

NPA Standards of Identity – Proposed Position

Background:

FDA's Nutrition Innovation Strategy pledged to revisit hundreds of standards of identity (SOI), adopted primarily in the 1940s to 1960s covering numerous traditional foods including macaroni and noodle products. These regulations are intended to protect consumer expectations associated with the defined names. FDA seeks public comment on how best to modernize standards to improve the nutrition and healthfulness of standardized foods, foster innovation, and with a particular focus on "horizontal" approaches that allow for rule changes that can be applied across-the-board.

Key Consideration Points:

- Current SOI were established in the 1940's. 79 years later, marketplace and consumer demand, along with industry innovations, suggests the need for modernization/more flexibility in standards regulation.
- The SOI remains vital to protecting consumer expectations for "noodle" and "macaroni" products that ensure a high quality product made from "semolina, durum flour, farina, or flour" (as specified by the current SOI).
- NPA in recent years has brought to FDA's attention a growing number of products using the term "noodles" to describe vegetable/fruit based ingredients that are formed into a "noodle" shape. These products are not objectionable, but should be named and labeled in a manner that prominently distinguishes them from standardized "noodle" products. This approach would also be appropriate for "macaroni" products as well. NPA's approach is designed to advance FDA's stated preference for an "across-the-board," horizontal approach.

Proposed NPA Position:

NPA continues to support current Standards of Identity for macaroni and noodle products. Products that are named or identified as "macaroni" or "noodle" must comply with the standard of identity, with new flexibility for modified products that will foster innovation. The proposed approach takes account of an evolving marketplace and consumer trends.

- **Modified Products with Qualified Name Permitted.** New uses of "macaroni" and "noodle" for products that meet the SOI are permitted provided the product name also include the principal ingredient(s) that are not permitted by the "macaroni" and "noodle" standards. Failure to identify the modified "macaroni" and "noodle" product in this manner shall render the food misbranded.
- **Allowance for All Ingredients.** When the modified macaroni or noodle product is properly named, there is no restriction on the vegetables, fruits or other characterizing ingredients that may be used in flour or any other form as long as the minimums outlined in the standard are met.
- **Egg Minimum for Modified Foods.** Only for modified foods, that do not meet the noodle standard, with an appropriately qualified name (above) are exempt from the egg minimum.

- **Flexible Use of Shapes.** Modifying the existing SOI to remove only the shape dimensions currently specified in the SOI. The update would allow manufactures to move to calling all products “macaroni” or “noodle” products if they meet the SOI, excluding the dimensions, with the shape of the “macaroni” or “noodle” product listed as the fanciful name. Shape names shall not be misleading and should be based on published data and consumer expectation of the named shape.
- **Remove Upper Limits of nutrients and ingredients.**
 - **Upper Limits for Vitamins and Minerals** – Removing the upper limits of the required vitamins and minerals in “enriched macaroni” and “enriched noodle” product will provide better allowances for natural variance in ingredients and manufacturing variances. The intention of the removal of upper limits is to better align “macaroni” and “noodle” product standards with other grain product standards like enriched wheat flour (137.165), enriched self-rising flour (137.185), enriched bread, rolls, and buns (136.115). Manufactures would continue to use good manufacturing practices (GMPs) using the remaining minimum values for vitamins and minerals a minimum target value helping to ensure products are not intentionally over enriched.
 - **Upper Limits on Egg White Solids and Protein Targets including allowance for additional protein sources** – Macaroni Products: Removing the upper limits for egg white allows for flexibility in formulation. As an example, more egg whites provide a firmer macaroni product for use in retort/soup applications. Macaroni and Noodle Products: Removing the upper limits for protein and providing for additional sources of protein a for innovation in the protein space.
- **Establish a Standard for Enriched Semolina and Enriched Durum Flour.** Establishing SOIs for Enriched Semolina and Enriched Durum Flour the regulations will allow for innovation outside of the SOI for “macaroni” and “noodle” products but continue to provide accessible enriched food for the general public. The proposed SOI would set enrichment levels that are equivalent to the current SOI for “enriched macaroni” and “enriched noodle” products. Allows for enrichment in non-standardized pasta products.