Staph Topic for Foods Conference

International attention of food scientists will be focused on Penn. State University March 18 to 20 for a conference dealing with microbiological food safety. The event will be held in the J. Orvis Keller Conference Center at University Park

The event has already brought inquiries from over 250 food scientists in the U.S , Canada, Japan, Germany, and France, says Dr. Kurosh Ostovar, conference chairman. As of mid-February, 50 persons had pre-registered. The meeting has been described in 45 scientific journals.

The formal topic for the meeting will be staphylococci in foods While salmonella were a major cause of food poisoning in the 1960's, staphylococci or "staph" are now the most troublesome, Dr Ostovar points out

One of the conference objectives will be to provide information concerning control measures and sanitation programs to protect consumers from illness caused by "staph" bacteria

Dr Ostovar says 60 percent of the men and women attending will represent the food industry. Also well represented will be regulatory agencies such as the Food and Drug Administration, the U S Department of Agriculture, the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta, Georgia, and state health and agriculture departments A third major group will come from departments of food science and microbiology at various universities.

The conference will provide general and specific information as to the source, cycle, and significance of staphylococci in foods Speakers will update procedures and techniques used to isolate and identify staphylococci and to detect enterotoxins The meeting should also encourage further educational efforts to protect consumers from staphyloccocci-food-borne illness

Giving the keynote address on the status of staphylococci in food products will be Dr J. C Olson, Jr , director of the Division of Microbiology for the U S Food and Drug Administration On the program from the Canada Department of National Health and Welfare in Ottawa will be Dr N Dickie, head of the Biochemistry and Microbiology Division. Discussing national and international surveillance, from the Center for Disease Control, Atlanta, Georgia, will be Dr W H Baker, Jr , chief of the Enteric Diseases Section

Further details on this upcoming conference on microbiological food safety are available from the Agricultural Conference Coordinator, J Orvis Keller Building, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pa 16802

Bullock Grades Adopted

The U S Department of Agriculture (USDA) has announced revisions in U.S quality grade standards for bull beef that will distinguish, for the first time, between beef from young and older bulls

Officials of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), which establishes Federal grade standards for agricultural products, explained that under the new standards, beef from young bulls will be graded on the same standards as beef from steers However, when it is Federally graded, it will be identified with the word "Bullock," since presently available research shows that beef from young bulls may be more variable in palatability than steer beef with the same quality-indicating characteristics The term will appear in conjunction with the USDA quality grade shield and will provide a means of identifying such beef

USDA officials emphasized that the revised standards would not change the grading of beef that is now generally available in retail stores and that consumers could continue to purchase USDA graded beef with complete assurance that the quality in each grade has not been changed

USDA officials noted that very few young bulls now are being produced for use as fresh meat, so consumers should not expect bullock beef to be immediately available in volume at retail meat consumers

Another change in the standards is the discontinuance of quality grades for beef from older bulls USDA officials said that such beef is used almost exclusively in processed meat products and that value difference among such carcasses are dependent almost entirely on their yields of lean meat For that reason, older bulls will be yield graded only

The proposed change in standards was published in the March 17, 1972, issue of the Federal Register (see USDA press release 958-72). During the 90-day comment period which followed, 87 comments were received. Of those, 59 favored adoption of the revisions as proposed. Seventeen other comments also favored adoption, but with some modification. There were 11 comments opposing adoption. Support was expressed by most segments of the livestock industry as well as by individuals and groups not associated with the livestock industry

The revised standards will go into effect July 1, 1973 and were scheduled to be published in the Federal Register Feb. 22, 1973. Copies may be obtained from the Standardization Branch, Livestock Division, Agricultural Marketing Service, U S Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

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