



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20580

Office of the Secretary

May 9, 2001

Charlotte Arnold Christin, Esq.
Joseph Mendelson, III, Esq.
Andrew Kimbrell, Esq.

Research Foundation for
Science, Technology & Ecology
A-60, Hauz Khas
New Delhi, India 110016

Center for Food Safety
666 Pennsylvania Ave., S.E.
Suite 302
Washington, DC 20003

International Center for
Technology Assessment
666 Pennsylvania Ave., S.E.
Suite 302
Washington, DC 20003

Dear Ms. Christin, Mr. Mendelson, and Mr. Kimbrell:

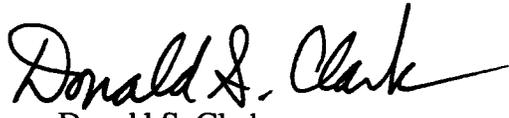
This is in response to the petition you filed on behalf of the Research Foundation for Science, Technology & Ecology, the Center for Food Safety, and the International Center for Technology Assessment, asking the Federal Trade Commission to commence a proceeding for a trade regulation rule to prevent U.S. grown rice from being advertised or otherwise represented using the words "Basmati" and "Jasmine."

The Federal Trade Commission is directed to act in the interest of all consumers to prevent unfair and deceptive advertising. Each year the Commission receives many requests, and must weigh a number of factors in deciding whether action is appropriate, including the types and prevalence of violations alleged, and the nature and amount of consumer injury that may occur. The Commission's efforts are focused on those areas which may affect the greatest number of consumers, may pose a risk to consumers' health or safety, or may cause significant economic harm to consumers.

Based on our review of your petition and related U.S. regulations, we do not have reason to believe that significant consumer injury is likely to arise from current rice marketing. Under United States Department of Agriculture regulations, basmati and jasmine rice are included as examples of "aromatic rough rice," and are not limited to rice grown in any particular country.¹ Thus, there is no specific statutory or regulatory limitation on references to U.S. grown rice as "basmati" or "jasmine." Moreover, we do not have evidence to suggest that U.S. grown rice is being misrepresented as rice from other parts of the world. In fact, each of the web pages referenced in your petition specifically note that the American products are, indeed, grown in the United States. In addition, based on a review of rice packaging by Commission staff, the American basmati and jasmine rice products are labeled as U.S. grown, with clear descriptions such as "the American Basmati Rice."

Based upon the foregoing considerations, we are declining to take any action on your request at this time.

By direction of the Commission.


Donald S. Clark
Secretary

¹ See 7 C.F.R. § 868.212 (e).