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COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX
PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT
75 BAYARD STREET, FIFTH FLOOR
NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ 08901

June 19, 2009

Jennifer Apostol
MCFOODS Coordinator
101 Interchange Plaza
Cranbury, NJ 08512

RECEIVED

JUN 21 2009

**Middlesex County
Improvement Authority**

Re: Canned Food Expiration Dates

Dear Ms Apostol,

Please be advised that product dating is not required by Federal or New Jersey State regulations except for milk (including cottage cheese, yogurt, etc.), infant formula, and baby food. Canned foods with product dates refer to best quality and are not safety dates. Canning is a high-heat process that renders the food commercially sterile. Canned foods kept in a clean, dry environment for long periods of time will be microbiologically safe. Again, it is the quality of the food that may be impacted.

According to the New Jersey Department of Health and Human Services, Retail Food Division, there are no restrictions on the sale of canned foods past the product date. The consumer has the final decision on whether or not to use outdated canned foods.

Of course, as you know, cans that are leaking, rusting, bulging, or severely dented must never be used. If you have any other questions regarding canned foods, please contact me at 732-745-3136.

Sincerely,

Douglas M. Sheehan
Supervising Chief REHS

cc: Ronald G. Rios, Freeholder
David A. Papi, Director-Health Officer