

BENSON ON "CHEMICALS AND FOODS"

(Taken from THE PACKER January 23, 1960 Issue)

WASHINGTON, D. C., Jan. 22 -- Secretary of Agriculture Ezra Taft Benson last week issued an official statement, "Chemicals and Foods," and summarized its contents with the following remarks:

"Our food supply in the United States is the safest, cleanest and most wholesome in the world. The Department of Agriculture takes pride in the part it has played in making this true.

"The department considers that the safety of the Nation's food is its first responsibility in carrying out assignments from the Congress. This principle guides USDA research programs and regulatory and service activities pertaining to foods and to the use of chemicals in food production and distribution.

Endorse "Safe" Use

"The department intends to continue and intensify its efforts to insure that American consumers get the foods they need and want in adequate quantities at a reasonable price, and that these foods continue to meet the highest standards of nutritional quality and wholesomeness. It strongly endorses the safe use of carefully tested chemicals as required to maintain the excellence, variety, and economy of the foods we eat.

"We cannot continue to produce adequate amounts of safe and wholesome foods without chemicals. Abandoning their use on farms and in the food industry would result in immediate decline in the quantity and over-all quality of our food supply and cause a rapid rise in food prices paid by consumers.

"The use of chemicals in foods themselves is as old as the practice of preserving meat with salt . . . and as new as the addition of thiamin to bread.

"In every way possible, department actions are aimed to assist growers, processors, and distributors in producing and marketing products that meet all the requirements of law regarding safety and wholesomeness. USDA is continuing today, as for many years past, to withhold approval of the use of chemicals that do not meet these requirements.

"Consumers, as well as farmers and the food industry, have a vital stake in the safe use of chemicals in food production, and in the research and regulatory programs of our federal and state governments that assure wholesome, high-quality foods in economical abundance. Only wide public understanding of these facts can provide the necessary basis for continued supply of good foods we can enjoy in safety."