

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
COUNCIL ON WAGE AND PRICE STABILITY
726 JACKSON PLACE, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, October 13, 1976

FOR INFORMATION CALL:
(202) 456-6757

COUNCIL REACTS TO FDA BABY FOOD
LABEL REQUIREMENTS

Proposed regulations by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requiring percentage ingredient labeling of baby food were the subject of a filing today by the Council on Wage and Price Stability (Council). Supporting the concept of improved information for consumers, the Council called attention to several difficulties in FDA's rules and urged that evidence of additional benefits from the proposed method of ingredient labeling be considered and balanced with the extra costs of meeting the proposed standards.

In a discussion of the filing, William Lilley III, Acting Director of the Council, stated: "We support FDA's concern for an economic approach to baby food labeling. However, we hope they recognize the statistical difficulties presented in measuring and labeling ingredients. It is just not possible to have a system of minimum percentages for all ingredients in a multi-ingredient package. There has to be some downward variation. Our information is preliminary, but we are asking FDA to allow producers to label on a least cost basis. We believe competition in the industry should be recognized and used to serve the consumer."

In addition to Lilley's comments, the Council's filing discussed:

- o The possible tradeoffs between perfect information, and other important qualitative aspects in the production of baby food, pointing out the potential losses which might accrue to consumers;
- o An approach which FDA might take in evaluating the rules prior to their promulgation, again focusing on the tradeoffs between label information and price; and
- o The importance of statistically sound programs in which accuracy of labels and the number of ingredients measured are both of interest to the consumer.

o o o