

cially in developed countries, and put it in a refrigerator. They are not going to eat it the next day because they shop once a week or whatever, so they want it to have a longer shelf life once the food gets into the home. That means 40-45 days of shelf life from the time of harvesting to the consumer. One of the best examples of that, even in the United States, is strawberries. You pick strawberries, you put them in a basket and put them in a refrigerator, and in three days, the basket is moldy. A small dose of radiation makes them last for about three weeks. Then you have something that the consumers are willing to pay for. . . .

**Q:** Do you think there is an artificial interest among these groups against science?

**Labuza:** Oh yes. There are a lot of groups against science.

There are a number of groups in the United States that feel and think that we have to go back to the old ways, that science is degrading our moral philosophy, adding poison to food, and we are going to die, that science is producing cancer. They tend to forget to look at the statistics and look at what mankind ate in the old days, and the fact that they lived maybe 35-40 years, and that they died so much of food poisoning. You know, when you give them those numbers they just ignore them. When you are an anti-science person it is easy to ignore whatever you want to ignore and only believe what you want to believe in. And I think that is one of our real problems.

**Q:** What do they want? A new Dark Age?

**Labuza:** Ha, ha. I think so. I think so.

## A beneficial technology poisoned by the anti-nukes

There seems to be no end to the lies the anti-nuclear movement invents about food irradiation—and the numbers of people who will fall for them.

The propaganda has reached new depths of deception in New Jersey, a state that has pioneered in the development of low-level irradiation to kill insects and bacteria. If New Jersey legislators do not stop the proposed two-year moratorium on food irradiation, the Garden State will go on record opposing science and supporting the lies of the well-funded anti-nuclear movement. The moratorium was an ill-conceived compromise proposed by the State Health Department. Although the department itself has ruled irradiated foods to be safe and wholesome, it feared that without such a compromise the anti-nuclear lobby would succeed in achieving a permanent ban on the technology.

The professional anti-nuclear activists in New Jersey have no concern for truth. Typical of their propaganda is a leaflet against food irradiation adorned with a cartoon of a wicked witch, saying, "Eat it my pretty little guinea pig," as she force feeds children. Various leaflets suggest that irradiated food will "poison" people, that it is a plot on the part of greedy industrialists, that animals and people have been harmed by eating it.

Using the logic of the anti-food-irradiation lobby, which claims that "unique radiolytic products" are produced by irradiation, the New Jersey state legislature should also ban cooked foods as well as canned foods (which are heat processed), because the radiolytic products found are the same in all cases!

The antinukes have had their arguments refuted time after time by scientists and state and federal agencies. In

the Dec. 30 *Federal Register*, the Food and Drug Administration published a detailed rebuttal to every objection raised to the FDA's ruling that permits food irradiation use for fresh pork, disinfestation of produce, and growth inhibition (such as sprouts in onions). The FDA denied requests for hearings on these objections, stating after a review of each objection, "A hearing will not be granted on the basis of mere allegations or general descriptions of positions and contentions."

Food irradiation is the most researched food process in man's history. The studies began during World War II, when researchers were looking for ways to supply battlefield troops with wholesome, tasty food. Today, more than 40 years of research and thousands of studies later, the technology has the full weight of the international scientific community attesting to the safety and wholesomeness of the product.

Food irradiation at low doses can prolong the shelf life of fruits and vegetables, kill the parasitical trichina worm in pork and the bacteria salmonella in chicken, disinfest fruits and grains after harvest, and delay sprouting in potatoes and onions. At higher doses, irradiation can sterilize foods, enabling them to be stored at room-temperature indefinitely. (This is what astronauts eat in space.)

Although the United States has led the world in pioneering the research, it now lags behind in the use of the technology. While the relatively affluent U.S. consumer can continue the luxury of believing environmentalist propaganda, reason must prevail in developing countries, which have starving or semi-starving populations and crop losses of up to 60%.

It is not too late for New Jersey to wake up. All it will take is one or two legislators who are more worried about the disease, starvation, and grinding poverty that accompany a new dark age, than they are about votes from the environmentalist lobby.—*Marjorie Mazel Hecht*