



APR 12 2006

The Honorable Christopher H. Smith  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515-3004

Dear Mr. Smith:

Thank you for your letter of February 14, 2006, co-signed by several of your colleagues, on behalf of the Congressional Spina Bifida Caucus, concerning the ten year anniversary of the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) decision to fortify grain products with folic acid. In your letter you express interest in receiving an update on what FDA has been doing on folic acid fortification issues.

FDA continues to recognize the importance of folic acid in the diet, especially for women during their childbearing years, and appreciates the significance of this public health issue. FDA will continue to track folic acid intake by monitoring the results from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Surveys (NHANES). As shown in the most recent data NHANES 1999-2000, folate status has improved significantly among the United States population.

As you also may be aware, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the March of Dimes, and the National Council on Folic Acid have organized the National Folic Acid Campaign. (See the CDC website at: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/folicacid/folcamp.htm>). The goal of the campaign is to educate all women who could become pregnant to consume 400 micrograms of synthetic folic acid daily from vitamin supplements and/or fortified foods in addition to eating food folate in a healthful diet. The campaign highlights the critical importance of nutrition education as one of the teaching tools that health professionals can use to assist women in consuming a diet high in folic acid.

In closing, we would like to note that throughout 2006, FDA will commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passage of its founding law, the 1906 Pure Food and Drugs Act. As FDA celebrates its Centennial, we will be recognizing our many important public health accomplishments. FDA takes great pride in its accomplishments to promote and protect the health of Americans. For more information about our upcoming Centennial, see the FDA website at: <http://www.fda.gov/centennial>.

Page 2 - The Honorable Christopher H. Smith

Thank you again for your letter. If you have further questions, please let us know. A similar letter has been sent to each of the co-signers of your letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'DWB', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David W. Boyer  
Assistant Commissioner  
for Legislation