
ASSOCIATION OF FOOD AND DRUG OFFICIALS

2013

RESOLUTION NUMBER 2013-2

Submitted by: CASA and amended by AFDO

Date: April 4, 2013

Concerning: Areca Nut (Betel Nut)

Whereas, areca nut (betel nut) is an adulterated food used in paan (betel quid), an ancient food combination of areca nut and slaked lime, wrapped in a betel leaf with optional condiments, and

Whereas, areca nut (betel nut) is the fourth most common addictive substance in the world; and

Whereas, 10 - 20 percent of the world's population in South East Asia, the Subcontinent of India, and U.S. immigrants and refugees (about 600 million people) practice betel nut chewing culture, and

Whereas, betel nut chewing culture has been documented in the United States, and

Whereas, areca nut itself has been classified as a Group 1 carcinogen (carcinogenic to humans) by the WHO International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC, 2004), and

Whereas, areca nut is the definitive cause of oral sub mucous fibrosis (OSF), a precancerous condition of the upper digestive tract including the oral cavity, and

Whereas, the immigrant and refugee populations that practice betel nut chewing culture are increasing at a greater rate than the general population, and

Whereas, areca nut is also a non food religious ritual item.

Resolved, that CASA forward this Resolution to AFDO for their consideration and endorsement, and then have it forwarded to FDA, and be it further

Resolved, that AFDO advise FDA of this matter and ask them to clarify to State food safety regulatory agencies of its position on areca nut (betel nut) as an adulterated food, any labeling requirements which could exempt it as a food (religious exemption), and what enforcement actions would be appropriate.