

Potato Growers, Shippers Advised On Labeling Seed Potatoes

If you market seed potatoes, the U.S. Department of Agriculture recommends that you familiarize yourself with the new U.S. grade standards for seed potatoes to avoid mislabeling.

Use of the new grade standards is voluntary, but if seed potatoes are marked as to grade the labeling must be accurate.

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, which administers the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act, says seed potatoes packed in

bags labeled "U.S. No. 1" and failing to meet the higher requirements of the U.S. grade standards for table-stock potatoes, will be considered as mislabeled under the Federal law. Simply attaching tags to show the potatoes are of seed grade will not correct this.

The new grade standards for seed potatoes went into effect in April. AMS points out that the grade was intended for seed potatoes, not those for table use. The seed potatoes packed under this grade should be in bags labeled, "U.S. No. 1 Seed" or U.S. No. 1 Seed Potatoes," or be unmarked as to grade.

Under the new grade standard, seed potatoes can have more of certain defects than table

potatoes. In the past, most seed potatoes were shipped under State seed grades that required the potatoes to meet U.S. No. 1 table requirements. These seed potatoes were generally shipped in bags marked U.S. No. 1, with State certified tags attached. If diverted from seed to table use, the potatoes would meet U.S. No. 1 quality standards for table potatoes.

Most seed tags now in use contain the marking, "U.S. No. 1," as a separate, distinct item. If these tags are used on U.S. No. 1 seed grade potatoes, AMS warns, it will be considered a misrepresentation, unless the potatoes also meet the higher requirements of the U.S. No. 1 table grade. The tags should be

redesigned to show U.S. No. 1 SEED (or U.S. No. 1 SEED POTATOES) in one word group of the same size printing if they are to be used for the U.S. No. 1 seed grade.

When potatoes are marked as to grade, the labeling as to grade must be accurate, as required by the PAC Act. Other Federal and State laws require the name and address of the packer or distributor, the product, and the net weight of the contents to be shown.

Grade Standard Proposed for Nest-Run Eggs

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has proposed establishment of a standard for yield grade of unwashed, unsized eggs.

The standard would be used to predict what the grade and size of these eggs—called nest run eggs—would be after washing, grading, and sizing.

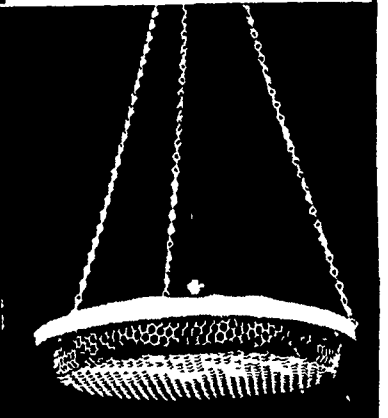
Commercial flocks are now generally made up of birds of uniform age and breeding. Such flocks produce eggs relatively uniform in weight and quality, making it feasible to provide sample grading of nest run eggs. Sample grading, based on the proposed standard, would make it possible to buy and sell eggs based on size and quality without the time and expense of an initial grading and packaging followed by another grading prior to final sale.

As with all services provided in USDA's Federal-State egg grading program, sample grading of nest run eggs would be voluntary and paid for by the user.

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