

score for "Grade A" would be 78. A substantial portion of the commercial pack should qualify for this grade.

The remaining grades for fish sticks might be similarly established, possibly with "Grade B" at a score of not less than 60. Any product not rating over 35 would fall into "Grade C", which would be a sub-standard category allowing considerable variation in conformity to color, size and shape. A given per cent of broken sticks, some separation of breadding from the fish and a reasonable amount of carbon specks would be allowed. Considerable loss of the characteristic good flavor and odor might be accepted here and some slight undesirable flavor and texture changes tolerated.

We are continuing the study on standards, in close cooperation with the industry subcommittee, to insure a realistic and workable standard for use if the government is asked to initiate this valuable aid in the marketing of this fishery product.

Standards Voluntarios Federales para Croquetas de Pescado

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Abstracto

El éxito fenomenal de las croquetas de pescado en el mercado debe ser fomentado para asegurar aceptación entusiástica de este nuevo producto.

Con este fin, un grupo de productores en la industria organizó un Comité de las Croquetas de Pescado en la Convención de Cleveland en abril de 1954. Este Comité pidió da cooperación del Fish and Wildlife Service para obtener información sobre standards voluntarios federales para croquetas de pescado.

Los standards se basan sobre el siguiente criterio.

- a) El color de las croquetas
- b) La apariencia, color, textura y sabor de la harina y aceite así como la carne
- c) Defectos presentes; por ejemplo, presencia de espinas, piel, manchas oscuras y otras características no deseables.

How Voluntary Quality Standards Work in the Frozen Fruit and Vegetable Industry

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Something like the notes of reveille which awaken a slumbering military camp to action, I would like to sound off a few preliminary notes to remind

you of the size of the job ahead of you. During the last 55 seconds, five babies were born in the United States. In the next 20 minutes, over 100 more will be born. 1954 will welcome over four million new babies—over four million prospective new customers for you. What are your plans for them? How well will you discharge the moral responsibility of offering them ever more nutritious, more delicious food? Will you act as if every one of them were your own flesh and blood?

The frozen food industry as a whole has big plans for expanded service. In 1954 over six billion pounds of frozen foods will be consumed, about a 350 per cent increase in 10 years. Future prospects look even brighter for more and more customer enthusiasm over the time-saving convenience, elimination of seasons, and peak-of-perfection freshness made so widely available through quick-freezing.

While it is true that the modern bride is more tempted to serve frozen fillets, or fish sticks, or breaded shrimp than when it was necessary to start a meal by cleaning or deveining raw seafood, yet United States statistics show only a meager growth of about 12 per cent in the national seafood pack frozen in the last 10 years. Challenging the seafood producer is the brighter record of home freezer capacity—a 7,500 per cent increase in the last 8 years!

It is important to determine how ocean products, which pioneered the frozen food industry, can cease being laggards and move ahead to gain prominence in the freezer cabinets of today. Certainly the modern housewife welcomes the new convenience of frozen seafoods, but, too often perhaps, she is dubious about seafood quality and whether the family would be satisfied to have her repeat these frozen time-savers. Otherwise there would seem to be little reason for such an all-time record high in supplies of frozen fish and shrimp backed up in refrigerated warehouses this month.

In considering the vitally important objective of raising quality standards, examine the experience of other frozen foods with voluntary grade labeling. The U. S. Department of Agriculture has promulgated standards for grades for 11 frozen fruits, 5 juice concentrates and 18 frozen vegetables, plus cooked squash and French fried potatoes. Some standards for grades are new this year; others have been in use for a decade or so. Such grades offer both advantages and disadvantages.

Several points on the asset side deserve stressing. It is easy to become a processor as every gardener with a home freezer knows. Many of the smaller processors among the 1,000 and more in this young industry have found the official grades to be a useful measuring stick and have learned to pack more uniform quality products.

An important contribution of grades to a rapidly growing industry, always short of cash for expansion, has been to facilitate the obtaining of loans on frozen foods in warehouses. The banker making the loan is not basically interested in the flavor or nutrition within the package but rather in such specification of grade as may help to determine value. Grades, in like fashion, are useful in the settlement of damage claims.

Many of our independent frozen food distributors, just as in the case of chain store buyers, own private labels themselves, or jointly with cooperating firms. These buyers find government grades a useful shorthand in helping specify their needs since they lack personal inspection by their own repre-

sentatives at the packing plant. The buyer usually knows, however, the kind of product which comes from a packer and he expects to sample the lot upon receipt.

Probably the most advantageous use of official grades is in selling frozen fruits and vegetables to large institutional users. Where hundreds or thousands of personnel are fed in industrial plants, hotels, hospitals, or government establishments, the buyers frequently must decide between raw or frozen products. Besides the convenience and the lack of waste, frozen foods have the great advantage of offering uniform quality, whereas raw produce is highly variable. Yet the buyer must be sure of obtaining the promised uniform quality when the feeding of so many is involved. Official grades help to give him that assurance.

Government agencies and many other establishments specify that grade certificates accompany bids. If there is a dispute between buyer and seller as to grade at the time of delivery, the official inspector acts as an arbitrator.

Against the advantages for voluntary government grading cited above must be weighed some of the disadvantages that the frozen food industry have found.

Notwithstanding any printed specifications, grading decidedly depends upon judgment and is subject to human fallacy, temptations and disagreements. One packer, for example, reports taking a substantial loss to get rid of a Grade C vegetable to a broker—and thereby lost out on a big government order! The broker had had the frozen lot reinspected and found he could present a Grade A certificate and an unbeatable low price to the government purchasing agent. Another packer who pays for continuous government inspection states that it is only human nature to expect the government agent who is going to live with him to favor him.

Past experience indicates that the differences in judgment may be clearly demonstrated when a new inspector replaces an older man. The new man does not have the experience and knowledge but may follow his instruction sheets literally. As a result there will be a noticeable difference in the grades which these men give to the produce.

Unfortunately there is a good deal of waste of the customer's and/or taxpayer's dollar involved in grade labelling. The Florida Citrus Code, for example, assesses producers for United States Department of Agriculture inspectors acting as agents of the State. It seems to be general industry opinion that not much, if any, attention is paid thereafter to the grades. One packer observed that he has yet to see a shipment labelled "sub-standard". Maybe the inspectors eat what they reject. Anyway, he estimates the needless cost to the industry at a half-million dollars.

Another packer points out that there may be virtue in grading a frozen product to determine whether it is acceptable or unacceptable under industry standards, just as poultry or meats are inspected (or the "sterling" stamp is permitted on silverware) but he suggests that the real waste is in trying to define official degrees of mediocrity. His frozen brand uses more detailed inspection criteria for its own protection (A1, A2, A3, B1, B2, B3 etc.) and he finds that their "B2" will regularly receive an "A" grade if submitted to a government inspector.

The advantages that official grades offer frozen food packers, wholesale distributors, or chain store private label and large institutional buyers in

dealing with their principals have been cited, plus some stumbling blocks which you should evaluate. Those consulted are all experts within the trade, qualified to judge what a grade means, and equipped to sample large lots prior to acceptance.

Any advantages to the homemaker of grade labelling on retail packages have not been cited. This is because responsible members of the frozen food industry generally agree that she will not be better informed, but rather misinformed. It is the old story of a little knowledge being a dangerous thing. Take every precaution to protect health and safety and honest measurement for each family—but don't try to tell the individual what his taste should be!

Suppose there were a hundred samples of peas from a hundred growers scattered from coast to coast. Suppose a hundred individuals judge which are A, B, C and D. How would each decide on the degrees between smooth and wrinkled, large and small, too green and too pale, more or less tender, more or less mature, more or less nutritious, insipid or delicious. How would each weigh all these varying degrees to determine which are Grade A. How few would agree! Yet why is the government inspector qualified to tell anyone that he doesn't know what he likes in peas. Favorite foods are reordered because of their flavor, and for children because of the nutritious value believed to be present. But neither flavor nor nutrition is graded by the government inspector and the grades do not mean quality of appeal to the ultimate consumer.

It is suggested that voluntary grade standards deserve study as possible tools of value within the trade itself, but that they should only be used between experts where they can be of demonstrable value because they are fully understood. Their very A-B-C simplicity is misleading to the uninitiated, just like the druggist's pills which the doctor and the law cautions against issuing except on prescription.

You are confronted with a grave responsibility as your products move more and more through frozen food cabinets. Where formerly the housewife inspected and even smelled the raw product for herself, or at worst placed her trust in her friendly grocer, now she and he see only a package. You, the seafood processor, have assumed her responsibility for the quality of the raw material and its preservation. Keep faith with her. Give some thought as to why the precautionary inspection of fish and shell-fish should not be just as important a government service as in the case of turkeys or pork. Consider what other industries have done without government aid. For example, the Underwriters Laboratory seal of inspection on a radio set assures you that forgetfulness in leaving it turned on during a trip will not result in your house catching fire.

The Shrimp Association of the Americas deserves every support for the standards which were approved last July in Mexico City. The acid test of accomplishment will be the extent to which they are observed and enforced, and progressively raised as the industry is able to improve its techniques.

You will have to compete for space in the frozen food cabinet with every other packer of frozen meats, poultry, prepared foods, etc. For your own selfish advantage it would seem obvious that every seafood leader should join with every other leader to raise industry standards and win customer

enthusiasm. The successful distributors who are members of our progressive National Wholesale Frozen Food Distributors Association like to do business with that kind of leader.

Como los Standards Voluntarios de Calidad Trabajan en la Industria de Frutas y Verduras Congeladas

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Abstracto

A pesar de que el consumo de alimentos congelados en los Estados Unidos ha aumentado 350 por ciento en 10 años, el empaque de productos marinos congelados solo ha aumentado un 12 por ciento. Con un incremento de 7500 por ciento en capacidad refrigeradora en el hogar en ocho años, la industria de mariscos tiene un enorme mercado disponible.

Parece que la falta de los productos pesqueros congelados en mantenerse a la par del resto de los demás productos alimenticios congelados, es lo que causa que la ama de casa dude la calidad de los mariscos ofrecidos. Standards gradatorios parecen ser necesarios. Los standards facilitan el obtener préstamos sobre productos congelados en las bodegas, y son muy útiles para ayudar en la venta a compradores de instituciones grandes. Standards gradatorios aún dependen del juicio humano y será difícil en la práctica el obtener una uniformidad estricta. La utilidad de los standards depende en la forma en que estos son observados y enforzados.

DISCUSSION

Industry Session

Discussion Leader: JAMES E. BARR

Discussion Panel: LOUIS FISCHER, J. C. FERGUSON,
J. ROY DUGGAN, PEDRO PINSON

Voluntary Government Standards For Fishery Products

A. W. ANDERSON

- Q. Fieger: Mr. Anderson, don't you feel that with frozen food there is the same problem as with fresh food, in that from the time it leaves the plant until it gets to the consumer you don't know what kind of handling is given to the material. I think that we need a lot of education in the stores on the proper handling of frozen foods.