

appropriate updates to the Dietary Guidelines.

Over 1,700 commenters specifically addressed the proposed provisions to implement the Dietary Guidelines' recommendation on limiting the levels of calories from fat and saturated fat. The majority of these commenters were parents and students. Many parents were concerned that the levels established by the Dietary Guidelines were too low for children and that overemphasizing the need to limit fat would lead to eating disorders. Other commenters suggested that the level for fat be set at 32 per cent, not 30 per cent, because they believed that student participation might decline if fat is reduced too much. The Department notes, however, that approximately three-quarters of the comments received from the public health sector agreed with the proposed levels.

The final regulation includes the current recommendations of the Dietary Guidelines for fat and saturated fat as proposed because the Dietary Guidelines represent the best scientific knowledge on nutrition currently available for everyone above the age of two. Moreover, Congress mandated that school meals comply with the Dietary Guidelines in recognition of the fact that they represent scientific consensus. Given this statutory mandate, the Department has no authority to alter the current recommendations regarding limits on fat and saturated fat.

The Department recognizes the importance of encouraging children to accept meals with reduced fat content. Merely enacting policies will not accomplish change. That is why USDA established Team Nutrition to implement "Making Food Choices," our nutrition education, training and technical assistance effort. The mission of Team Nutrition is to improve the health of children by creating innovative public and private partnerships that promote healthy food choices through the media, schools, at home and the community.

As part of this overall effort, the Department has established the Children's Nutrition Campaign—a multi-faceted education program delivered through the media, in schools and at home that builds skills and motivates children to make healthy food choices. The campaign will bring proven, focused, science-based nutrition messages to children in a language that they understand while strengthening social support for children's healthy food choices among parents, educators and food service professionals. To accomplish this goal, the Department is building partnerships with public and

private sector organizations, such as the Walt Disney Company, Scholastic Inc. and the National PTA to name only a few.

The Department is also promoting a Training Plan for Healthy School Meals—a strategic plan for "change-driven" training to provide support to school food service personnel implementing the Dietary Guidelines. Through this plan, the Department will ensure that school nutrition and food service personnel have the education, motivation, training, and skills necessary to provide healthy meals that are appealing to the children and meet the nutrition standards established by this rule. As initial steps in this approach, the Department has developed improved recipes for schools and is working with the American Culinary Federation to share recipes and techniques in food preparation with the school food service community.

In Fiscal Year 1995, the Department is also awarding \$4.4 million in Team Nutrition Grants to enable States to start or expand training and technical assistance activities for local food service personnel. The Department expects these grants to result in more expeditious compliance with the Dietary Guidelines.

The Department considers that providing accurate information about nutrition through the Children's Nutrition Campaign, as well as assistance with meal planning and preparation offered through the Training Plan for Healthy School Meals, will go far toward maintaining, or even increasing, participation in more healthful school meal programs.

To comply with the Dietary Guidelines, schools will also need to decrease the levels of sodium and cholesterol and increase the amount of dietary fiber and total carbohydrates in school meals. The Department did not propose specific levels for these components because numeric targets are not established by the current Dietary Guidelines. However, progress in this area will be assessed in a variety of ways including gradual reductions in sodium, and if necessary, cholesterol levels, and increased use of vegetables, fruits and grain products.

In addition, the Department did not propose measuring sugar or carbohydrate levels or the school's success in offering a variety of foods. As stated in the June 10th proposal, specific levels are not established by the current Dietary Guidelines for these components. The Department believes, however, that the provisions of this final rule actively promote an increase in the

amount and variety of fruits, vegetables and grain products in school meals.

Approximately 2,600 comments addressed one or more of the above issues. The large majority of these were from school food service personnel, although more than 250 were from the public health community, with the majority of these agreeing with the Department's decision not to establish numeric levels. With respect to the recommendations on sodium, dietary fiber, and cholesterol, the number who supported including the recommendations without specific limits was about the same as the number who wanted a specific limit. For sugar and other carbohydrates, the majority suggested that the Department establish numeric levels. At this time, the Dietary Guidelines do not recommend quantitative levels of sodium, fiber, cholesterol, sugar or carbohydrates. Therefore, the final rule does not establish any numeric standards for any of these nutrients or dietary components. The provisions on the Dietary Guidelines are found at § 210.10(b) and § 220.8(a).

Additional RDA/Tolerances for RDA

Over 300 commenters, approximately half from the school food service community, addressed the minimum standards for RDA and calories. Some commenters recommended additional nutrients that should be measured such as: potassium, thiamine, riboflavin, copper, magnesium, zinc and B vitamins. Others asked that tolerance levels for meeting the required nutrients and calorie levels be established. As stated in the June 10th proposal, the included nutrients were chosen because they are the key nutrients that promote growth and development. Moreover, the presence of some of these nutrients is an indication that other important nutrients such as those suggested by commenters are present as well. Further, they are consistent with those required in the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act of 1990 (Pub. L. 101-535) and, thus, are clearly identified on labels or food specifications. The Department considers that measurement of nutrients would be too complex and burdensome if they are not included on labels. Therefore, the Department does not intend to add any other nutrients to those already proposed. Finally, with respect to tolerances, the Department does not consider it appropriate to include them as part of the regulatory standards, since those standards represent minimums which school food authorities should always strive to meet. The Department also notes that, as will be discussed later in this preamble,