



Negative Publicity for Pink Slime Leads to Removal

SHANNON LI
Staff Writer

Recently, there has been uproar over what the meat industry calls "boneless lean beef trimmings" (BLBT) which has been dubbed "pink slime." It consists of remaining beef scraps, connective tissue and fat that are more likely than other cuts of beef to be contaminated with diseases such as salmonella and E. coli, so it is sprayed with ammonium hydroxide to eliminate potential bacteria.

The use of BLBT has been approved by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA)

for the last two decades.

This substance can constitute up to 15 percent of ground beef without extra labeling. According to ABC News, 70 percent of ground beef sold in supermarkets within the United States contain "pink slime."

After ABC News' series of reports on the substance, public reaction caused many grocery stores and supermarkets to stop carrying products with the additive.

"If it's unhealthy, [...] we shouldn't be putting this kind of stuff into people's food," freshman Rosa Zheng said.

After parents and consumers insisted pink slime be removed from public schools, the USDA indicated that it would give school districts the option of choosing between ground beef with or without the additive. Following that announcement, many school districts stated they would stop using BLBT in their food.

The Alhambra Unified School District (AUSD) is one of those districts; the meat to be used for the 2012-2013 school year is guaranteed to be BLBT-free, according to director of AUSD's Food and Nutrition Services Vivien Watts.

"Pink slime" was first developed in 1994, when the public was concerned about the presence of E. coli and other diseases in beef. The founder of Beef Products Incorporated (BPI) created a system that disinfects meat using ammonium hydroxide. The production methods have led to concerns that it might be a risk to human health, even though there have been no reported cases of foodborne illnesses due to consumption of the product.

However, due to the public's health concerns over the product, many restaurants announced they would

discontinue using BPI products in their food. BPI also announced that it was suspending operations at three of its four plants as a result of the plummeting demand. Executives of Tyson Foods Inc. says the negative publicity has hurt demand and will reduce the supply of beef by two to three percent, which will likely drive up costs for consumers.

"If pink slime was a serious health problem, the USDA wouldn't allow it to be used in food," senior Ted Lin said.

"What makes pink slime so unappealing isn't its actual health content, but the bad publicity it has received."

Coke and Pepsi Remove Carcinogen

OLIVIA CHEUNG
News Editor

Coca-Cola Co. and PepsiCo. Inc., who, together, both account for ninety percent of the soda market, have decided to change their manufacturing processes.

As a result of a California law that mandates drinks containing a certain level of carcinogens to come with a cancer warning label, the two companies have decided to drop the potential carcinogen, 4-methylimidazole (4-MEI), instead of altering their labels.

This decision came after consumer-advocacy group, the Center for Science in the Public Interest, petitioned to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to ban the chemical. This additive is notably used in the caramel coloring often found in soft-drink products.

The FDA declared Coke and Pepsi's use of the chemical to be safe at its current level, but the companies ultimately decided to remove the compound.

"While we believe that there is no public health risk that justifies any such change, we did ask our caramel suppliers to take this step so that our products would not be subject to the requirement of a scientifically unfounded warning," Coca-Cola repre-

sentative Diana Garza-Ciarlante told the Associated Press.

However, both Pepsi and Coke claim that this is not a change to the soda recipe, saying that consumers will not notice the difference in taste.

"The caramel color in all of our products has been, is and always will be safe, and the Coca-Cola Company is not changing the world-famous formula for our Coca-Cola beverages. Over the years, we have updated our manufacturing processes from time to time, but never altered our secret formula," Coke spokesperson Ben Sheidler said in an email to FORBES.

Despite the American Beverage Association (ABA) pointing out that there is no scientific evidence that the chemical is a threat to the human health, its member companies had made adjustments to meet California's new standard but still uses caramel coloring in certain products.

"I'm indifferent about this, since although the entire issue may seem somewhat [ambiguous], people will most likely still drink the sodas, since the carcinogen didn't actually damage one's health," sophomore Diana Ly said. "Change is hard nowadays and it's just [...] simpler to stick to what they already know."

MOOR graphics by SHARON XU

PI Status Implemented to Raise CAHSEE and CST Scores

DEBORAH CHEN
Staff Writer

Motivation from others and self-determination are key ingredients to the success of high school students. All schools strive to help their students do the best they can, while simultaneously trying to ensure their students are receiving a good education so they can make continual progress.

Title I is a federally funded program that provides services to schools; its goal is to provide high-quality education for every student. All Title I funded schools and local education agencies that do not make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) are identified for Program Improvement (PI) under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act requires all states to ensure that their students meet the annual state standards in reading and mathematics. If these standards are not met, this puts the school in Program Improvement.

Two years ago, AHS was put under PI status for not meeting the

objectives that were set for CST and CAHSEE scores. These standards must be met for two consecutive years in order to get out of PI status. If no advancements are made during the first year, then the school will advance even further into PI status. This means that parents of children in that school will be given the choice of transferring their children to schools that are not designated as

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- Brad Walsh

"in need of improvement."

AHS met the requirements for the first year and is waiting for the results from this year. If the AYP requirements are met for two consecutive years, then AHS will exit the school improvement program.

"It's all on the students' self-motivation skills. Not a lot is wrong with AHS' teaching system, we just need to find a way to motivate our students," senior Lawrence Ku said.

When the PI status was implemented for Alhambra High in 2009, 53 percent or less of students were proficient or above for English, Mathematics, Science and Social Science.

In 2011, the annual yearly progress targets increased for three requirements. First, the required percentage of students who are proficient or above for high schools in English Language

Arts is 66.7 percent and 66.1 percent for mathematics. Second, the required percentage of students who are proficient or above for unified school districts, for high school districts and for County Offices of Education (COEs) for English Language Arts is 67 percent

and 67.3 percent for mathematics. Finally, to meet the Academic Performance Index (API) requirement for AYP purposes, a school must demonstrate a growth of at least 1 point or a minimum API score of at least 710. API was created to measure the academic performance and progress of schools in California.

"I want you guys as a school to blow the CSTs out of the water this year and do our best," Principal Brad Walsh said.



In Other
News...

Police investigating newspaper theft at an Arkansas university

Scientist uses physics to get out of a speeding ticket

Man tries smuggling gold coins in diapers

Corrections: Issue 10 indicated that school starts on Aug. 20; school actually begins on Aug. 21. Furthermore, the school play was on Mar. 14, not May. We apologize for any inconveniences.