

Additional Dry Milk Imports Authorized

Additional imports of 80 million pounds of nonfat dry milk have been authorized by President

Nixon as part of the action taken to increase food supplies in support of Phase IV. The authorization, taken under Section 22(b) of the Agricultural Adjustment Act, as amended, was proclaimed on Wednesday, July 18.

The imports will be on a first come, first served basis, and must be entered by August 31; no licenses will be required. The maximum amount which an individual importer may bring in is limited to 2,500,000 pounds; this limitation is intended to prevent any importer from controlling a disproportionate share of the imports. Imports will not be restricted to specific countries of origin.

At the same time, the President directed the U. S. Tariff Commission to undertake an investigation and make recommendations as to whether the annual import quota of 1,807,000 pounds should be increased or suspended. The Commission was also instructed to investigate and recommend on the quota for animal feeds containing milk or milk derivatives. Such feeds, commonly known as "milk replacers," consist largely of nonfat dry milk.

The authorization for 80 million pounds of nonfat dry milk follows similar actions earlier in the year, totalling 85 million pounds. Nonfat dry milk production has been below normal this year because of the decline in fluid milk production, but commercial demand has remained strong.

When it became apparent that the upturn in production which had been hoped for during the flush milk production season had not materialized, Secretary of Agriculture Earl L. Butz recommended prompt action by the President to insure that supplies would remain fully adequate.

The importation of most dairy products is limited by import quotas established by Presidential Proclamation under the Section 22 authority. Section 22 provides for limitations on imports, following an investigation by the Tariff Commission and a Presidential determination, of items found to be interfering or likely to interfere with the price support program for milk. Imports of nonfat dry milk have been under quota control since 1953, when an annual quota of 1,807,000 pounds was proclaimed by President Eisenhower.

The emergency Section 22 action will, as provided by law, be subject to an investigation and report to the President by the U. S. Tariff Commission. The investigation will include a public hearing at which interested parties may testify. An announcement by the Tariff Commission is expected in the near future.

New Requirements for Handling Meat and Poultry Spice Mixes

The U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) set new requirements for the handling of pre-mixed spices and curing agents used in processed meat and poultry products manufactured in federally inspected plants.

Officials of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) said that effective immediately packers and processors will not be permitted to use spices and flavorings which are pre-packaged with curing agents such as nitrates and nitrites unless the mixtures contain a buffering compound.

Officials said that other pre-mixes currently on hand in federally inspected plants will not be permitted in the manufacture of luncheon meats, frankfurters, and similar processed meat products unless they meet specific safety requirements.

Today's action does not affect the use of spices and curing agents packaged separately, or when mixed at the time they are applied or added to processed products.

APHIS said the action was necessitated by a change in Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations, effective July 19, which removed such spice and

curing agent pre-mixes from the "generally recognized as safe" category. Officials explained that laboratory analyses have indicated that such pre-mixes may cause the formation of nitrosamines. Some of these nitrosamines, they said, have been found to be a health hazard in laboratory test animals. In a recent series of pre-mix tests conducted by the Federal Meat and Poultry Inspection Program, two of 16 samples showed nitrosamine levels of 5.6 parts per billion (ppb) and 48.5 ppb, respectively. No buffered mixes have been found to contain nitrosamines.

Extensive testing measures were begun early last month by USDA and FDA when officials of the Canadian Ministry of Health reported the finding of nitrosamines in spice and curing agent pre-mixes in Canada.

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