

A P P E N D I X

NORWAY INTRODUCES TOTAL BAN ON ARTIFICIAL FOOD COLOURING

Norway has become the first country in the world to impose a total ban on artificial colouring in foodstuffs. The ban became applicable from January 1, 1978. This was announced recently by the Norwegian Institute for the Food Processing Industry. Norway has tended to follow international rules and recommendations in this area, but has taken a step ahead this time, by becoming the first country to introduce a total ban.

In recent years in Norway the number of permitted usable artificial colourings had gradually shrunk until finally only five artificial colours were allowed. In the list of permitted additives, colourings were marked with a star. The ban thus came as no surprise to the industry. Only natural colouring now will be permitted, but this will not mean their unrestricted use. For example, beetroot and chlorophyll colouring will not be permitted for use in colouring products where they have not previously been used. The ban will initially affect fish products such as "smoked coalfish" and lumpfish roe (caviar), although a spokesman for the Canning Industry's Laboratory said that these two products would be allowed temporary dispensation until a natural colouring could be found as a substitute. Research is proceeding as quickly as possible, but difficulty has been experienced in finding substitutes which have the same strength, ability to tolerate light, etc. If no substitute can be found for the caviar, for example, it will need to be granted permanent dispensation or appear in a different form.

Producers of cod roe have been more fortunate. The two largest Norwegian producers have decided to use natural colourings already being used in ice cream and juice. A major Swedish producer is considering adding no colouring at all to cod roe.