

RECOMMENDED VOLUNTARY OPERATING PRACTICES FOR THE HANDLING OF CONSUMER PACKAGED FROZEN FOODS

The frozen food industry trade groups which have joined in approving these recommended voluntary operating practices have done so in recognition of their mutual responsibilities to the consuming public. They regard these responsibilities as requiring a good faith, organized effort on their part to continue making progress in improving operating practices in the handling and distribution of frozen foods.

These recommended voluntary operating practices are the result of extensive study by the industry with scientific advice and assistance. They have been given a most thorough consideration and are both sound and practical. In the context of the industry's program of progressive improvement, these far-reaching initial practices are endorsed by the undersigned but they are not to replace in any instance more rigid company or industry practices already in effect (such as in the frozen citrus concentrate industry). The industry's goal is to reach a 0° temperature from packer to retailer. These initial practices will be re-evaluated within 2 years.

The development of these goals is based on the principle that voluntary action undertaken by industry members will result in greater, as well as more rapid improvement in handling practices than would be produced by the use of force through the imposition of compulsory laws and regulations. The voluntary approach is the most realistic and the most effective, because these goals do not lend themselves to regulation.

This method is desirable to obtain and encourage a maximum of unified and enthusiastic cooperation from industry members. Harmful, unnecessary, and costly delays and interruptions in the supplying of high quality frozen foods to the public will be avoided by utilizing voluntary means instead of compulsion. The industry with its practical experience and knowledge, backed by guidance and assistance from scientific authorities, is better able to develop sound practices for meeting desirable goals to afford consumers high quality frozen food products. Compulsion in this matter serves neither the consumer interest nor the public interest.

Public health is not involved in this manner. The matters dealt with in these suggested practices relate to the merchandising aspects of the selling of frozen foods.

The recommended voluntary operating practices represent voluntary goals for achievement by the industry for the current year as well as for future years. We pledge in good faith our best efforts to achieve these goals. This commitment on our part is voluntarily accepted in recognition of our responsibilities. The program outlined is a serious effort to do the job in the best possible way.

We recognize the desirability of achieving a goal of a reasonably uniform temperature of 0° F. for the commercial handling of frozen foods. This objective must be applied with the understanding that all frozen foods do not require the same temperature levels for proper preservation; that the time in which frozen foods are held at a given temperature is an essential consideration since frozen foods held at a higher than recommended temperature for a brief time will not produce any distinguishable change in the product. The same objective obviously does not apply and these operating practices do not cover products intended to be sold in other than the frozen state.

These recommended voluntary operating practices are based on findings of extensive studies in frozen-food time-temperature tolerances by the Western Utilization Research and Development Laboratory of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. These findings were concurred in by the Refrigeration Research Foundation.

Foods for freezing should be promptly delivered to the plant where they should be processed and packaged with all reasonable promptness.

1. Similar care should be used by processors without freezing facilities in moving packaged product to refrigerated warehouses for freezing.

2. Where processor has his own freezer and warehouse, product should leave the warehouse at 0° F., or lower.

3. In movement from processor, who freezes but does not have sufficient warehouse space to complete the freezing, the product should leave processor's