

Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

NOTIFICATION

1.	<b>Member to Agreement notifying:</b> <u>CANADA</u> <b>If applicable, name of local government involved:</b>
2.	<b>Agency responsible:</b> Department of Health
3.	<b>Products covered (tariff item number(s) as specified in national schedules deposited with the WTO. ICS numbers may be provided in addition, where applicable):</b> Folic acid
4.	<b>Title and number of pages of the notified document:</b> Proposed Amendment to the Food and Drug Regulations (1066) (pages 3702-3705)
5.	<p><b>Description of content:</b> This schedule of amendment to the Food and Drug Regulations proposes that: (1) the current voluntary fortification of flour and enriched pasta with folic acid be changed to a mandatory requirement; and (s) the Canadian levels of nutrient addition to flour and enriched pasta be harmonized with those of the United States.</p> <p>Folic Acid</p> <p>Recent research has demonstrated that there is a relationship between an increased intake of the B vitamin, folic acid, by women for a few weeks before and after conception, and a reduced risk of neural tube defects (NTDs) such as spina bifida in newborn infants. Consequently, on December 25, 1996, regulations were published in the Canada Gazette, Part II, which provided for the optional addition of folic acid to flour at a maximum level of 0.15 milligram per 100 grams and to pasta at a maximum level of 0.27 milligram per 100 grams.</p> <p>The optimal level of folic acid fortification for preventing NTDs is as yet unknown. The United States has chosen levels that are considered to be safe for long term consumption by all segments of the population and that will improve dietary folic acid intakes of women who could become pregnant. The Department of Health believes it is in the interest of public health to harmonize with the United States (U.S.) levels and</p>

<p>to make the addition of folic acid mandatory in both flour and enriched pasta. The folic acid intakes of significant proportion of Canadian women tend to be low than recommended for general nutritional health as well as for the prevention of neural tube defects. This action would, therefore, be consistent with the Department of Health's policy on the fortification of food to prevent or correct a deficiency of a nutrient in specific groups of the population.</p>
<p><b>6. Objective and rationale:</b> Protection of human health</p>
<p><b>7. An international standard, guideline or recommendation does not exist [ ].</b> <b>If an international standard, guideline or recommendation exists, whenever possible, identify deviations:</b></p>
<p><b>8. Relevant documents and language(s) in which these are available:</b> Canada Gazette, Part I, 29 November 1997</p>
<p><b>9. Proposed date of adoption:</b> Not stated</p>
<p><b>10. Proposed date of entry into force:</b> Not stated</p>
<p><b>11. Final date for comments:</b> 10 February 1998 <b>Agency or authority designated to handle comments:</b> National Enquiry Point</p>
<p><b>12. Texts available from:</b> National enquiry point [X] or address, telefax number and E-mail address (if available) of other body:</p>