

# Meat Additive Control Considered

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has announced that it is considering changes in its meat and poultry inspection regulations to control the addition of water and oil base solutions into meat and poultry products.

Officials of USDA's Consumer and Marketing Service said this was not a formal regulatory proposal but rather an invitation to interested persons to comment on the scope of any formal proposal which may be issued.

A typical meat product treated with a solution, C&MS said, is beef that is partially cooked in a processing plant and cooked further to complete its preparation in a "fast food" outlet such as a sandwich shop. The solutions are added to help

retain normal color, to distribute seasonings throughout the meat, and improve tenderness. The solutions usually consist of water mixed with approved materials and phosphates and sometimes contain animal and vegetable fats, alone or in combination.

In poultry products, C&MS said, the solutions are added to inhibit the development of muscle dryness during cooking and to facilitate wider dispersion of flavoring agents. Typical poultry products are "self basting" raw turkeys injected with solutions of varying compositions.

Federal meat and poultry inspection laws prohibit the preparation of "adulterated" products, and state that a product will be considered adulterated

"if any substance has been added thereto or mixed or packed therewith so as to increase its bulk or weight or reduce its quality or strength, or make it appear better or of greater value than it is."

Meat and poultry products can become adulterated by the addition of water. C&MS must therefore have information on the amount of water, if any, necessary in these solutions in order to achieve the desired results in these products. Any comments on this subject should include substantive data and information to show that water is necessary to prepare the products and the amount required for the given purpose, officials said.

C&MS said any proposed regulation would specify

1 The products into which liquids can be injected, mixed, or otherwise added

2 Liquids that may be added.

3 The maximum percentage of liquid that may be added.

4 General plant operating procedures that must be met with the requirement that the specific processing methods be submitted for approval along with the application for label approval.

5. Handling practices to be used during distribution in commerce to insure proper identification of the products when delivered to the consumer.

Meanwhile, C&MS is giving temporary approval to products meeting the following require

ments. Labels must bear a prominent, legible and descriptive name; the product name must include a bold statement declaring the amount of solution added and the common or usual name of each of its ingredients in the order of predominance. Solutions approved thus far range from 2 to 10 per cent of the weight of the meat product and 3 to 6 per cent of the weight of the poultry product.

Two copies of any comment should be sent to the Hearing Clerk, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250 before November 9, 30 days after publication of this announcement in the Federal Register on October 8. All comments will be available for public review in the Hearing Clerk's office.



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