

USDA Prohibits Packers From Custom Feeding

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently announced that a new regulation prohibiting dual ownership of meat packers and custom feedlots has been adopted and will become effective on July 1, 1974.

The regulation, issued under the Packers and Stockyards Act, will be published in the May 17 Federal Register.

The regulation contains specific language to make clear that meat packers may not own, operate, or control meat packing firms.

A custom feedlot, as defined in the regulation, is any facility which is used for the purpose of feeding livestock for the accounts of others, excluding feeding which is incidental to the sale or transfer of livestock.

Packers would not be prohibited from feeding their own livestock for their own slaughter needs. New language has also been added to the original proposal to make clear that the regulation is not intended to prevent a packer from hiring the services of a custom feedlot to fatten its

own livestock for its own slaughter needs.

USDA's Packers and Stockyards Administration (P&SA) said it hopes to achieve compliance with the regulation on an informal basis. However, it will enforce the regulation by filing administrative complaints where dual ownership is found to exist if such firms decline to separate ownership on a voluntary basis.

Adoption of the regulations followed public hearing in Des Moines, Iowa, and Phoenix, Arizona, during which 83 witnesses testified. An additional 655 written comments were filed for the record. Statements were made by representatives of county, state, and national farm organizations, college and university educators, State Departments of Agriculture, state legislators, members of Congress, individual farmers and feeders, conglomerates, meat packers, and custom feedlot operators.

Much of the testimony cited dramatic changes in the marketing system for fat cattle during the past 10 years as a prime reason for adoption of the regulation separating ownership of packers and custom feedlots. These changes have resulted in feedlots becoming the principal market centers for slaughter cattle, rather than the public markets as was the case in earlier years.

P&SA said that it became aware in early 1973 that a large number of packers were considering acquiring custom feedlots. At least 17 packers, who controlled about 40 percent of the Nation's slaughter of feed cattle under Federal inspection, either owned, were in the process of acquiring, or had expressed interest in acquiring custom feedlots.

Such a development, P&SA said, would have real potential for decreasing competition in the purchase of livestock.

P&SA officials said dual ownership presents obvious conflict - of - interest situations, and could tend to restrain competition and create monopolistic conditions if not prohibited.

The record in this matter is open to the public. Copies of the regulation may be obtained from the Information Office, Packers and Stockyards Administration, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250.

Furniture at No Expense

Make your imagination work for you without straining your pocketbook. Mrs. Helen Puskar, Extension home furnishings specialist at The Pennsylvania State University, suggests you create furniture from materials you would discard. Make shelves by gluing together several layers of heavy cardboard. Then use upended tin cans or newsprint rolls for supports. Cover with fabric scraps or decorative paper.

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Lancaster Man Writes Book About Tobacco

A book about the Lancaster County tobacco industry was announced Sunday at the home of Arthur L. Reist, author of "Tobacco Lore of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania".

Reist, of 1050 Eden Road, Lancaster, wrote the book because, he said, "There's a great deal of history and tradition in our tobacco and I wanted to preserve it."

The publication of the 32-page book culminated a year of writing and preparation by Reist. Among those attending the announcement gathering were Dr. Orman E. Street, professor emeritus of agronomy, University of Maryland. Dr. Street, who wrote the foreword to the book, was described by Reist as "the world's foremost tobacco authority".

Reist also credited Harold H. Bowers, 19 E. Frederick St., Millersville, for photos used in the book. And he added praise for H. H. Schultz, a Manheim Twp. High School senior for pencil sketches which illustrate parts of the book.

In the book, Reist traces the history of tobacco use from the New World to the Old and back again. He also

gives a detailed account of how tobacco is grown and how the process has remained virtually unchanged through the years.

Science Press, Ephrata, printed 2000 copies of the book, which will sell at various locations throughout the county for \$2.25.

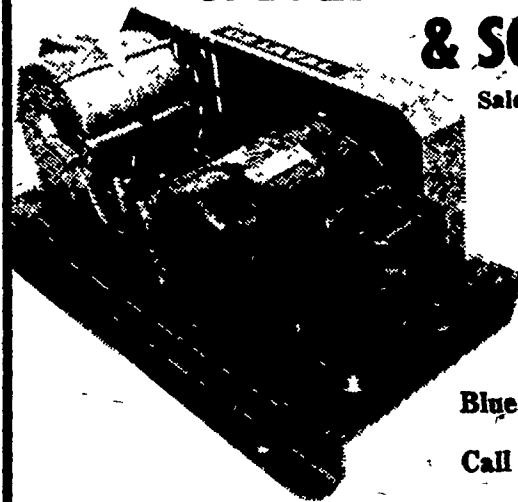
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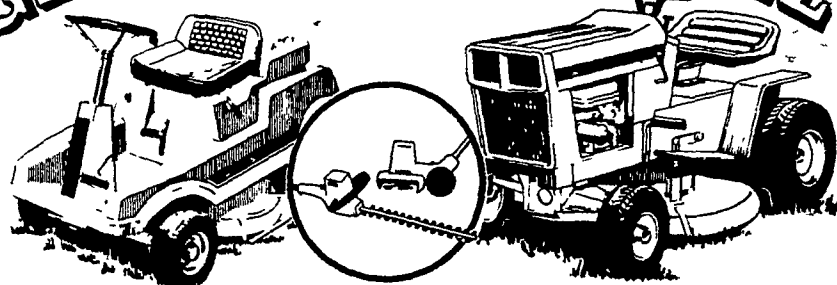
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