

In the area of processed foods, six general framework directives are under consideration:

- a) additives;
- b) materials and articles in contact with food;
- c) food labelling;
- d) foods for particular nutritional uses;
- e) food processes, sampling, inspection, irradiation, new foods obtained through biotechnology, etc.; and
- f) flavourings.

#### Progress to Date

Two of the framework directives on which the single market in foodstuffs is to be based have been adopted - the additives framework directive and the framework directive concerning materials and articles in contact with food.

In the case of additives, however, the Council has reserved the right not only to adopt new lists of approved additives but also to administer the Community system, which will entail the adoption of several thousand separate decisions. It has to be noted that, in two cases of limited amendments to the directives on colourings and preservatives, the Council has not been able to reach a common position. The Commission is currently examining the policy implications of the lack of agreement.

The directive on materials and articles in contact with food allows harmonized legislation on all materials and articles in contact with food, including lists of substances permitted for use in specific materials and limits on migration.

Common positions have been reached on the remaining framework directives concerning food labelling, foods for particular nutritional uses and food inspection. These will be subject to a second reading by the European Parliament before being finally adopted.

The framework directive on food labelling will allow datemarking of foodstuffs to be harmonized across the Community. For example, in the UK the "sell-by" date will not be permitted after December 31, 1992 and will be replaced by a "best before" date for most foods and a "use by" date for highly perishable ones. Long life (e.g., canned) and frozen foods will in future also have to be datemarked.

The directives on foods for particular nutritional uses identifies the special foods (e.g., diabetic foods, baby foods, slimming foods, foods for sportsmen) for which free trade will not be permitted