefs WITH DOUBLE THE PRICE

An investigation into Safeway Stores in Seattle and Tacoma revealed a systematic pattern of substituting beef liver for calf liver, whereby Safeway substituted 70 cents per pound premium on sales. Beef liver normally sells for 75 cents a pound, while calf liver commands $1.49 per pound.

The inquiry was conducted by Hub Segur, on the staff of the Interfaith Committee to Aid Farm Workers, with the assistance of Gretchen Davis, a professional meat expert.

Their study also revealed that Safeway commonly sold club steak as eye steak, a practice reported at Safeway stores in other parts of the country.

Oregon

FEDERAL INVESTIGATION FINDS MEAT PLANT "UNACCEPTABLE"

LOS ANGELES, California--An investigation by the California Assembly Committee on Agriculture, Food and Nutrition has revealed that growers have harvested pesticide-contaminated lettuce and farmed for retailers like Safeway have marketed it, endangering the health of consumers and farm workers alike. In some cases such workers have died or been injured against the warnings of State Agriculture Commissioners, and criminal indictments against such parties may be forthcoming.

The investigation grew out of reports early this year that lettuce in California's Imperial Valley was showing signs of contamination from the use of the nerve gas pesticide Mon-Oars, by Imperial County Agricultural Commissioner Claude Finnell uncovered serious cases of residues in excess of the legal tolerance.

However, hearings before the Committee revealed that much of the lettuce was harvested, shipped, consumed, and sold that farm workers and consumers alike had experienced symptoms--sometimes deadly--due to exposure to the pesticide. California Assemblyman Richard Alatorre (D-Los Angeles) visited the Imperial Valley and talked to farm workers who had harvested the crops.

"I saw a man whose hands were being eaten away," Alatorre said. "You could see the irritation, the scratchiness. I saw men whose hands looked rotten or who had stores along their arms that had not been there before. The latter proved that farm workers have no protection against such contamination, since there are no legal tolerances established for workers handling contaminated crops."

Assembly Speaker Bob Moretti, speaking before the Committee and also noting the lack of protection for farm workers, said, "Just as we cannot tolerate using the consumers' food plate as a testing ground for pesticide research, we cannot tolerate the use of farm workers as laboratory mice for discovering the human health effects of new pesticides."

The Committee hearings revealed that the Imperial Valley's lettuce cultivation is suffering severe pesticide contamination, as much as 6.5 ppm of the legal maximum, much of the Imperial Valley lettuce crop was marketed by stores such as Safeway, consumed by the public, with only a fraction destroyed by federal officials. A sampling of areas around the country revealed:

- A large shipment of lettuce with a Monitor reading of 2.5 ppm of the pesticide was sold and consumed in L.A.
- Lettuce bearing a residue of 6.5 ppm was consumed by the public in Colorado.
- An assembly of lettuce was grown by the Safeway Store at High Street and San Jose Avenue in San Francisco.
- Visitors of a lab who ate that night, and probably woke up 100 times. All the time I felt like vomiting but didn't.

In each of the areas I worked in the lighter pre harvest operations, I have been afflicted with the following symptoms of pesticide poisoning--frequent shortness of breath, general weakness of body, pain in the legs and arms, and skin problems such as rashes. When I was first afflicted with these problems, I went to a doctor in Colorado, he told me that my condition was a result of the pesticides used by the growers from whom I worked, he gave me some medication.

M.R., Calexico

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Assemblyman Speaker Moretti: Neither farm workers nor consumers should be used as pesticide guinea pigs.

CONSUMERS & FARM WORKERS RECOUNT Horrors of lettuce poisoning

On February 19, 1973, I ate at a small cafe on Sacramento Avenue in Berkeley. I ordered a green salad. The waitress started to pick leaves off a head of lettuce, but commented that all the leaves had small black holes bored in them. She kept picking away the leaves, and throwing them out. Finally, she had me a whole head of the leaves near the center of the head of lettuce, but even these had black marks on them. I ate the leaves, and anything else for lunch. About three hours later, I began to feel severe stomach pains and swell. All night I felt the stomach pains--they were sharp, like under pain--and I woke up the next day feeling nauseous. I couldn't sleep well that night, and probably woke up 200 times. All the time I felt like vomiting but didn't.

Berkeley

On March 4, 1973, my wife made a large salad with lettuce she had bought from the Safeway Store at High Street and MacArthur Blvd. in Oakland. I ate some of that dive Monday, March 5, I was sick. I couldn't sleep, I felt like vomiting but couldn't, and felt nauseous. I couldn't perform my duties as postman I felt so sick, and stayed home March 5th and 6th. I didn't eat anymore lettuce, and on March 7th I felt well enough to return to work.

-Carl E. Hanna

Oakland

- On February 26, 1973, I purchased some lettuce at the Mayfair Market at the corner of Ocean and Sansome in San Francisco. I have been trying generally to eat a lot of lettuce recently because I'm dieting. After eating some of the lettuce on about February 28th, I felt extremely nauseous. That night, I couldn't sleep. I felt weak, had a headache and was vomiting. The next day I ate some more of the lettuce and the symptoms continued. I continued to eat the lettuce on the days that followed. I have since felt better and the symptoms have subsided.

-Dolores Circle

San Francisco

Incorrectly labeled safe-keep t-bone steak

GRAPHIC EVIDENCE of how a lab test used by state officials failed to detect by examination the above meat cuts. The top one was pur- chased as a Safeway store in Los Angeles on February 20, 1973. It is clearly labeled "T-bone steak," yet the package actually contained a piece of boneless meat. The bottom sample is a correctly labeled tradesman's cut of boneless meat.

Safeway President Defends High Reef Prices

SAN ANTONIO, Texas--With consumers across the country outraged at the price of beef and, in some cases, antibiotics charged to lower prices, William S. Mitchell, President of Safeway Stores, Inc., has repeatedly voiced the fact that "Quite a lot of prices are not too high." Mitchell had a receptive audience for his comments--the American National Cattlemen's Association, meeting in convention here. "The first thing I think the producers, and the retailers, must do," he said, "is show down the idea that beef prices are too high."

National T.V. Poll

Safeway customers back lettuce boycott

BOSTON, Massachusetts--Safeway Stores, Inc., the second largest food chain in the country, in effect sponsored a referendum on the United Farm Workers lettuce boycott and lost badly.

When "The Advocates", a nationally broadcast program of the educational and national television network, scheduled a debate, "A Race for Consumption: I Support the National Lettuce Boycott?" Safeway, the second largest food chain, spent an estimated $25,000 in advertising urging its customers to view the program and decide for themselves whether to support or not support the lettuce boycott, with only 3% voting against it.

In the 6th week of the Advocate, Safeway is supporting the boycott, speaking against the boycott was a coalition of Teamsters Union and grower representatives.
We have a profound obligation to our neighbors, the Farm Workers out of the fields, to make sure that they are provided with a safe and healthy environment in which to grow our food. We must be concerned that there are no pesticides in our lettuce and other vegetables. If we cannot grow latino farm workers, we cannot grow healthy lettuce.

The Safe Food Act of 1970 created a shocking revelation: most of the chemicals in our food are banned for human use. But that is only part of the problem. Far more pesticides are sold for industrial use on the farm than are used in our homes. We must be aware of the chemicals we are being exposed to.

The following is a listing of various chemicals found on lettuce samples by the Federal Drug Administration during the fiscal year 1975.

**Aldrin**
**BHC (Benzene Hexachloride)**
**DDT**
**Diazinon**
**Dieldrin**
**Endrin**
**Endosulfan; thiodan**
**Elatine**
**Lindane**
**Malathion**
**Methyl Paraichlori; Metacide**
**Oxon; Chestnut**
**Parathion**
**Paraichlor**
**Phosdrin; meuphos**
**TEG; DEK; Khorathene**
**Toxaphene**
**Zineb**
**Carbaryl**
**Carbaryl-sevin**
**Fluorine Compounds**
**Dacthal; Dimethyl**
**Dimehyl**
**PCNB**
**Sulfotep**
**Hexachlorophenol**
**Penta Chloro Analine**

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