

Fusarium, A Wide-Ranging Crop Threat

Scientists concerned with fungi of the genus *Fusarium* have a new *Fusarium* Research Center at The Pennsylvania State University.

Directing the Center are Dr. P.E. Nelson, professor of plant pathology, and Dr. T.A. Tossoun, adjunct associate professor of plant pathology.

The work consists of research projects relating directly to agricultural problems in the Commonwealth. In addition, there are projects of national and international concern. The Center maintains the largest collection of *Fusarium* species in the United States—some 3,800 different strains.

Current problems under study are stalk rot of corn, *Fusarium* blight of turfgrass, and *Fusarium* stem rot of carnations. In each case, *Fusarium* species are being identified as well as the environmental factors favoring disease development. Faculty members at Cornell University, as well as Penn State, are cooperating in the corn stalk rot and carnation stem rot projects.

Widely distributed in soil from the Arctic to the Sahara Desert, *Fusarium* species cause diseases of animals and man. Their most serious effect, however, is in producing wilt diseases of major crops as well as root rots and blights of cereal grains.

The Center serves as a resource nucleus for scientists and other persons wanting help in identifying, handling, and storing *Fusarium* fungi, the directors point out.

With this in mind, strong cooperative programs have been developed with scientists in Australia. Collaborating with

Drs. Nelson and Toussoun on diseases of wheat and corn are personnel with the University of Sidney and the Queensland Department of Primary Industries. In addition, a cooperative program on *Fusarium* diseases of ornamental plants and turfgrass is being set up with scientists at Brisbane.

Another international function is to identify *Fusarium* cultures, provide cultures, and maintain and store cultures for other workers. During the past year, requests for these services have come from many states as well as from Malaya, Canada, Australia, British Solomon Islands Protectorate, India, Colombia, Egypt, Lebanon, and Japan.

Although most of the cultures for identification came from plants, Center personnel also identified several *Fusarium* species of human origin.

Moreover, several cultures were identified that produce toxins in hay and silage.

Long-range plans call for promoting the use of the *Fusarium* Research Center's large collection fungi as biological indicators or measuring devices in studying the environment.

Fusarium species are particularly suited for studying the effects of sewage sludge, compost, and other solid wastes on agricultural land—including biological control of soilborne organisms. Such fungi can also determine the ability of airborne dust to disseminate soilborne organisms in temperate and arid climates.

In addition, such fungi can help to determine the effect of plant cover and man's activities on populations of soilborne organisms.

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New Labeling Regulations For Manufactured Meats

Hot dogs, sausage, sandwich meat, bologna, scrapple and other favorite staples manufactured from meat products must have their ingredients clearly labeled for sale to consumers as of Sept. 15, it was announced today by Pennsylvania Secretary of Agriculture Jim McHale.

McHale said the meat industry was notified of the pending labeling requirements May 25.

"After Sept. 15, our inspectors in the department's Bureau of Foods and Chemistry will enforce this regulation," said McHale.

The secretary noted that the department's regional consumer councils have been alerted to the regulations and are expected to help in reporting violations.

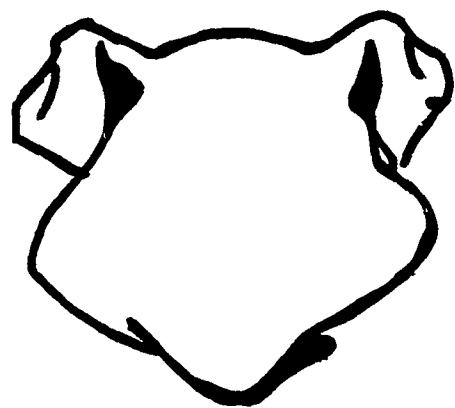
Jane Alexander, director of the Bureau of Foods and Chemistry, said regulations stem from the Meat and Poultry Hygiene law of 1968. She said the meat industry has had a good record of voluntary compliance with the

labeling requirements. However, violations have occurred when retail outlets buy manufactured meat products in bulk and repackage the meat for sale in smaller quantities.

Regulations to be enforced require that pre-packaged meat items with two or more ingredients be labeled to identify these ingredients. Unpackaged meat products such as sausage and bologna sold in bulk to retail stores must be identified to the consumer by a wallboard or chart, or a card for each item in the display case.

All meat retailers, wholesalers and distributors are asked to remove from sale all unlabeled pre-packaged meats. After Sept. 15, such meat will be seized by the department's food inspectors and prosecution initiated.

Stores in violation will be subject to fines from \$50 to \$300. A second violation will carry a fine of \$500 to \$1,000.



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