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CONSUMER AND INDUSTRY GROUPS COSPONSOR CONFERENCE ON SALT REDUCTION

WASHINGTON—Health experts agree that Americans are consuming too much salt. That's why the nation's biggest food industry group, Grocery Manufacturers Association (GMA), and the nation's most prominent nutrition advocacy group, the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI), brought together food industry leaders, health professionals, and government officials at a conference aimed at helping consumers meet the 2005 Dietary Guidelines goal of 2,300 mg of sodium per day.

The two-day conference, *Getting to 2,300: Balancing Health with Consumer Preferences and Industry Challenges*, held in Washington, D.C., wraps up today. Topics of discussion included industry experience in cutting sodium levels, consumers' taste expectations, salt substitutes, and research and education needs. Numerous major food companies, food associations, salt and ingredient manufacturers, health organizations, and U.S. government representatives—including the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)—participated in the conference.

"I am proud of the efforts of food manufacturers to reformulate their products and reduce the amount of salt," said Cal Dooley, GMA President and CEO. "The industry has made great progress and we are committed to continuing our efforts to provide consumers with great tasting and lower sodium products that help them reach dietary goals and live healthy lives."

"Reducing the amount of salt in processed foods and restaurant foods is perhaps the single most important thing we could do to reduce blood pressure and the incidence of heart attacks and strokes in this country and around the world," said CSPI executive director Michael F. Jacobson. "It's something that the food industry and government regulators are taking increasingly seriously."

Next month, the FDA will hold a public hearing on salt reduction. The Nov. 29 hearing is in response to a 2005 petition by CSPI that asked the FDA to use its regulatory authority to lower sodium levels in the food supply.

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