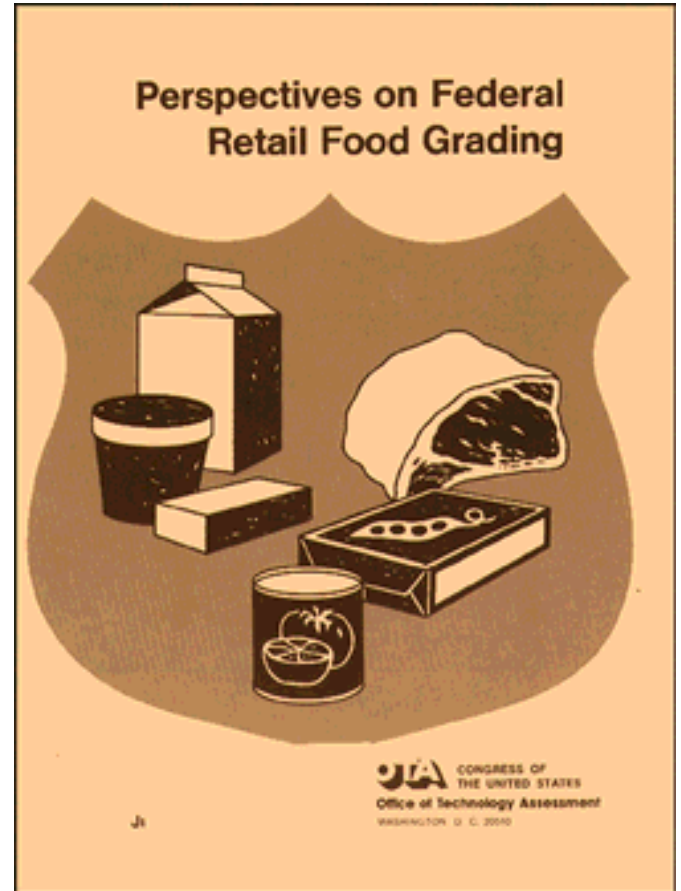


Perspectives on Federal Retail Food Grading

June 1977

NTIS order #PB-273163



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JUN 1 1977

The Honorable George McGovern
Chairman
Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

On behalf of the Board of the Office of Technology Assessment, we are forwarding to you the report Perspectives on Federal Retail Food Grading.

The report is an analysis of the U. S. food grading program. It evaluates changes and modifications in the present grading **system** which would facilitate consumer choices, examines the major issues associated with these changes, and outlines alternative approaches to implementing these changes.

This assessment was performed in accordance with your request to the Office of Technology Assessment dated September 15, 1975. The request was accepted and the study authorized by the Technology Assessment Board on December 9, 1975.

Sincerely,



EDWARD M. KENNEDY
Chairman

Sincerely,



MARJORIE S. HOLT
Vice Chairperson

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JUN 1 1977

The Honorable Edward M. Kennedy
Chairman
Technology Assessment Board
Office of Technology Assessment
Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The enclosed report, Perspectives on Federal Retail Food Grading, presents OTA's analysis of changes and modifications in the present food grading system which would facilitate consumer choice in buying food products.

The assessment was requested by the Chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs and endorsed by the Chairman of the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee. The report has been reviewed extensively within OTA, by the Food Advisory Committee, and by personnel from the Federal agencies, industry, and consumer organizations which will be affected by this study.

Specifically the report, (1) identifies and analyzes changes in the grading system needed to facilitate consumer choice, (2) identifies and analyzes the major issues associated with these changes, and (3) presents to Congress alternative approaches to accomplishing these changes.

A consumer-oriented food grading system has become an important issue in Congress and the Administration. In addition to the requesting committees, the House Agriculture Committee and the House Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee have expressed interest in receiving the report. The USDA Assistant Secretary for Nutrition and Consumer Services has indicated a desire to revamp the food grading system to aid consumers in making sounder purchase decisions. This report will be useful to Congress both to draft legislation in this area and to consider the Administration's suggested changes.

Sincerely,



EMILIO Q. DADDARIO
Director

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Preface

This assessment is an analysis of the U.S. food-grading program. It evaluates those changes and modifications in the present grading system which would facilitate consumer choices and examines their possible consequences.

The assessment was requested by the Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs and endorsed by the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry. The report identifies and evaluates the major issues and options available for congressional consideration in food grading.

The report was prepared by the Office of Technology Assessment food program staff, under the supervision of Mr. J. B. Cordaro, food program manager, and Dr. Michael J. Phillips, project leader, with contributions from: (1) the Food Advisory Committee; (2) the food-grading workshop participants; (3) Dr. Thomas Sporleder, food grading consultant; and (4) Mr. Robert L. Smith, Jr., OTA research assistant. Ms. Jane Mason and Ms. Ann Woodbridge provided clerical and logistic support in preparation of this report. The Food Advisory Committee provided advice and comment throughout the assessment, reviewed the final draft, and has recommended publication of this report.

The Technology Assessment Board, governing body of OTA, approves the release of this report, which identifies a range of viewpoints on a significant issue facing the U.S. Congress. The views expressed in this report are not necessarily those of the Board, the OTA Advisory Council, or of individual members thereof.

Acknowledgements

The food program staff received advice and assistance from Federal agency officials, individuals from the private food sector, consumer groups and widely known experts. Some participated in workshops, some were the subject of interviews, others assisted in review, and others helped in numerous ways essential to a balanced understanding of the complex issues involved in this study of food grading.

Their assistance is acknowledged. Likewise, the time made available and the effort put forward on behalf of OTA and Congress is appreciated.