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Butz Establishes Panel On Nitrates, Nitrosamines

Secretary of Agriculture Earl L. Butz announced he is establishing an expert panel to advise the U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) regarding the safety of the continued use of nitrites in human food and the possible formation of nitrosamines.

"Events in recent months have brought increasing concern about the safety of the use of nitrite as a curing agent," Secretary Butz said. "We have had numerous joint meetings with members of the Food and Drug Administration and other scientists and technologists since 1970. Now, there is a great deal of information in our hands. This panel will study the material and make recommendations as to what action needs to be taken," he said.

Nitrite, a chemical substance used in the curing of meats such as ham, bacon and sausage, has been demonstrated to inhibit the growth of the organism that causes botulism. It has been reported, though, that nitrite can combine with secondary amines in food to form substances called nitrosamines.

"USDA will act promptly on the recommendations of the panel," Secretary Butz said. "Public safety is our main concern."

The six-member panel will be comprised of experts in food science. Panel members are: Dr. Cecile H. Edwards, nutritionist and chairman, department of home economics, Howard University, Washington, D. C.; Dr. Leo Friedman, toxicologist and director, Division of Toxicology, Bureau of Foods, Food and Drug Administration, Washington, D. C.; Dr. Richard A. Greenberg, microbiologist and director of research, Swift and Co., Oak Brook, Ill.; Dr. James P. Keating, pediatrician, St. Louis Children's Hospital, St. Louis, Mo; Dr. Aaron E. Wasserman, research chemist, Agricultural Research Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Philadelphia, and Dr. John H. Weisburger, pathologist and vice-president for research, American Health Foundation, New York, N. Y.

Official notice of establishment of the panel was published in the Sept. 20 Federal Register.

Airsacculitis Condemnation To be Clarified

The U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) proposed to clarify present criteria for condemning poultry affected with airsacculitis.

USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) said the proposal would add a paragraph to the Poultry Products Inspection regulations which would identify airsacculitis as a condition requiring condemnation of the entire carcass or the affected parts. The disease usually affects the lower part of the respiratory tract.

APHIS officials explained that although condemnations attributed to airsacculitis occur, the regulations do not specifically mention the condition by name. The proposal would establish a new heading under the post mortem inspection section of the regulations, entitled "Airsacculitis." Identifying the condition in the regulations under the Act will help achieve uniform application of inspection standards.

A notice concerning the proposal appeared in the Federal Register. Any person wishing to submit comments concerning the proposal may do so by filing them in duplicate with the Hearing Clerk, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. 20250, by Nov. 30.

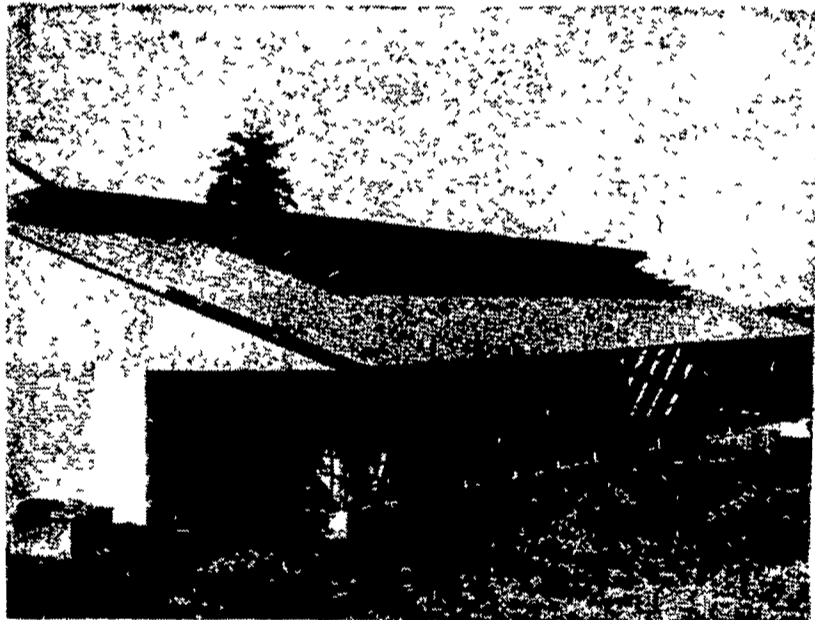
Any person desiring to be heard orally, should address his request to the Inspection Standards and Regulations Staff, Meat and Poultry Inspection Program, APHIS, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250. Transcripts of oral hearings and written comments will be available for public inspection.

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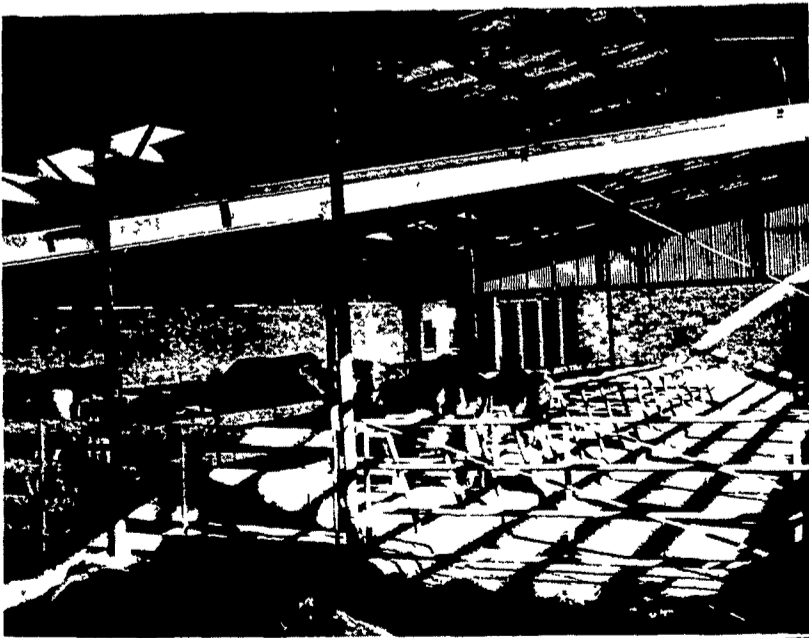


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